

Friends,

Do you remember when things used to slow down during the summer months? I've seen little evidence of that in the past two years, but I keep hoping!

Last night's Mayor & Council meeting was jammed with important actions I'd like to share with you.

- Bus fares, of course, are tops in many people's minds, and last night's deliberations were challenging. Financial detective work by Councilmember Uhlich's staff revealed that the projected shortfall in SunTran's budget amounting to \$4-million over the next two years was premised on a cut in general funds to SunTran, something Council did not intend when the budget was adopted and that we believe goes against the spirit of our agreement with the Regional Transportation Authority. Our vote was based on the belief that if general fund amounts to SunTran are just kept level, there will be no need to raise fares. Yes, that now leaves a \$4-million dollar hole in the general fund, adding to the \$14-million we'd already anticipated. We are working to make that up by not hiring new staff [except Police and Fire and other essential staff] and cutbacks in travel and administrative expenses ... not services. In the months to come we will keep an eye on whether SunTran can continue to operate at current levels with its approved budget. If gas prices keep escalating, however, we may have to look at options again. We plan to appoint a task force to keep tabs on this important issue.
- The Miramonte Neighborhood Plan was made an official City of Tucson document with a unanimous vote of Mayor and Council. Many thanks to the many neighborhood people who worked tirelessly on this project, which can serve as a model for our community of a neighborhood coming together to decide what it values and how those values can be put into action to strengthen their community. They dealt with single family homes, apartments, condos, businesses large and small, and so much more. Special thanks not only to the neighbors, but also to Rebecca Ruopp of the City's Department of Urban Planning, the Drachman Institute, and to Ward VI aide Laura Burge, who all worked tirelessly on this project.
- We passed the Residential Solar Readiness Ordinance! This initiative is something our office began earlier this year to make it easier for people in our community to go solar! This measure means that all new homes must be made ready for solar water heating and solar electric

when they're built. Simple and inexpensive additions in appropriate places will make it easier for homeowners to go solar if / when they want without the added costs associated with retrofitting an older home. The final specs on standards are being finalized with stakeholder input, but this action sends a clear message that we are serious about being as sustainable a community as possible.

- We had a lengthy discussion on the Certificate of Occupancy Disclosure Ordinance I proposed. Last fall, more than a half dozen small businesses came to us at risk of failure before they even opened their doors because nobody told them they needed a C of O in order to obtain a business license. In several cases they'd already leased a building and done improvements only to find that site didn't qualify for their kind of business. The Ordinance says nothing more than: Landlords must inform prospective tenants they will need a C of O. I strongly believe this is necessary. However, in the more than 4 months of work with stakeholders to prepare this ordinance, it became obvious that our C of O process is greatly flawed and needs to be modified. We will continue working with stakeholders to avoid the proverbial unintended consequences when one well-intentioned act results in other hardship. Nothing is quite as simple as you might hope, but I am committed to doing this right. Here are some of our immediate efforts:
 - A Provisional C of O process is about to be formalized. This allows a business to open so long as all life safety issues are resolved. Other less critical requirements can be implemented on a reasonable timetable.
 - An administrative policy will allow for baseline drawings instead of architectural plans when applying. [Baselines are simpler and much less expensive than architectural drawings, saving new businesses time and money.]
 - Both of these modifications should be in place this summer. But there are other issues, as well:
 - Current regulations make it difficult for older buildings to be adapted for new uses. We need to be sure we're protecting health and safety ... and that businesses belong at that location, but not be overly restrictive.
 - We need a consistent simplified check-list for businesses seeking a C of O. It's in development.
 - We need to address parking mandates, which seem to be based on everyone being able to park right in front of the business. We're building more parking lots that allow folks

to just walk a few blocks. We're encouraging more mass transit. It's time for us to revisit this issue.

The C of O Ordinance should be discussed again next week at Study Session.

- We took another major step forward on making our community more sustainable by moving forward with our Office on Conservation and Sustainable Development's Interdepartmental Sustainability Strategic Plan. This framework will make it easier for all departments to work together to lessen our carbon footprint. A tremendous amount of effort went into developing this approach, and the expert citizens' panel will help assure we have top expertise and considerable community input as we tackle the sometimes difficult decisions we'll face as we 'green' our community.
- On a lighter note: MonZOOOn Magic - Don't miss it! It takes place every Friday night at our own Zoo - that wonderful green spot in the middle of town. It is the setting for some wonderful movies and concerts this summer. We have already enjoyed 'The Jadi Norris Band' and 'Horton hears A Who'. This Friday, June 20th, they're offering the classic, 'A Princess Bride'. Come enjoy the movie and while you are there you can see the animals [who come out more in the evening when it's cooler] and join in on the craft activities. The cost is \$10, with children under 2 free. Call 881-4753 for more information.



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