

Greetings from Ward VI!

Our agendas have been relatively short for Council meetings the last two weeks, but the matters we've covered will have great impact on our community. Let me give a brief overview of three key items:

- **Commercial Water Harvesting:** Tuesday, we passed an ordinance that will require commercial buildings constructed after June 2010 to harvest at least half the water they'll need to sustain their landscaping on the property. This is a significant step towards sustainability, and I applaud my colleague Rodney Glassman for his leadership on this matter. After 9 months of discussions including stakeholders from business and environmental communities, a solid consensus was reached. Our ordinance is the first of its kind in the nation!
 - o **What each of us can/should do:** Beyond the importance of last night's decision, however, is the awareness I hope it will create that we ALL have a role to play in using our water run off. At Study Session last week, Brad Lancaster, our world renowned local expert on water harvesting, gave a fascinating presentation on the simple things each of us can/should do so we can use our rainwater, rather than letting it run down the street creating our many temporary lakes and streams each time a heavy rain hits! And the numbers are astounding! Did you know the amount of rainfall we receive each year is MORE than we need to sustain our community ... at least it would be if we could harvest it and use it appropriately, rather than letting it run north in the Santa Cruz. Brad showed us simple berms and swales we can create in our own yards; how to create our own water flow within our yards; the role curb cuts can play; and all of it do-able.
 - o **What we've done at Ward VI:** As I've mentioned in previous Perspectives!, as part of our recent Go Green III we created a water harvesting system in and around our building, so instead of feeding the Ward VI Lake in our next major rainfall, our berms and swales will capture the run-off from our roof to water our native vegetation. Come by and be inspired! The variety of low water plants is extensive - and beautiful!
- **Getting Ready:** So much is happening Downtown ... with so much more to come. Part of our 'getting ready' is rezoning several properties owned by the City for their intended uses, which we did last week. The

goal is to unify downtown zoning to provide the most flexibility for future targeted uses. We started with two of our own properties. These actions will speed things up when it's time to develop them ... and will serve as a signal to private interests that we are serious about facilitating appropriate growth downtown.

- o Greater Tucson Leadership: I had the pleasure last Friday of taking the Fall Class 2008 of Greater Tucson Leadership on a tour of what's happening Downtown. From the modern streetcar tracks emerging from the 4th Avenue Underpass to seeing the 'before' of our Warehouse Arts District, to enjoying the Tucson Museum of Art's sculpture garden, to seeing One North Fifth now half full, to looking at the beginnings of the Convento and Mission Gardens followed by a trip up 'A' Mountain for the birds' eye perspective. They had the chance to see how much is happening, and how much more is planned. Many of these young professionals, each of whom is committing countless hours to learning more about our community and how to become our next generation of leaders, expressed surprise so much is happening they didn't know about!

Certificate of Occupancy: Last week we devoted time at Study Session to discuss new policies designed to make it simpler and easier for businesses moving into an older building to get their Certificate of Occupancy [C of O]. [I know we've talked about this in prior Perspectives!, but the law took effect Wednesday, and I want you to have a bit more background on what we did - and why: Since 1928 when Tucson adopted its first building codes, a C of O has been required for commercial properties. A code adopted in 1988 requires any business with a business license to have a C of O. For a variety of reasons, not the least being health and safety of our community, a few years ago City staff began enforcing this law more consistently. The result: we received many phone calls from small businesses that had taken out leases and done improvements only to find they didn't qualify to operate in that location - and great frustration from property owners and rental agents that they can't get tenants into their older properties because of arcane rules.] Our office began working with stakeholders to find ways to help businesses and property owners out of what had become a very difficult situation that left many of our older buildings unusable! Through lengthy conversations, Development Services has adopted three new policies that make it easier for businesses to reuse old space without having to make major, expensive and cumbersome changes that

do not relate to health and safety.

- o A more personal perspective on this issue: This one has been a challenge for me on a variety of levels. Our office stepped in to try to improve an untenable situation, and in many ways I believe we've succeeded, at least in taking the first steps to resolve this immediate problem. But what has been difficult is this: some of those involved in the process of resolving the C of O seem to blame me for the initial problem itself, which in fact was prompted by a change in code back in 1988! Our process, therefore, exploded and expanded into the myriad issues many people face with our Land Use Code. And I agree with them! Parking is a prime example! We definitely require far more parking than necessary in many cases ... and our rules don't have enough flexibility to adjust to special circumstances ... and our rules are the same for the suburban portions of our community as they are for our more urban downtown. Through the Environment, Planning and Resource Management subcommittee chaired by my colleague, Karin Uhlich, we're tackling some of those issues within the Infill Incentive District. But our office will be working with an expanded stakeholders group to look at the citywide issues, too.

There are so many interesting events taking place in the next few weeks in Ward VI! Let me tell you about a few of them:

- Saturday, October 18th / Carondelet Get Moving Tucson: Here's a great opportunity to get some exercise and check out the historic parts of Downtown: the 4th Annual Carondelet Get Moving Tucson 5K walk, 5K run, and 10-mile run will take place *at the TCC in Downtown Tucson* on Saturday morning, October 18th. The event combines a family-friendly non-competitive walk with a competitive run. Activities include YMCA fitness games, a climbing wall, children's races, jugglers, a live band, and plenty of free food and drink. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Sunnyside High School's "Run to College" program and Carondelet Health Network's wellness programs. All participants receive an event t-shirt, and age-group and overall winners receive cash or gift certificate prizes. Registration information can be found at <http://www.azroadrunners.org/events/gmt.html> or by contacting Randy at raccetta2@cox.net.
- Sunday, October 19th / Desert Living Is Different! Book

Signing: Join us *at the Ward VI Office* from 3-5 PM to meet the young artists who helped create this newcomers' guide to Tucson. Their fabulous drawings, poems and essays will help newcomers learn more about our Sonoran Desert - its beauties and its challenges. More than 100 students from K-12 grades throughout our community had their works selected for this unique guide. In addition to meeting the artists and getting a copy of the guide, you can participate in an Environmental Fair.

- Thursday and Sunday, October 16th and 18th / Grant Road Widening Project: Learn more about the proposed alignments for Grant Road improvements between Oracle Road and Swan. A dedicated group of citizens has worked long and hard to developed these proposed alignments. For more information, go to www.grantroad.info or call 624-4727.
- Thursday, November 6th / Visit Mars!: This is early notice, but I hope you'll mark your calendars to join us from 4:30 to 6:30 to experience Mars ... and fanciful Martians! Giant images of Mars taken as part of the Phoenix Lander project based here in Tucson will adorn the walls of our Community Room *here at Ward VI*. Some will be 3-D images - and we'll provide the glasses! Meet some of the scientists involved in the project, including Peter Smith, Phoenix Principal Investigator and Thomas R. Brown Distinguished Chair of Integrated Science at the U of A. As for the Martians? His wife, Dana, is a talented ceramicist and gathered many of the scientists, support staff and friends to create their own fanciful visions of Mars. Some of those pieces will be on display as well.
- Beginning November 10th / Citywide: Residential trash and recycling collection schedules are changing! You'll receive an information flyer in your next City utility bill. Be sure to check out any changes that might affect your service. More on this closer to the change!

I guess that's it for now! Please do stay in touch! I value your input on these and any other issues that come before the City.

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