

Tuesday's Study Session was filled with topics of great importance to our community. Let me catch you up on a few of the items we discussed, starting first with the one contentious item on the agenda.

- The Rialto Block: All of us, I believe, are committed to doing everything possible to assure the Rialto Theatre the greatest possible opportunity for continued success. We all love it - and value its important role in our emerging Downtown. Where we differed was on how to get there.

Councilmember Glassman and I supported working with the Theatre foundation and the partners who own the rest of the block to create a one year lease on two critical parcels of property: 1,000 square feet within the contiguous walls of the Theatre to be developed into appropriate restroom facilities; and a 2,500 square foot area now used as Theatre office space and the Green Room for performers. Such a lease would have removed the Eviction/Condemnation controversy from the table and given both sides time to find an equitable solution.

Our motion failed. I still do not understand why! A one year lease allowed both sides to step back from the brink of eviction/condemnation. It allowed time to cool off and find a way to guarantee the Rialto's future for us all. The rental agreement could have been voided when a successful conveyance of property and/or extended lease was negotiated. Why not allow enough time to forestall potential legal action that would, in and of itself, have proven not only contentious, but expensive! I just don't think that's good for anyone involved.

So the battling threats of eviction / condemnation remain very real.

I will continue to work to find a reasonable solution that preserves our important City asset while also encouraging continued private investment in our Downtown. Let's hope we can achieve such an understanding soon and leave the fireworks for the monsoons!

- Community Key Services Dialogue: City Manager Mike Letcher presented us with an outreach/communications plan that will more proactively bring our citizens into budget discussions earlier in the process. Through a series of facilitated community meetings to be held in Ward offices and community centers throughout the City, Mr. Letcher [and we] will seek input on community priorities relating to neighborhoods, sustainability, human needs, and economic health in addition to our Core Services of Public Safety, Transportation, Parks, Water and Environmental Services.

I am pleased with this proactive outreach plan and look forward to the increased dialogue as we pursue resolution to what will be an even more difficult budget next year.

- Green Building Program: For more than one year, the Ward VI office has been working with staff and consultants to develop our City's Green Building

Program. It was built upon the County's current program, along with national LEED standards and the National Association of Home Builder's green program. Our goal was to come up with appropriate standards that incorporated the special challenges we face in our home in the Sonoran Desert. There were discussions in the Environmental Subcommittee of the Council last year that helped refine concepts ... and there is considerable interest throughout our region in the program we're developing. Council was very supportive of this plan, which will be presented for vote at our August 5th meeting. Hopefully, the City of Tucson will have created a Green Building Program that can and will be adopted by other jurisdictions in the region, allowing for greater continuity and predictability for everyone trying to help us grow in a sustainable manner.

- **Local Procurement Policies:** The Council had a discussion on the importance of buying local through our procurement policies. Bottom line costs cannot be the only factor considered when making a purchasing decision. Our policies allow points to be allotted in support of local companies. I requested that we take one additional step in assuring we incorporate Best Value Pricing, which takes into consideration the dollars that stay in our community when local companies are hired, recirculating here, rather than going to some other city. The lowest cost isn't always the best price!
- **City Courts Human Resources:** I asked for an agenda item to be added for the August 5th meeting to discuss a plan by the City Courts to establish their own human resources department. While I know the Courts have the right to do this, I don't think in these challenging economic times any department or division should be hiring anyone other than essential staff ... and no additional expenses should be incurred that aren't absolutely necessary. I'll update you after next month's discussion.

Other things are happening I'd like to share with you!

Community Generosity Abounds! Special thanks to the hundreds of people who take part in meetings at Ward VI every month for their generosity! This all started a couple of months ago when one of the many groups asked me how they could help out in these difficult times. I suggested they could bring in food for the Food Bank, toiletries for SAAF and diapers for the Diaper Bank. We sent notices to every group that uses our rooms and WOW! So far we've been able to donate 10 large boxes of food the Food Bank! We've collected boxes and bags full of diapers for children and adults ... and bags of toiletries for SAAF. [When you travel, grab those small shampoos and soaps. There are those who could really use them!] And, lest we leave out our furry friends, we've expanded our donation site to include dog and cat food for the Humane Society.

Welcome Lorraine Hernandez! Ward VI has a new member of our team. Lorraine Hernandez had worked with former Councilmember Carol West for 4 years. She's well versed on all things City, but among her special areas of emphasis will be Transportation Issues, the Arts, the U of A, and about one dozen of our Ward VI

neighborhoods. We are delighted to have her with us. But the sad part is we had to say good bye to Roger Carrillo, who was part of the Ward VI team from the day we took office. He and his wife Holly decided to move to California to provide assistance to his elderly aunt and uncle. I have tremendous admiration for Roger and his willingness to uproot himself after more than 30 years in Tucson to be there for family members he loves. We wish him and Holly well as they start their new life.

Country Club is Clean! Our office has conducted three major clean ups of Country Club from Speedway to Broadway as our first steps in 'adopting' this roadway. This morning was our final clean up to qualify for official designation through Tucson Clean and Beautiful's Adopt-a-Street program. We'll let you know when we become official ... and maybe you'd like to join us on our next clean up ... or adopt a street or park of your own!

Mark Your Calendar! The Fourth Avenue Underpass will officially open on August 20th. Look for more information on all the festivities, but it's real! It's happening! I hope you'll join us as we celebrate 4th Avenue and Downtown again being linked, this time with a modern, beautiful welcoming underpass that will serve as a gateway in both directions!

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