

Ward 6 Staff



Steve Kozachik



Ann Charles



Diana Amado



Molly Thrasher



Amy Stabler



Ward 6 - Newsletter

TUCSON FIRST

September 25, 2013

Thrifty Block

In 2006, the City, through its management of Rio Nuevo struck a deal with BP Post Investors for the sale and eventual development of a parcel of ground on Congress called the Thrifty Block. The sale was for \$100, and the City put a chunk of change into demolishing the existing building in order to make room for the development. It is the last remaining poorly drawn deal that the City put together when it was running Rio. The parcel is still empty and the original deal had insufficient language in it to cause the land to revert to City/Rio ownership.

There has been litigation over the site, and now the parties want to strike a deal that will end up in the lawsuits being washed out and the site developed. Those are good goals. My bottom line is simply this; to the developer, if you've got the money, build something. If you don't, then cut the charade and sell the land to somebody who has got the capacity to get a project moving. Carve us out of the deal and get to work.

All things being equal, that position would have been fine to land on. But all things aren't equal in this deal. There is cross-litigation sitting placing a pall over the property that would prevent any lending agency from putting a penny into it for fear of being caught up in more legal issues. And the original deal was drawn in such a way that the developer can simply sit on the land forever, leaving a dirt lot in the middle of downtown.

I had four issues of concern that I wanted addressed. What we voted on Tuesday got us most of the way there.

A) Getting something built by a certain date:

The draft we were given gave the builder 24 months to begin securing permits and a building loan on a project – then he is eligible for a free pass for a 12 month extension, only needing to show that he was moving towards permitting in order to get the extension. He can qualify for a final 12 months upon another showing of progress. I think it's pretty lame, but it's the closest thing to getting some time lines built into the project that we've seen.

B) I wanted the taxpayers interest protected:

Just because the initial agreement contained foolish give-aways shouldn't mean we're obligated to continue them into this one. There are too many builders who are active in the downtown core right now who have played by the current 'by-right' incentives for



Important Phone Numbers

Tucson Police
Department

911 or 791-4444
nonemergency

Mayor & Council
Comment Line

791-4700

Neighborhood
Resources

791-4605

Park Wise

791-5071

Water Issues

791-3242

Pima County Animal
Control

243-5900

Street Maintenance

791-3154

Planning and
Development
Services 791-5550

Southwest Gas

889-1888

Gas Emergency/
Gas Leaks

889-1888

West Nile Virus

Hotline

243-7999

Environment

Service

791-3171

Graffiti Removal

792-2489

AZ Game & Fish

628-5376

Continued: A Message From Steve

us to be giving extra credit to the student who turned in his homework late. This proposal waived annual payments for both temporary and permanent easements, as well as all fees associated with granting air rights. The value of those is in the tens of thousands of dollars over the long haul. To get the deal done, it was worth not digging in on.

C) Indemnification from future litigation:

And this is the linchpin of the whole deal. Getting everybody to the point at which we say that we're done wasting taxpayer money in court was a positive step. This deal says that we're done suing over issues related to the initial agreement. It's now history – finally.

The City has a policy that includes causing builders to invest a portion of the project costs into a local apprenticeship program. This deal also did not include that. I asked the City Attorney to make an effort to get that included.

We have too much going on of a positive nature to let this disagreement remain a blot on the progress Congress and the area is seeing. The meter's now running. We can finally circle a date on the calendar and say that without progress, the property returns to the public domain. It's the best we could do with a bad situation.

As I said above – if you've got the money, use it. If you don't, then unload the property and make your investors whole, and do the taxpayers a favor by putting somebody in the batter's box that'll swing for the fence.

Ronstadt Transit Center



We have been paying for studies of how to develop the RTC for a decade. Early this year we decided to give it another try. The M&C unanimously adopted a motion that said in part: *“Direct staff to return to the Mayor and Council within 60-90 days with a draft Request for Qualifications (RFQ) seeking a qualified development team to plan, design, construct and own/manage some components of an integrated mixed use development/transit center on this prime 4+ acre site...”*

On Tuesday, Staff brought the results of a series of widely attended scoping meetings and asked for approval to move forward with issuing the RFQ. I fully supported giving that direction. What's different now than in past tries at doing this is we now are on the verge of having the streetcar passing RTC on Congress, there has been significant public/private investment in that area and our difficulties with Rio have largely been resolved, thus opening the door for the proper use of Tax Increment Finance funding to further enhance the downtown core. I strongly disagree with those on the council who wanted to delay moving this process forward. But that was the prevailing vote; we'll wait until January before issuing the Request for Qualifications.

The timing of this will be that staff will prepare the RFQ between now and the end of the year. Also in that time, we will have the results of the operational analysis we've contracted for so any proposers will have that ridership information to consider when proposing. We will also include in the packet being sent out to prospects the results of the recent



Important Phone Numbers

stake holder meetings so they'll have a sense of the priorities of the community. Included in those meetings were representatives of downtown neighborhoods, bus riders, developers, the Downtown Tucson Partnership, the Tucson Pima County Historic Commission, ParkWise, our Transit Task Force and any others who chose to participate. Prospects will have a wide array of input to include in their responses.

I advocated for a mandatory pre-proposal conference that will cause interested proposers to come to town, see the site and hear directly from our consultant team about the nature of the feedback we've received. That process may weed out some who wouldn't have necessarily come here to learn the unique challenges RTC has. That will be just one step in what will be a very deliberative process.

Other communities have successfully developed their transit facilities. We were given six such examples, and in each case the result of the projects were inclusive of the mixed use/retail elements we included in our motion last spring. They each also retained the transit functions. We will do that, too, for multiple reasons. The most basic of those is that since the land has a component of Federal money associated with it, we are bound by law to keep transit in some form on that location.

While none of us can pre-suppose the project designs we will eventually see coming from this process, I would hope that we have an interest in maximizing some development potential, especially on the Congress side of the space. Because this involves Federal Transit money, not only do we need to retain the transit function, any revenues we realize from the project will have to go back into transit. That's a good thing. We need to find funding sources to help to offset the claims on the General Fund that Sun Tran makes each year.

The general timing of this will be short-listing the RFQ prospects next spring, getting the Request for Proposals out to that group after that and whittling down the list to a winner, hopefully by mid-2014. This will be a financially challenging piece of ground to develop. It will also present some architecturally challenging hurdles. I'm looking forward to getting things started. We as a community have tried this so many times in the past. We need to see it through this time in a way that enhances the transit riders experience at the RTC, and builds some revenue stream into our coffers to help pay for the transit system we're running.

Downtown Financial Incentive District

And speaking of private sector development, back in 2002, the City established a DFID that included some statutorily allowed incentives for development that was to occur in the downtown core. In August of this year, we directed staff to extend the District's life for another five years, and to look into expanding its footprint as a way of providing incentives to development in a wider area than just the small downtown center that is now included.

On Tuesday, staff brought back a proposal to expand the DFID to overlap with our downtown core sub-district of the Infill Incentive District. While doing that would extend the District by about a third, and take it to the west side of the freeway, I would have preferred to have it overlap with the broader Central Business District. That would have taken it much further to the north and some to the east, thereby extending our incentive package that much more broadly. There was general consensus on the Council that we should look at ways to provide the incentives being offered in this new District on an eligibility basis, not by geography. Staff will look into how we can move that idea forward.

Senator John
McCain (R)
520-670-6334

Senator Jeff
Flake (R)
520-575-8633

Congressman
Ron Barber (D)
(2nd District)
520-881-3588

Congressman
Raul Grijalva (D)
(3th District)
520-622-6788

Governor Janice
Brewer (R)
Governor of Arizona
602-542-4331
Toll free:
1-800-253-0883

State Legislators

Toll Free
Telephone:
1-800-352-8404
Internet:
www.azleg.gov

Mayor Jonathan
Rothschild
791-4201

City Infoguide
[http://
cms3.tucsonaz.gov/
infoguide](http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/infoguide)

The incentives we're now able to offer within this District include a \$10K building permit fee waiver, a construction sales tax credit for public right-of-way improvements, up to a 100% reduction in parking requirements (subject to discussion on a project by project basis – we can't make parking a free-for-all into the surrounding neighborhoods,) as well as loading, setback and landscaping requirements. I believe our having expanded the boundaries will pay dividends in the very immediate future.

Building on Success

All of these initiatives are simply building on the successes we've seen in the recent past. Those who keep harping about how bad things are simply haven't been paying attention.

Since approximately the time of my election in 2009, downtown Tucson has experienced unprecedented growth in the private sector. That includes more than 150 businesses and projects. The breakdown looks like this:

- Restaurants - 34
- Retail shops - 27
- Art and Cultural projects – 12
- Offices - 14
- Health and Wellness centers – 9
- Hi-tech businesses or business incubators – 9
- Housing projects – 8
- Bars/Nightclubs – 6
- Bakeries - 5

and two coffee shops, two salons, two schools, one craft brewery, one entertainment venue expansion and one hospitality renovation.

On the books for 2014 is yet another \$100M of private sector investments spread among 17 more projects. In the time span I'm describing, that's nearly \$600M in public/private projects. Considering that we're coming out of a huge recession, I'd say that's not a bad track record.

Grant Road Early Property Acquisition

The alignment for the expansion of Grant Road has been set. Now the RTA has begun construction at the Oracle/Grant intersection and City Staff wanted us to approve \$25M for them to move ahead with purchasing properties along the rest of the roadway that will eventually fall to the construction. That was a heavy lift for me for a few reasons.

The most basic of those reasons was that I haven't seen a policy that will prevent the City from buying up property and having it simply sit dormant, us demolish the structure on the property and then have a vacant site for years until construction begins. Some refer to that as the 'missing tooth' syndrome. I call it blight.

Included in the 'ask' is the property at Campbell and Grant that is now a Walgreens and Bookman's. It serves as a good example of what I'm trying to avoid. Knowing that the alignment is going to take about ½ of the Walgreens, they've now shut down that store and moved to 1st and Grant. So we already have an empty building, and staff is asking us to pay to buy it. Then what? Will we become landlords and try to get a short-term tenant (10 years?) until the road project knocks it down? If we buy and demo the building ourselves, the site is empty, except for the Bookman's. We're working on a Safe Harbor set of guidelines intended to avoid just this situation.

Right now on the Broadway RTA project I've written so much about, we've stopped the early acquisition process until we set that alignment. Unfortunately the City already went ahead and bought up numerous properties on Broadway, many of which are sitting empty, some with chain link fencing around them. That's not a template I wanted to see happen on Grant.

Instead of simply giving the \$25M and sending staff out to start buying up the properties, I wanted assurance that prior to any individual buy, M&C would be included for a vote. What I'll be after is to know the longer term strategy for each of the 'takes' so we don't end up



like this

Cute, but not so much for corridor development. With the commitment that no buys will be made without M&C approval, I supported the item.

On the Recruiting Trail

Last weeks' activities ended with my having taken on two initiatives in which I'll be recruiting some outside assistance in two pretty important areas. First is **pension reform**.

Let me start with the goal, and work back to the recruiting. We will not be seeing a pension proposition on the ballot this fall, but we still need to work on making changes in our Plan so that it's healthy for the long haul. I don't want to wait on the courts and the State to try to impose that change on us. Neither do I want to rely on solely in-house options. I just want to broaden the mix of what we're seeing in terms of proposed changes.

With that in mind, I'm beginning to put together a small panel of community people who know the ins and outs of municipal pensions. Once I get a few on board, I'll invite city staff to participate in an open discussion of what that group sees as possible changes. I'm not an expert, and so my role, after having brought the groups together will be to listen and learn. My hope is that the process will yield some new ideas that may not have ended up in front of M&C yet for our consideration. More on this to come.

Feel free to drop me an email if you feel you're qualified to participate in the exchange.

Next is the **Military Community Relations Committee**. After a bit of an unpleasant meeting a couple of months ago, members of the MCRC were ready to dissolve as a group. I believe if the members retool their mission and can find a way to work together towards a set of common goals, having a group of citizens working to bridge communications with Davis Monthan is a healthy thing. With that in mind, I offered to try to help them find a trained facilitator/mediator to spend an afternoon with them to sort through the past, but most importantly put together a blueprint for how they might continue to meet and keep an open dialogue going. At their meeting last week, they voted unanimously to have me try to find somebody to serve in that role. When asked, I told them that I have nobody in my back pocket waiting, so I've sent out a couple of feelers and will hope to hear a positive response soon.

As is true of the pension group, if you've got the credentials to serve in that role and would be willing to set aside a few hours on an afternoon in October to help keep this group functioning, drop me an email.

Film Incentive Update

Plans are moving ahead between Peg Johnson over at The Loft and my brother for him to come on November 10th and sit for Q&A following a screening of one of his films. He's just starting a new one – click on this link and it'll give you a little background on what's in the hopper, as well as a brief resume of some of the people who'll be working together on it:

www.kickstarter.com/projects/athenastudios/auntie-claus-the-movie

What they're doing is cutting a teaser to get producers interested in supporting the film. The latest update on what they're doing is this:

We have had tremendous 'buzz' around the film even without the pitch package and already have been speaking with Academy Award-winning film producers as we start to make contacts at the major studios.

We have been contacted by at least a dozen composers who would like to work on the film, which is tremendously exciting! We've heard some great music, including some by a five-time Emmy-winning composer.

We have also been busy getting a new scene set up with Pete Kozachik, Tim Taylor, Peter Williams and Tom Proost. It is a BIG and difficult shot that is coming up next week and it has everyone scrambling. Our FX lead and editor for the trailer, Jorge Martinez, has been preparing for the shot and focusing on compositing some practical effects into our footage along with lining up a very cool matte painting shot from artist Jackson Dryden.

I include this to show just how much goes into film production. It begins far ahead of the actual shoot. There's money to be made by attracting this industry back to Tucson.

During the same week of Pete's presentation at The Loft, the sequel to *Hot Bath and a Stiff Drink* will begin their shoot here in town. Remember, this is the group who did their first film here in January, spent 20 days on the ground and dropped about \$1.5M into our local economy when they were here. Based on the incentives offered the first time, principally by the Old Tucson folks and the County, they're giving us another try. Right now they're looking at various locations for where this next film will be shot. Last week they did auditions for acting spots, and will also be putting together a list of crew that'll need to be filled in the very near future.

This time, a group of us is hoping to be able to put a better offer on the table for them as a way of extending out into the industry the message that Tucson, Pima County and Southern Arizona are back in the film business. The VisitTucson folks have secured an independent financial analysis of what various film options are worth to the economy, and once we get what's called a *technical rider* from the *Hot Bath* production crew, we'll look at what we might be able to add to what's already on the table to sweeten the deal for them. VisitTucson has taken the lead this time in making a cash offer to help the show offset some of their costs.

For the last two legislative sessions up in Phoenix, we've gotten a sort of



response to our call for a State-wide tool kit aimed at getting us back into the conversation in the film industry. Instead of waiting on the State, we'll work within the State Constitutional gift clause's constraints and put something together locally. Bigger would be better, but we'll work with what we have and get it done.

And if the State wants 'in', any of them can sponsor a bill – it's a jobs bill and could be good for the economy State wide.

Pregnant Elephant at Reid Park Zoo



The folks at Reid Park Zoo announced that Litsemba (nickname Semba), a 24 year old African elephant, is pregnant. They confirmed it through some hormonal analyses they did recently. The birth will take place somewhere around the summer of 2014. Elephants have a 22-23 month gestation period, thus the delay.

My wife often remarks how she would have loved to have carried our daughter for that long. Well, Semba will have the honor.

This is a pretty impressive milestone for the Reid Park Zoo. The staff out there is taking extensive measures to ensure the safety of both the mom and the unborn calf. They'll work with experts from the San Diego Zoo Global, as well as the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Elephant Taxon Advisory Group. Together they'll monitor Semba's progress. Semba's no rookie to this. She had a baby back in 2007, and again in 2010.

Reid Park zoo is open from 9am until 4pm daily. Pay 'em a visit. It's a good time.

Envision Tucson Sustainable Festival

On Sunday, October 20th from 10am until about 4pm, the Reid Park band shell will play host to the third annual Envision Tucson Sustainable Festival. There'll be a combination of educational programs, and presentations/offerings by businesses that are geared towards raising awareness of how we can work together to preserve and protect our unique southwestern desert ecosystem.

Included will be a variety of food vendors, electric vehicles, demonstrations of aquaponics



and some innovative school programs showing what our kids are seeing in their classrooms. Of course the day will be sprinkled with music and speakers.

By its description you can imagine that this is certainly a family-friendly event. I'd invite you to carve out some time to stop by and see what's going on locally in this very important field. For more information on the event, you can check out this web site:

<http://tucson sustainable.org/>.

NCAA Basketball Champions

And by way of final reminder, this Friday is the Fox Theater event at which you can review the '97 Wildcat National Championship game. Present at the event will be several of the players (Miles, Donnell, A.J., Jason Terry, Mike Dickerson, Gene, Joe, and more) as well as Lute. The event is a fund raiser for both Primavera and the Blair Foundation. The doors open at 6pm and the show starts at around 7.

Here's their web site <http://97cats.com/>

Broadway Road Project

Finally, this week is the public open house/workshop related to the Broadway road project. It'll be held on Thursday from 6pm until 8:30pm out at the Sabbar Shrine / 450 S. Tucson Blvd.

The Citizen Task Force members will be on hand for conversation, but the presentations and interaction will be with the consultant team and with those of you who have not been directly included in the project briefings until now. The schedule of the evening is something like this:

- 6:05 PM Hear a brief update about the project, the current process, and schedule
- 6:10PM Meet your Broadway Citizens' Task Force
- 6:20PM Learn through a brief presentation by project staff:
 - About recent project work completed
 - What street width alternatives are being considered
 - How the Community Workshop Activities will inform the project work and future roadway design
- 6:40PM Participate in Community Workshop small group discussions and planning
- 7:40PM Hear brief report-outs by each small group

We so often hear from groups and individuals near the end of a project or process by which we change policies that they never had a chance to get involved. Open houses such as this represent that chance. I hope you can make the time to take part.

Sincerely,



Steve Kozachik
Council Member, Ward 6
ward6@tucsonaz.gov

Events Calendar

What's happening this week in the Downtown, 4th Avenue, and Main Gate areas . . .

Rialto Theatre, 318 E. Congress St.

Saturday September 28th **LOCAL LOVE-A-PALOOZA** (Local Music and Speakers)

6:30 PM doors / 7 PM showtime all ages

www.RialtoTheatre.com

Fox Theatre, 17 W. Congress St.

Friday, September 27th, **'97 Wildcats Championship Game**. Proceeds Benefit Blair Charity Group and Primavera Foundation

7:00 PM Regular admission

www.FoxTucsonTheatre.org

Living Streets Alliance and American Institute of Architects Present: Architecture on Wheels Hike & Bike Tours

Sunday, September 29th, 9:00-11:00am

1200 East University Boulevard (Flagpole at Old Main)

FREE for LSA and AIA members! \$15 for non-members

1) **Walking Tour of University of Arizona** buildings, led by R. Brooks Jeffery, Director,

2) Drachman Institute

2) **Bicycle Tour of University Boulevard.**, Fourth Avenue, and surrounding neighborhoods, led by Jennifer Levstik, Planner, City of Tucson Historic Preservation Office

3) **Bicycle Tour of Sam Hughes Neighborhood**, 3rd Street Bikeway and 6th Street, led by Demion Clinco, Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation and Arizona Senator Steve Farley.

RSVP: info@livingstreetsalliance.org

Ongoing

Loft Cinema 3233 E. Speedway

www.loftcinema.com/

Temple of Music and Art, 330 S. Scott Ave.

"The Importance Of Being Earnest"

Written by Oscar Wilde, Directed by Stephen Wrentmore

September 14 – October 5, 2013

www.arizonatheatre.org

Tucson Museum of Art, 140 N. Main Ave.

Ongoing exhibition: "Desert Grasslands," and "Art + The Machine"

www.TucsonMuseumofArt.org

Children's Museum Tucson, 200 S. 6th Ave.

Tuesday - Friday: 9:00am - 5:00pm; Saturdays & Sundays: 10:00am - 5:00pm

www.childrensmuseumtucson.org

Jewish History Museum. 564 S. Stone Ave.

Open Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday, 1:00-5:00 and Friday, Noon to 3:00pm
Special hours for school and group tours, for more information call 670-9073

www.jewishhistorymuseum.org

Meet Me at Maynards

A social walk/run through the Downtown area

Every Monday, rain or shine, holidays too!

Maynards Market and Kitchen, 400 N. Toole Avenue, the historic train depot

Check-in begins at 5:15pm.

www.MeetMeatMaynards.com

Arizona State Museum – Woven Wonders (beginning April 28)

The Arizona State Museum is debuting a sample of 500 pieces from the world’s largest collection of Southwest American Indian basketry (over 25,000 pieces). Visit

www.statemuseum.arizona.edu for more information.

UA Mineral Museum – Ongoing

“100 Years of Arizona’s Best: The Minerals that Made the State”

Southern Arizona Transportation Museum

414 N Toole Ave.

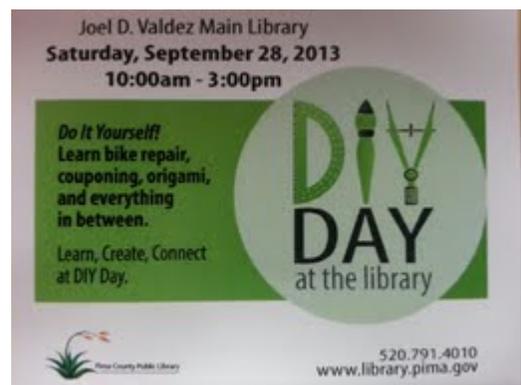
Tuesday – Thursday, Sunday: 1100am - 3:00pm; Friday & Saturdays: 10:00am - 4:00pm

<http://www.tucsonhistoricdepot.org/>

Downtown Lecture Series

This fall, the UA College of Social and Behavioral Sciences will present the first annual Downtown Lecture Series - five talks given by UA Faculty exploring topics that shape our everyday lives. In this year’s series, faculty will investigate “happiness” and present research from their diverse fields of study, including sociology, anthropology, psychiatry, philosophy, and integrative medicine which could help us to lead happier – and healthier – lives. All lectures will be on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 at the Fox Theatre starting October 16. For more information visit: www.downtownlectures.arizona.edu.

DIY DAY @ Main Library



For other events in the Downtown/4th Avenue/Main Gate area, visit these sites:

www.MainGateSquare.com

www.FourthAvenue.org

www.DowntownTucson.org

Empty Bowls

HELP SUPPORT THE
Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona



A luncheon to fight hunger!

Friday
November 8, 2013
11 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Hosted by
Mulcahy YMCA/Kino Center
2805 E. Ajo Way
(turn north on E. Ajo Way on Forgeous Ave.)



Choose from a wide selection of hand-crafted ceramic designs donated by the Southern Arizona Clay Artists (SACA) and other local artists, Marjon Ceramics Inc. and Laguna Clay Co.

Purchase your bowl of choice for \$15

Sample a wide variety of soups from local restaurants and breads for lunch.



Marjon Ceramics Inc.



Community Food Bank
of Southern Arizona



More information: contact Susan Grunebaum at susangrunebaum@me.com