

Ward 6 Staff



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Council Member



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Ward 6 – Newsletter

JANUARY 20, 2011

A Message from Steve

Today's council meeting was our first since the events of January 8th - events that both tossed our community into a state of emotional disarray, and events that drew our community together with a sense of unity of spirit. I have stated that the reaction of the residents of Tucson have made me proud to be associated with this City. Ghandi is quoted as having said "the culture of a community resides in the heart and soul of its people." The heart and soul of Tucson is shown in the outpouring of love and compassion for all of the victims of the shooting incident. That's our culture and the national media is taking notice.

We hit the ground running today with a host of significant issues. Several of these will take us through the spring to come to closure. One of these relates to the issue of how to appropriately develop housing - most generally student housing - in neighborhoods Zone R-1. There are a variety of moving parts in this issue: behavior issues, a decision pending by the Zoning Administrator that will address appropriate uses of housing, architecturally related questions over which the City has been notified a lawsuit will be filed and the overarching question of how we as a community address the fact that there are 38,000 students attending the University, many of whom are looking for places to live. Lots of competing rights to respect, and lots of competing legal arguments to be resolved. We'll be kicking this one around for a while, and keeping our eye on any legal decisions that are given that might serve as road maps for our future decision-making.

We also took time today to review some challenges involved with the design of the Wal-Mart that is proposed to be going into the old Macy's building in El Con. What we knew before today's meeting was that there is an existing development agreement, the terms of which allow for the Wal-Mart to be developed on the footprint of the old store. As long as they comply with that constraint, the City is not in a legal position to interfere with the process. The City will oversee the design to ensure that it is compliant with the guidelines drawn into the El Con development agreement. On a parallel path, I have already expressed my concern to both Wal-Mart and to the El Con management over some of the operations and design components that appear to be a part of Wal-Mart Corporate's plans. Specifically, I asked that they reconsider the planned 24 hours of operation and the west-facing orientation of the storefront. Having had no success in getting them to reconsider on either point, today the rest of the Council joined in support of asking



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

Continued: A Message From Steve

Wal-Mart and El Con to accommodate those requests. If either or both parties wants to start off on the right foot with their neighbors and customers who live in the area, showing some willingness to give on those issues would be a wonderful public relations move. I thank the rest of the Council for standing together in asking for this consideration.

The budget will be another one of the issues with which we'll be dealing for the bulk of the spring. Today we received the Governor's economic forecast. I believe it's aggressive in its projections. If I'm right, our budget condition may be more serious than what we are now being led to believe. I will be asking for the input at a future study session from other economic experts so we have some comparison data before we make any decisions for FY 2012. However, even if the numbers coming out of Phoenix are accurate, we are still left with a budget hole that is daunting. Nearly everything needs to be on the table for our consideration - "nearly" everything. Today I made the motion to remove from our discussions the elimination of low-income fares in our transit system. We will have to adjust them, but I don't believe any of us on the Council will be agreeing to totally eliminate them. In an effort to ease any concerns on the part of the citizens who rely on those fares, I wanted to take that item out of the discussion. I understand and respect the position of those who disagreed with me; that is, let's not do this budget piece by piece, but look at it holistically. My position was that if we know we're not doing it, get rid of the item. The vote was 3-3, so my motion failed. I chided Council Member Uhlich afterwards that perhaps that's a nice piece of symbolism; that is, in the midst of us all talking about civility in discourse, I lost a vote to her 3-3. This Council will work together in the days ahead in the spirit of finding solutions. It's not a sprint to the finish line.

We ended the night with another sign of unity on what could be a volatile topic. The State, during the last legislative session, passed a bill that makes it legal to carry loaded guns into public parks. In the same sense that I believe in the 1st Amendment rights of free speech that come with some controls related to time, place and manner, I believe in the 2nd Amendment right to keep and bear arms, with some controls as to time, place and manner - in both cases to protect the public safety. I know the arguments - "if people don't know who's carrying, they'll be less likely to start shooting..." - and I don't buy the argument that therefore we open things up as the State legislature did. With that in mind I probed the City Attorney asking what controls we might adopt to help put some moderate controls on handguns in our public parks. I was disappointed to learn that we cannot adopt measures that would have the effect of superseding the State's intent of pretty much freely allowing guns in our parks. I don't know if they have a problem in Mesa with the proliferation of incidents of people in their parks being held at gunpoint, but we don't in Tucson.

I stated that this strikes me as a solution looking for a problem, and if we cannot prevent what the State has passed, the problem might emerge in unintended consequences. I am grateful to those of my colleagues who joined me in simply refusing to adopt the State's language into our local ordinance. We're legally bound to comply, but we're not legally bound to vote in a way that gives the appearance that we agree.

So, we're off and running again. Our hearts remain heavy with the thoughts of the victims who we have lost, and those who are still in recovery. Our prayers continue to be lifted up on their behalf. And our focus changes back to the need to address the wide variety of issues we face together as a community. We will, and we appreciate your support.

Sincerely,



Steve Kozachik
Council Member, Ward 6

Iskash*TAA Refugee Harvesting Network Donate Your Tree's Fruit!

Iskash*TAA is collecting fruit from your trees! Can eat your fruit fast enough? Don't let your fruit go to waste. They pick up, harvest and distribute your fruit. The fruit helps feed families in need in our community. Please contact Barbara Eiswerth (520) 440-0100 or email: harvest@fruitmappers.org You can also visit: <http://www.fruitmappers.org/> to learn more information.



TREES FOR TUCSON PROGRAM

Tucson Clean & Beautiful distributes low-cost desert-adapted trees for area residents to plant at their home and in community public spaces through the Trees for Tucson program, now entering its 22nd year. Trees for Tucson is now accepting applications throughout 2011 for home shade trees as well as community project requests on a first-come, first-served basis.

To qualify for our Home Shade Tree Program, residents must be customers of Tucson Electric Power Co, and agree to plant the trees within 15 feet of their home on the west, south or east side of the home. Residences built in 1979 or earlier qualify for a maximum of four trees, and newer homes built in the 1980s or later qualify for up to two trees. Applications are accepted one time per calendar year, per residence.

Visit <http://www.tucsoncleanandbeautiful.org/> or call (520) 791-3109 for more information.

Southern Arizona Buffelgrass Coordination Center Announces Beat Back Buffelgrass Day 2011

Last year, SABCC and PAG enjoyed a great turnout for Beat Back Buffelgrass Day with over 500 people participating at 20 different locations around the Valley. This year, they have engaged the University of Arizona Softball Team and Coach Mike Candrea to help recruit volunteers and pull buffelgrass on Saturday, February 5th, 2011.

You can get more information at <http://www.buffelgrass.org/> or contact Linda Brigham at (520) 626-8307 or email Linda.brigham@buffelgrass.org

The 15th Annual Coyote Classic Golf Tournament Benefiting the Tucson Torch Run for Special Olympics

Sunday, January 30th at Tucson National Resort. 1 p.m. is first tee time. You can view information and download the registration form at:

<http://www.specialolympicsarizona.org/15th-annual-coyote-classic-golf-tournament>

Dillinger Days in Tucson – January 21, January 22

Hotel Congress celebrates the capture of Public Enemy #1, John Dillinger, with re-enactments, vintage cars, live music, tours, speakeasy, period films and family friendly carnival. Hotel Congress, 322 E. Congress St. 622-8848,
www.hotelcongress.com

Email us at: ward6@tucsonaz.gov