

TRRG Annual Meeting, April 29, 2017

The Annual Meeting was opened following lunch at 12:23 pm.

1. Ruth Beeker presented an overview of the day's agenda. Ruth noted that this is our 4th Annual Meeting. Introduced the members of the Board who were present (Oscar Gandy, JD Garcia, Lisa Jones, Barbara Lehmann, Bonnie Poulos, and Kris Yarter).

2. Ruth introduced the first presentation, which she noted would also be TRRG's major focus for the coming year, the Planning and Development Services Department (PDSD). She introduced our two guests, Albert Elias, Assistant City Manager and Lynne Birkinbine, Deputy Director of PSDS. Ruth read a [letter to TRRG from the City Manager, Mike Ortega](#).

Mr. Elias spoke first describing his extensive experience in different departments in the City, prior to his becoming Assistant City Manager. He noted that this is a moment of great change-- cultural, organizational, resource, and process changes taking place in the city. One feature of these changes is a rather dramatic reduction in force [which might be seen as a twin-edged sword; loss of institutional memory on one hand, the entrance of new ideas on the other]. The changes are across departments and functional centers within the city government. Many of these changes involve the combination, or consolidation of previously separate departments and functions, many of which were noted. Reference was made to the brief tenure of the Director of PSDS, Manjeet Ranu, who resigned after two months for another opportunity. It was suggested that during his brief time with the city, he helped us recognize many of the opportunities for improvement that we may have overlooked, and Elias suggested that many of these will be explored.

Ms. Birkinbine then spoke to us, first making it clear that she knows this city well on the basis of her tenure as a resident and city employee. Her assessment of the current state of PSDS was quite critical, especially from the perspective of people needing to get actions taken in a timely manner. Part of the problems are organizational, or structural, seen as an absence of an integrated system without a centralized procedural record. Added to this, she noted that the city is actually quite busy, with many more projects being developed within the city, in comparison with the low level of development activity in the county. As such, the city is looking at partnering with the county on planning and development projects. A primary focus in PSDS will be on "process improvement"; something that should be transformed if and when electronic submittal of plans and proposals is initiated.

An extended and quite lively question and answer period followed. Among the items explored in detail were the following: 1) the kinds of resources needed and being invested in the city's planning activities—land use, regulation and zoning; 2) public engagement; 3) capital planning.

In response, Mr. Elias noted that: 1) land use, regulation, zoning—this needs expertise, 2) advanced, long range planning, requires different skills and knowledge [policy goals and objectives—which we aren't doing very much, 3) public engagement and capital planning. He noted that capital planning simply is not happening; no long term plans, no resources that would lead entities to invest in planning, with Plan Tucson being cited as a prime example—a vision, with no plans associated with those ideals.

There was also an extended discussion about the process of changing codes, and implementing them, and the challenges related to interpretation of terms within the codes that vary across time and location, especially as they relate to the original intentions behind the latest change in the codes.

3. A brief break in the Annual Meeting was taken before a special meeting to address the Revision of the TRRG Bylaws.

4. The Bylaws Revision Meeting was initiated by Ruth

Ruth Beeker described the revision committee's process, and our goals for this meeting. Using a power-point presentation Ruth identified major changes in the document and noted the rationale for the changes being recommended.

A motion to accept the Revised Bylaws as submitted by the Committee was properly moved and seconded. A question was raised about Article III, Section 5, Rules of Procedure, suggesting that it was missing. An amendment to correct the omission was introduced and, and accepted, and [the Revised Bylaws were approved without objection](#). [Upon review, it was noted that Section 5 was actually included, but its title was not Bold-faced, and thus did not stand out. The secretary, corrected the error, and adjusted the document, noting the date of approval].

The special meeting was ended 1:59 PM

The TRRG Business Meeting was convened.

A. Board Election. Bonnie Poulos identified herself and Tina Pacheco as the Nominating Committee. She noted that the committee checked the present board members whose terms were expiring to see if they wanted to stay on the board, and asked others if they wanted to run. Ruth Beeker, Oscar Gandy, Bill Ford (not present) and Kris Yarter agreed to stand for re-election. Joan Hall has agreed to join the Board if elected. A motion was made, seconded, and approved without objection to elect the slate of (5) Board Members as nominated.

B. Barbara Lehman presented the Treasurer's report. She noted that we are "in the black" with a balance of \$1,335.21. She noted the declining rate of new member enrollments over time (81+10, +15, +2) and stated that TRRG currently has 110 members and 33 friends. She noted that our expenses were for such items as web posting, postage, etc. She added that donations were ~\$900, with 61 membership renewals.

A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made and seconded. A question was asked about the nature of expenses, and reference to bank service charges and checks was made. The motion for approval was passed without objection.

C. A discussion of 2016-2017 Focus Topics identified as “Ended” was begun by Ruth Beeker, with [projected slides](#) for guidance. Ruth noted the rationale for the three categories used for these activities by TRRG committees (action, monitoring, and support) that would be ended or continued.

1. JD Garcia gave a brief report of the Public Participation Committee’s efforts, he distributed copies of his report. Noted the role of M&C in responding, with an [administrative directive](#) (instructions to the staff). JD noted the debt we owed to Steve Kozachik in getting this directive issued. He concluded by noting that “we’ve picked the low hanging fruit.” Much remains to be done in this area.

2. Bonnie Poulos reported on the Charter Review Committee’s (CRC) activity. The Charter Review Committee was a TRRG monitoring project. Bonnie chaired the committee for the second year of its operation. The CRC focused on two primary issues: matters concerning the city’s financial status, and on the City’s form of elections. The Mayor and Council accepted the final report from the committee, whose work is now complete. Since the 9th circuit court ruled in favor of the City of Tucson on the form of elections, a ballot initiative to change the form of elections was not put forward for a vote. There were three financial issues addressed in the report from the committee. Of those, the M&C chose to put a 0.5 cent city sales tax tied to specific projects (road repair and fire and police equipment and facilities support) on a special election ballot, that was just mailed out to voters (due back by May 16).

3. Ruth Beeker reported on the “Public Participation in Transportation Planning” topic, which had been placed on the TRRG agenda by Don Ijams. While there was considerable interest in the topic, neither of the board members identified initially wanted to be the chair of this committee. The committee met three times, but the motion to approve the committee’s proposal statement of purpose was tabled at the October 27th meeting of the Board.

D. Continuing Focus Topics for 2017-2018.

1. Kris Yarter discussed the Code Enforcement (CE) committee’s status. She used a [detailed slide show](#) about concerns regarding code enforcement. She suggested that committee members were feeling more successful, despite the budget cuts CE was facing. A number of important initiatives were noted, including the following: 1) Met with many city staff, and officials including Carlos De LaTorre. 2) Steve Kozachik also supported bringing representatives from the city of Mesa, AZ to speak with the committee about their approach to CE. 3) Followed-up with meeting with M. Ortega and attorney Rankin to see if we could model Mesa’s approach to CE. 4) The committee expects a new policy manual to be finalized before long. The city’s CE group is part of Environmental Services/Customer Service. Kris was appointed by Steve Kozachik to ESAC, Environmental Services Advisory Committee. Many more positive responses from the CE group were reported.

2. Colette Altaffer reported on Boards, Committees and Commissions (BCCs). She noted some recent progress with regard to BCCs, achieved in part with Amy Stabler’s help from the Ward 6 Office. According to Colette, the Mayor seems to want to place BCCs higher on the agenda of

M&C, raising the visibility of these BCCs. She noted several initiatives in that regard, including the decision that BCCs will get time on the schedule of the M&C meeting to present reports.

3. Judith Anderson noted some of the difficulties associated with regard to Neighborhood Services Enhancement, including the fact that there are no scheduled resources available for this kind of support at the present time. The latest Neighborhood Huddle was canceled as a consequence. Neighborhood Enhancement appears not to be a priority within the city, at this time. She distributed copies of “capacity building resources” that have been identified.

D. New Focus Topics for 2017-2018

1. Ruth Beeker described City/TRRG relations with the University of Arizona, especially in relation to Campus Community Relations Committee (CCRC) concerns. A current issue surrounds getting the University to bring the process governing the Honors College development back on track. Diana Lett, President of Feldman’s Neighborhood Association and member of the CCRC, has been working with the University in relation to the Honors College construction plans and noted the failure of key stakeholders to follow the rules for making decisions about construction, and suggests that a lawsuit seems likely to emerge unless the University decides to follow the rules.

2. City-regulated signage: Ruth Beeker identified this issue and her role in monitoring the public process. She linked it to the problem of PDSD no longer doing planning; instead, seeming to be just stamping proposals sent to them by developers. Action by TRRG alerted Mayor and Council to the need for a public process concerning changes to the Sign Code. TRRG members were asked to consider what role there is for TRRG in trying to get PDSD to do real planning. Reference was made to the utilization of a map included in Plan Tucson that was not the product of an official planning process involving official approval and which has a disclaimer on it that it is not to be used for planning purposes or as justification for action by the city. This limitation is consistently being ignored by PDSD staff. It was suggested that the City needs a new Director for PDSD who is responsive to the residents as stakeholders, not only to the developers.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10PM

This draft has been respectively submitted to the Board by the Secretary, April 30, 2017, and revised May 3rd, 2017.