

Sierra Vista City
Council Work Session
Minutes

June 25, 2024

Mayor McCaa called the June 11, 2024, City Council Work Session to order at 3:00 p.m., Council Chambers, City Hall, 1011 N. Coronado Drive, Sierra Vista, Arizona.

Mayor Clea McCaa – present
Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn Umphrey – present
Council Member William Benning – present
Council Member Gregory Johnson – present
Council Member Angelica Landry – present
Council Member Marta Messmer - present
Council Member Mark Rodriguez – absent

Others Present:

Chuck Potucek, City Manager
Victoria Yarbrough, Assistant City Manager
Chris Hiser, Police Chief
Laura Wilson, Leisure, Parks, and Library Director
Sharon Flissar, Public Works Director
Matt McLachlan, Community Development Director
David Felix, Chief Financial Officer
Jennifer Dillaha, Budget Officer/Management Analyst II
Jill Adams, City Clerk
Mark Slania, Attorney for the Sierra Vista IDA

2. Presentation and Discussion:

A. June 27, 2024 Council Meeting Agenda Items ([agenda attached](#))

Mayor McCaa stated that the agenda starts with the call to order, roll call, invocation led by Pastor Greg Rowles, God is Good Church, and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Benning followed by a proclamation declaring Boys and Girls Club Week.

In response to Mayor McCaa, Mr. Potucek stated that the legislature sine die last week and that occurred without any major changes to the revenue structure. There are some sweeps of airport funds that the City would have used for projects, but until the Airport Master Plan is done, the City would not have had any; therefore, the City is not impacted. He also stated that as of the morning, the City of Clerk informed him that the quotes for the City's insurance premiums came in and are running a quarter \$250,000 over last year's, which has a budget impact. Fortunately, there are a couple of ambulances that are being delivered on Friday, June 28, 2024, and are in the budget as carryover items. Therefore, there is an offset and staff will make those changes to the final budget, but it does not impact anything that Council is doing with regards to the tentative budget approval.

Item 2.1 Discussion and Possible Approval of the Work Session Minutes of June 10, 2024 – There was no discussion.

Item 2.2 Discussion and Possible Approval of the Work Session Minutes of June 11, 2024 – There was no discussion.

Item 2.3 Discussion and Possible Approval of the Regular City Council Meeting Minutes of June 13, 2024 – There was no discussion.

Item 2.4 Discussion and Possible Approval of Resolution 2024-041, Designating David J. Felix, Chief Financial Officer, as the person authorized to sign and submit the City's Annual Expenditure

Limitation Report for FY 2025 – There was no discussion.

Public Hearing Item 3 Discussion and Possible Approval of Resolution 2024-042, Approval and Adoption of VISTA 2040

Mr. McLachlan stated that this is the product of many meetings and consultations over the last 12 months. The Vista 2040 Plan represents the fifth update to the General Plan since it was originally adopted in 1965. Under State Law, the City must either readopt the existing Plan or adopt a new Plan, and staff is proposing the latter in this case.

The commissions that Council appointed have all endorsed the final draft that will be presented at the third and final hearing on Thursday, June 27, 2024. On June 11, 2024, the Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing and voted unanimously to adopt the Plan pursuant to the findings contained in the staff memo.

A good general plan constitutes one that gets approved by the voters and in that regard, the Vista 2040 Plan will be on the General Election ballot on November 5, 2024, and staff hopes and expects the Plan to be approved without any controversy based on the processes gone through. It is a well vetted document. In 2014, the Plan passed by 58 percent approval. However, 10 percent of the voters skipped the question altogether. Therefore, staff is going to do its best to inform the public of the contents of the General Plan. Staff understands that it is a big document to have somebody pick up and read through the entire document, but staff will do its best to boil it down into a digestible format before November 5, 2024.

The work on the General Plan started early. In late 2,000 through 2,001, staff met with the Planning and Zoning Commission over the course of five meetings to do a chapter-by-chapter review of the current General Plan, Vista 2030 and then presented the final evaluation and appraisal report to the Council at a work session in February 2022. That initial work helped frame the direction of the proposed Plan. The update involved a new interactive approach by working through the commissions, where each were assigned one or more of the elements to review and comment. Breaking the Plan down into chunks based on their respective interest areas was a wise way to engage citizen volunteers that proved helpful in setting the ultimate direction.

Mr. McLachlan thanked the staff and council liaisons for shepherding the process to make it a more meaningful Plan. It is a less than perfect science trying to predict what lies ahead, especially when the economy is so heavily influenced by federal defense spending. Therefore, it is all an educated guess, and the Plan is based on the best available data and analysis found in existing adopted plans and studies as well as other secondary sources. The projected population growth has slowed down from the current one percent annual change to 1/4 percent annual growth. It is expected to reach 48,000 people by 2040 which represents the 2,720 person-increase over the 2020 census figure. The County is projected to grow at a slightly slower rate topping 130,000 people by the end of the planning period. While it is a comfortable position not to be overwhelmed by growth, as pointed out during the budget presentation, the state shared revenue is affected given the relative population growth to the major metros in the state. Sierra Vista is the 27th largest city, one spot behind Bullhead City and one spot ahead of Prescott which means that Sierra Vista is going to have to invest in marketing to attract the attention of the national companies that are looking to invest in faster growing cities throughout the state.

There are many factors that influence development patterns, a relative location in the state, transportation access, infrastructure, build out, economic conditions, land use and development regulations, market trends, and social dynamics. Sierra Vista City's limits have grown considerably since its founding back in 1956 when the boundaries covered two square miles. Currently the City's limits cover 152 square miles, which makes Sierra Vista the ninth largest city in terms of land area in the state. The largest chunk is Fort Huachuca that was annexed in 1971 and encompasses approximately 115 acres, or 3/4 of the City.

Future City expansion is guided by the City's annexation policy that establishes priorities and

guidelines for conducting annexations. Over the past 10 years, the City has completed six annexations, bringing in 100 acres into the city limits. The priority focus has been placed on the enclave areas. The jagged City's limit lines make service delivery inefficient when there is a need to look at a map to know whether the property is in the City or the County, which is the case in Fry Townsite. In 2015, the annexation of the Sulger neighborhood was completed to eliminate that confusion. The City has more than enough territory within its current boundary to accommodate the growth projections without expanding its boundary. However, most of this land is currently unplatted and does not have infrastructure in place.

In response to Council Member Benning, Mr. McLachlan stated that pink areas on the map are the enclaves that are surrounded by the City's limits. The undeveloped areas outside have been identified as potential targets for annexation based on the 2008 policy. The purple areas are previously developed commercial areas, and the previously developed residential areas are shown in yellow. State and federal land account for 90 percent of the territory within the City's limits. If this property is removed, there are 10,000 acres in private hands or municipal use. Municipal and county facilities comprise just under 2,000 acres within the City's limits.

The City has done a good job citing its parks and securing land along its washes for stormwater conveyance. The challenge in the future will be addressing the public facility needs in the southeast quadrant of the City. Over the next 15 to 20 years, the City is expecting to see most of the future growth.

A slide was shown of the existing commercial and industrial lands within the City that make up the City's tax base which together comprise 900 acres. The City was largely developed during the automobile age following strict commercial development patterns along the major roadways with no discernible downtown. The epicenter is the Four Corners area where the highest traffic volumes are located. Over the past seven years, the City has been averaging over 20,000 square feet of nonresidential development and if this trend continues, the City can expect 350,000 square feet of new commercial and industrial development by the end of the planning within the commercial industrial zoning districts.

Existing residential development occupies 3,600 acres of land within the City, which represents over 1/3 of the land held in private ownership. According to the census figures, there are over 20,000 homes within the community and about 3/4 of the housing stock is comprised of single-family units followed by multi-family apartments which account for another fifth of the housing stock. About five percent are manufactured homes that are located within the City's manufactured home subdivisions, Cloud 9, Sulger, Fry Townsite, and within park settings on the land in private hands with over 3,000 acres vacant. Almost 2/3 of the land is within the Tribute Specific Plan area located east of the highway north of Buffalo Soldier Trail that is planned for a mix of housing types and community shopping areas. There are also several scattered sites throughout the community, and some are within existing platted subdivisions that are readily available for development. The City anticipates that long term development will largely occur within the master planned areas of the City. This provides the City with some predictability on how the growth pattern will evolve in the decades to come. The City anticipates that the predominant housing type to remain as single-family detached on small to medium lot sizes, which is what the community prefers. According to the surveys, the ARL Workman projects that are currently under construction will likely capture a significant amount of the housing demand through the planning period. These two subdivisions contain 434 lots at 2.4 persons per household. These neighborhoods could potentially accommodate around 1,000 people, about 40 percent of the City's projected growth between 2024 and 2040.

A map was shown that portrayed the future land use pattern that serves as a legal basis for the City's Zoning Map. Staff is proposing amendments to roughly 85 sites to resolve inconsistencies between the City's future Land Use Map and the Zoning Atlas. The City also has a web app posted to the City's website on the GIS homepage where people can scroll to see where those changes are to occur. In no case is the City lowering the allowable densities or intensities. In most cases the City is planning the properties again to be consistent with the City Zoning Atlas. In coordination with the State Land Department, the City has removed some open space designations along the washes

based on a change in State Law that restricts the application of open space uses on state land, property, or private property without the owner's consent. The City's development regulations will restrict development and provide setbacks along drainage ways to accommodate stormwater demands from future projects. The goals and strategies of the Land Use Element are structured to support safe and walkable neighborhoods, healthy community, commercial districts, a sense of place and emphasis on good urban design, quality parks and open space, and mix of land uses and housing types. An emphasis is on taking advantage of infrastructure where it is already in place through promoting compact infill development opportunities. This will require coordination and cooperation between the public and private sectors in fostering an environment supportive of private investment.

Community redevelopment is one of the hardest things that local governments can take on their infrastructure challenges. There are market challenges, and it is not uncommon to be confronted by community opposition when trying to make changes. Most of the work over the last 10 years has been focused on fixing the basics, getting sites off septic and on to sewer, fixing drainage problems, filling in sidewalk gaps, adding streetlights, putting in ADA ramps, and improving accessibility in those neighborhoods. The City ramped up code enforcement to deal with the problem properties dragging down neighborhoods. The City is also making sure that rental housing is safe and decent and is now offering grants and other incentives to entice private development to the City's redevelopment areas. The headwinds that are faced are the continuing apathetic property owners, the presence of deteriorated buildings, and site improvements that are unappealing, odd-shaped parcels, non-conforming parking and access, and banks scaling back on commercial loans. The Plan calls for the City to stay on top of vacancy rates and staff goes through the business inventory that is reviewed and updated on a semiannual basis, which is available on the City's website. Staff can track vacancy rates on a sub area basis to determine the health of the commercial areas, continuing to shore up and upgrade public infrastructure and facilities to improve quality of life.

Encouraging special events to bring people into the City's West End and parks will continue to be a focus and supporting placemaking initiatives that improve the image and vitality of the redevelopment areas.

Sierra Vista has a range of housing options for all income strata. The City is one of the most affordable metros in the nation, which is attractive for economic development folks. The focus is on making sure that the housing is safe and decent, and neighborhoods stay livable through enforcing the City's minimum property maintenance codes. The goals and strategies are aimed at supporting neighborhood improvement initiatives, maintaining compatibility, providing for suitable land use transitions, using buffering, investing in public facilities, and infrastructure to bring up to current standards, fostering housing choice by offering a broad spectrum of zoning district options, which is interesting when looking at the neighborhoods being developed. About a third of the City's multi-family zoning district is being developed with small lot single family based on the smaller setbacks, which have been amended to accommodate smaller setbacks in other zoning districts. The City is seeing a market trend of people wanting lower maintenance properties without the bother of doing yard work.

There has been a lot of great work done by the City's Economic Development Team in recent years to build upon the City's assets and strengths, particularly the airport. A key focus is building upon the last iteration of the Plan for Prosperity developed in 2018 which is currently undergoing an update process. They include promoting the City and the region as a tourist destination, focusing on sporting events, fostering a culture of entrepreneurship, collaborating with educational institutions to equip the local workforce, business attraction and retention, and revitalizing the West End.

The Transportation and Circulation Element focuses on all modes of transportation, bike, pedestrian, vehicle transit, and the airport. Many of the findings and recommendations in this element flow from the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan that focuses on concurrency management, making sure the roadways operate at an acceptable level of service, and provide good circulation to and through the community. The City is also focused on roadway maintenance as part of the general operations, which is a high priority of the community as revealed through the surveys. The main challenge there,

is the drop in her funding that falls below what is needed to keep up with the maintenance needs across the entire community. The Public Works' staff does a good job prioritizing what gets done using their Pavement Conditions Inventory software. The goals and strategies of the General Plan focus on improving roadway design to accommodate all modes of transportation in a stress-free and safe manner, providing complete streets as a central tenet of livable communities. There they were considered during the major update to the City's Land Development Code through the Roadway Design Manual that was approved this year. The focus is to continue to fine tune the transit routes to better serve the public, which is experiencing record ridership since the free fare was implemented earlier this year and implementing the recommendations of the Airport Master Plan to maximize its potential and to serve as another economic engine for the City's growth, a key focus in future years.

The General Plan will continue to be strong on the environment and making sure to not lose the essence of why people are attracted to Sierra Vista in the first place. This chapter provides good background information on past and current efforts to conserve water and energy. The goals and strategies support opportunities to maximize renewable resources, reduce waste through reuse and recycling, encourage alternative modes of travel, manage land uses to protect the natural functions of the floodplain, maintain high air quality standards, and ensure water conservation and quality protection.

The Parks and Open Space Element borrows heavily from the Parks Master Plan that was developed three years ago. Every park was assessed relative to its existing condition, needs, and developed a Capital Improvements Program for the Council to consider over the next decade. The overarching goals and strategies are intended to offer and promote a full range of park and recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities in the community. They will continue to focus on leveraging partnerships, facilitating sports tourism an economic driver, enhancing the range of park experiences, both passive and active, and ensuring parks are accessible and well maintained in a creating a beautiful setting that respects cultural landscapes, natural resources, and the overall environment.

The City prides itself on the level and quality services it offers to residents. The central mission is to be proactive, responsive, and effective. The City has top notch law enforcement that meets or exceeds accreditation for law enforcement agencies and standards. The Fire Department does the same with the National Fire Protection Standards. The City is well prepared for natural disasters and is always looking to be more proactive and improve readiness.

The City's public library is the best-looking building and what is inside its walls is even more impressive with the diverse programming that is offered. The City offers a business-friendly approach to development when it advances community objectives. The City is respectful of the natural environment and citing of its public facilities and have implemented low-impact development projects to improve stormwater design and always looking to improve the processes to provide high quality customer service, a Strategic Plan objective.

Arts, culture, and humanities are essential for community vitality, uniqueness, and quality of life. The central goal of this element is to create an environment where arts, humanities, and culture flourish. The Arts, Humanities, and Cultural Diversity Commission recognizes the need to review and update the Art Vista Master Plan that was prepared 30 years ago. The City has unique assets to build upon and is starting to capitalize on its status as the Hummingbird Capital of Arizona, which could play into future artistic endeavors. The City is improving streetscapes through decorative lighting and entry features, promoting public and private partnerships, marketing available grants, and exploring collaborations, i.e., the mural that was painted behind the Oscar Yrun Center with Cochise College through Neighborhood Partner Program as well as the West Sierra Vista Partnership grants for private properties.

There is a lot of opportunity to explore during the update of the Master Plan. The General Plan is core as a long-term vision that captures what the community wants to be in the future. The places that everyone loves has resulted from some level of planning and organized interests working together. Vista 2040 is both backward and forward-looking and incorporated are in mind the best

ideas from previously adopted plans and studies that remain valid. It is part retro and elaboration of the work done by predecessors. At the end of the day, the City is striving to achieve balance and harmony between the public and private interests, which sometimes can be at odds with each other.

Many of the comments that were received relate to specific improvements or capital projects within specific areas of the City. The goals of the General Plan are intended to help guide in setting and developing future strategic plans that then get factored into capital improvement plans and budgets in future years to maybe implement some of those suggestions. It sets a direction that is flexible enough to accommodate the inevitable changes that will occur over the next decade guided by Council leadership.

Arizona Revised Statutes require a supermajority vote on the Plan when it comes before Council on Thursday, June 27, 2024, following the public hearing. It comes to Council with a unanimous vote by the Planning and Zoning Commission and a belief that they have considered the comments received from the commissions and the public through the interactive process.

Council Member Landry voiced her appreciation to Mr. McLachlan for talking to Council. She added that the Plan went through a lot of different people who gave a whole lot of passion and effort into making it a good Plan. She noted that she witnessed the push there was to get it out there for the public to see the QR code on the website and in-person. There was a big push and a lot of opportunities for the public to provide feedback and she hopes that people will continue to look at it and review it because it is a good document.

Council Member Benning stated that it is a good document and thanked everyone involved for their hard work as it is a big process. He then asked what will happen from Thursday, June 27, 2024 to November. Mr. McLachlan stated that staff will continue to work with the Public Affairs Office to broadly communicate with the public on the question that will be on the ballot and encourage them to review the document in full. Short of that, there will be brochure material that reduces it down to the essential elements of the Plan for them to consider ahead of the vote. Lastly, he stated that staff does not want 10 percent of the people skipping over the question and hopefully signing with approval.

In response to Council Members Benning and Messmer, Mr. McLachlan stated that staff can collaborate on the pamphlet and have something up on the web within the next few weeks.

New Business

Item 4 Discussion and Possible Approval of Resolution 2024-043, Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Ms. Yarbrough stated that this resolution will adopt the Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 24-25 in the amount of \$172,359,341.00. Council's adoption will cap the Fiscal Year 25 budget pursuant to State Law. The final budget can be equal to or less than that amount, but it cannot exceed that amount. There were three changes made since the last special budget work session a couple weeks ago and those are detailed in the staff memo. Staff realized that they had missed one of the Fire Battalion Chief positions and so that reclassification amount was added along with budget adjustments that were made for that. There is also an update for the Metropolitan Planning Organization's budget because staff used the current year fiscal year's budget as a placeholder until their numbers were turned in. Finally, there was a potential grant for runway rehabilitation and a new taxiway connector that were added in the Airport Fund. In closing, she explained that the change that Mr. Potucek mentioned will be made for the final budget in detail. It does not change the numbers and it will not change the budget cap.

Item 5 Discussion and Possible Approval of Resolution 2024-044, Approving the proceedings of the Industrial Development Authority of the City of Sierra vista regarding the issuance of its charter school revenue and refunding bonds, Lead Charter Schools Project, Series 2024 in an amount not to exceed \$8,500,000

Mr. Slania stated this resolution approves a refunding of presently existing charter schools. There are two charter schools, and they are looking to refund the existing bonds to reduce the interest rate that the schools must pay. There is no new money going into this. This is strictly a refunding from that perspective. The Sierra Vista IDA nor the City have any financial risk associated with the bonds. The risk is borne by the purchaser. In this case it will be a bank purchase of the of these bonds.

Item 6 Discussion and Possible Approval of Resolution 2024-045, Approving the proceedings of the Industrial Development Authority of the City of Sierra Vista regarding the issuance of its charter school revenue and refunding bonds, Leading Edge Academy Maricopa Charter School Project, Series 2024 in an amount not to exceed \$15,500,000

Mr. Slaina stated that this is basically a sister organization to the first one. The bank is looking at them collectively, but they do have two different charter contracts and they have different school locations; however, they have a commonality of executive director and some of the board positions. This will be a refunding of the two existing bond issues that they have and new money to add more facilities, not a new location. The bonds are not yet callable and therefore these will be issued as taxable bonds, a slightly different interest rate until that redemption date is reached, at which point will become tax exempt. It will change interest rate, but that is allowed in the documents. This is a bank purchase of the bonds and there is no public offering document.

B. Presentation by the Good Neighbor Alliance

Ms. Mignon Hollis, Mr. Roland, and the Good Neighbor Alliance (GNA) crew came before Council to provide an update. Ms. Hollis applauded the Vista 2040 and stated that she is going to address the unsheltered community that was overlooked in the Vista 2040 presentation. She displayed a slide with key statistics depicting a 30 percent increase in Arizona in the homeless population, 24,000 people.

In response to Council Member Johnson, Ms. Hollis stated that the increase is due to several factors, loss of jobs, loss of wages, increase in housing, lack of resources, and inflation.

Ms. Hollis stated that the unsheltered homeless population has almost tripled from 2014 to 2023. In 2023 there were approximately 7,600 people that experienced homelessness without any shelter. GNA has 22 beds available and depending on the configuration of who comes into the shelter, it is up or down, and they are at 98 percent capacity all the time. There is a list of people that are turned away each day. Arizona currently has 20 percent fewer shelter beds available compared to 2007 and despite the doubling of the average spending per homeless person, shelter availability has declined. The key statistics show that the numbers were the worst ever recorded for homelessness in the United State.

When GNA stood before Council, they gave Council the same numbers about what the average cost per person is in the shelter, \$30 a day, monthly cost is \$20,000, and the annual cost is \$240,000 for the basics, shelter staff, utilities, food, hygiene products, and general supplies. When GNA solicits funds, everyone wants to fund a new kitchen or donate paint. However, GNA needs money to keep the lights on and to pay for staff.

A slide was display of staffing costs totaling \$160,000 per year, coverage for two shifts, five days/week and three shifts on weekends. This excludes administrative staff and shelter staff is paid at minimum wage and not market rate.

In response to Council Member Benning, Ms. Hollis stated that the monthly and annual cost is the overnight operations of the shelter because the shelter does much more, one staff per shift.

For 20 years GNA has been in the community and relied on community donations and the State has done a great job, Arizona Department of Economic Security, Department of Housing, legislatures who have gotten emergency funding whenever needed.

A slide was displayed of these programs inside the shelter that are covered by grants, the outreach program, shower program, and the day program; but the day program has since gone away because that grant funding went away. Grant funds cannot be used for the day-to-day operations of the shelter, the overnight operations of the shelter. Things that are not covered are the utilities and staff salaries and this is where GNA needs the money.

If Sierra Vista does not have a shelter, the City will be faced with health issues, spread of disease, mental health struggles, and substance abuse. The shelter does not allow people to come in that are abusing.

A one percent rise in poverty amounts to a 2.16 rise in crime rates and a 2.57 percent increase in violent crimes. The City can fund a shelter or pay on the back end by taxing the Police Department and hospitals. The economic impact will be healthcare costs, property values because there will be unsheltered communities living in public places, and that perceived safety and cleanliness issue. Many businesses will struggle with this issue.

GNA would like to see from the City a budget line item to support homeless shelters of \$200,000. This can be done through an RFP so that other shelters can participate. GNA's funding runs out from the grants that they have at the end of June.

Ms. Hollis stated that she has heard from people to not close the shelter, but this is not a matter of GNA not wanting to close the shelter, it is a matter of financial constraints. If GNA does not have the money to pay the utility bill or staff, they cannot stay in operation.

Council Member Benning asked about other organizations that GNA works with. Mr. Roland stated that GNA partners with Saint Vincent De Paul, Salvation Army, any agency that touches homeless services. GNA has an MOU with some of them, Arizona At Work.

Mayor McCaa asked if GNA had any leeway with the County. Ms. Hollis stated that she has met with Mr. Karwaczka, and they will meet again in July because they are looking to do things within the department. The county will help in some way, but the County cannot come up with the whole amount. She added that when GNA is trying to get grants, they are always looking to see who supports them in their own community. GNA visited other communities and the cities support them through an RFP.

In response to Mayor McCaa, Ms. Hollis stated that the City of Tempe is doing an RFP. The City of Tempe has a line item for human services in their city budget and then they create the RFP around the human services for the scope of work for homelessness, homeless shelters, and they contain it within that line item to be able to fund.

Council Member Johnson asked about the number of homeless shelters in Cochise County. Ms. Hollis stated that there are only two homeless shelters that do overnight, GNA and the one in Bisbee. Mr. Roland added that there are two domestic violence shelters.

Council Member Johnson asked about staffing expenses. Ms. Hollis explained that it excludes administrative staff, Mr Roland and Doctor De Luca do not get a salary. GNA makes it work for them as best as it can, but these two individuals donate their time.

Council Member Benning asked if the Cochise County Health Department has been contacted because 50 percent of their budget comes from grants that pay operational expenses. Ms. Hollis stated that they have, but operational costs cannot be paid by grants for shelter. Occasionally there are grants that will, but there are far and few in between, none that has been seen in the past five years.

Council Member Johnson asked about the number of beds in Bisbee. Mr. Roland stated that he believes that they are similar in size to GNA.

Council Member Johnson stated that it is hard for him to believe that the County cannot step up. GNA is looking at the City of Sierra Vista to solve the problems, but there is a bigger problem out there than just Sierra Vista. Ms. Hollis stated that GNA is working with the County and Health Department.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey commented that the statistics provided were Arizona-wide, but she would like to know the numbers for Sierra Vista. Ms. Hollis stated that this is what GNA was able to collect, but she believes that it is not data that has been collected anywhere.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey asked about the last pick count. Mr. Roland stated that the pick count shows that 55 individuals were in the City.

Council Member Johnson asked if the Better Bucks and Better Work Program impacted GNA's operation. Ms. Hollis stated that it has not because GNA needs the money to operate, to pay for salaries, utilities, and day-to-day operations. Those programs will help individuals, but they will not help the shelter directly, indirectly through their guests.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey asked about current fundraising efforts to raise those monies. Ms. Hollis stated that there has been a decrease across the board in donations in any organization, nonprofit being looked at. Donations are down and they have been down and do not come up to this amount. GNA relies strictly on donations for the shelter operations.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey asked about current campaigns. Ms. Hollis stated that GNA has a couple campaigns in the works, but those campaigns are not going to launch for a couple months. Doctor De Luca stated that GNA is working on fundraising dinners, but they do not make a lot of money with this. It can be \$50 or \$60.00 per person, but by the time they are done paying for the place and the meal, if they walk away with \$10 a head will be great. They are increasing their ability for Legacy giving so that folks can understand that GNA can be part of their legacy planning. They are also looking at increasing crowdfunding to go after certain things, but then ask for keeping the lights on. Mostly, they are in the grant writing phase. There are beds and new security systems coming so that everybody can stay safe. GNA tries to find programs, talking to the County in getting operational costs and the ability to get in a van and go somewhere, which pays for that staff member. Ms. Hollis added that GNA has gone to all the churches and have done presentations to all the other nonprofits in the community as well.

In response to Council Member Messmer, Ms. Hollis stated that other cities issue an RFP that is specific to overnight shelters. Mr. Roland noted that the City of Tempe built their own shelter. Ms. Hollis stated that coming in on Sundays helps a lot in providing meals for guests that are staying at GNA, but if GNA cannot afford to keep the lights on, then there is no need to provide food. Father Greg has also attended the Joint Services Meetings for GNA.

Council Member Messmer suggested that GNA attend the Joint Services Meeting and provide the presentation because all the services are there together, and it would be a great opportunity.

Council Member Johnson asked if GNA has approached SSVEC. Ms. Hollis stated that she has and SSVEC cannot give them a reduced rate on utilities. However, they have contributed and are regular donors. She had asked if they could do a roundup and is in meetings again with them. Normally roundups are for households, but GNA is trying to work something so that they can do the roundup at the shelter.

Council Member Benning asked what happens on July 1, 2024. Ms. Hollis stated that they will start to shut down. In the meantime, they are hoping that it does not happen. They have had some people outside of the area that are willing to step up and help.

Council Member Benning stated that the Council is set to vote on the budget that is set and getting a line item added to the budget at this point is a lot of work in coming up with \$200,000 and it makes it

difficult. Council would need to hear from the County because it is not just a GNA issue, it is a City and County issues as well. He would like to know where the players are coming together to help solve this. Ms. Hollis stated that the \$200,000 is GNA's total ask. If the City could come in at \$100,000, that would keep the shelter running for a couple more months.

Mayor McCaa stated that it is not guaranteed.

Council Member Messmer stated that GNA has 22 beds, but usually when she has gone to the shelter to prepare and serve food, there are only 10 to 12 people and she wonders why all the guests are not being fed. Mr. Roland stated that it depends on the configuration of a family because there may be a family of four in one room or two people in one room, and that takes care of that room. Ms. Hollis stated that this is even though there are more beds, they cannot put more people in. The guests are also probably going somewhere else to eat where they can stay, out on the street, or at the Salvation Army.

Mayor McCaa stated that he would like to see what the County is going to do, and he can reach out to Mr. Karwaczka. Ms. Hollis stated that she has a meeting with him. He was going to meet with his department heads and noted that several of the departments within the County have some ideas.

Council Member Benning asked if Bisbee is trying to reach out to get a line item. Ms. Hollis stated that they are not because Bisbee has a benefactor and the way that their budget works is that they can only draw on the interest from the benefactor. They are starting to struggle.

C. [Presentation by the Environmental Stewardship Commission on Recycling](#)

Ms. Joelle Buffa, member of the Environmental Stewardship Commission, thanked Council for establishing the commissions. It has allowed herself and other citizens to learn more about the way that the City operates and appreciate the work that staff and elected officials are doing. At the Commission's first few meetings, the commissioners would go around the room and introduce themselves as well as the other participants and explain why they were interested in being part of the Environmental Stewardship Commission (ESC), and recycling (reduced, reuse and recycle) was mentioned by everyone. In February, the ESC formed the Recycling Subgroup to which she is the coordinator, and the goal is to explore, expand, and promote opportunities for recycling in Sierra Vista. Therefore, the purpose of the presentation is to share with Council some of the projects and ideas that they have developed for reducing Sierra Vista's waste stream.

A slide was displayed of the things that the ESC has accomplished in working together with some of the staff from Planning, Public Works, and Public Affairs. The ESC provided recommendations to the Vista 2040 environmental goals and updated the City's Where to Recycle web page. The group has periodically written tips on how to reduce, reuse, and recycle that have been published in the City's newsletter and social media. They have also had some coverage by the Herald.

The first group activity involved looking at the history of recycling in the City and the percentage of households participating in recycling. Apart from the City's exemplary green waste curbside pickup and the informal drop off that the City Animal Shelter runs for aluminum cans to support their programs, residential recycling has declined substantially in the past few years.

The operation of the mix stream curbside pickup that Sierra Vista did for quite a few years ceased in 2019 when the foreign markets for recyclables collapsed and the new buyers required higher standards for less contamination in the recycle stream. The City tried a drop off center that took care of the contamination issue because it was sorted by staff, which operated for about nine months in late 2019, early 2020. In 2020, the Council amended the Solid Waste Ordinance and allowed private recycling collectors. In the past four years there has been little recycled materials that have been diverted from the waste stream and that concerned the ESC work group.

The ESC work group looked at some of the barriers, pros, and cons of the different things that the City has tried over the years. The downside to the curbside recycling was contamination and

although participation was around 60 percent that is considered high in a national average, there was contamination and there were transportation costs as well, even though it was convenient and free for residents. The City residential drop off that was tried did get rid of the contamination, but there was a big drop off in the participation. One of the reasons for that could have been that it was sort of an out of the way location and it was not something people were used to doing and had to go out of their way. Therefore, due to the staff time and what the City was getting for the recycle materials was dropped because it was not cost effective.

In 2020 the City voted to allow the private collectors and for the first year or, so it was operated by a local business, and it was reasonable comparatively to what it currently is. It was about \$12.00 a month. After about a year it was bought out by Recyclops, a national organization for business that operates out of state, and they raised the rates to where it is between \$29 and \$36 a month. Currently there is very low participation which could be because of the cost and the company does not market or advertise well.

Ms. Buffa stated that she is a customer of Recyclops, one of 629 customers that they have according to the statistics that they gave her.

It was not an easy decision to go to a private collector in 2020 and there was a lot of discussion. The mayor at that time affirmed that the City was not giving up on recycling and that they would continue to look for ways and opportunities to recycle in the future, which was echoed by Council Member Calhoun. The ESC work group got to thinking that the City would be open to considering options for improving recycling. Their next mission was to look at what other adjacent communities and similar sized communities in Arizona were doing. The group collected a lot of information and found that communities have figured it out.

An example of what the City of Bisbee does was provided because they are a good model for solving the problems of both contamination and the cost of transporting recycled materials long distances, which is what Sierra Vista is faced with. The City of Bisbee operates a supervised fenced drop off center that is a drive through where there are separate bins for categories of materials. They have conveniently located the drop off next to their transfer station. They then compress and bale each material separately, which is key to why they are reducing cost of recycling. They take mixed loads and sells the recycled materials.

One of the members of the ESC group did an analysis of the estimated fuel cost of moving a chunk of loose cardboard to Tucson versus compressed and baled. The City was not compressing and baling; therefore, it was more expensive. By compressing, baling, and taking the air out, it reduces the volume and allows for fewer trips.

The City of Bisbee has been working with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and getting grants to do some of these things that has recently received a grant for a glass crusher. They are not going to be transporting their glass to Tucson but using it locally for building materials.

The ESC group came up with potential actions and ideas that the commissioners could work with as well as with the support of City Council, Public Affairs, and Public Works staff. Council may question if Bisbee's model is applicable and if Sierra Vista residents would use a drop off center. Therefore, one of the first things the ESC group thought of was to conduct a marketing study and perhaps using the City's Engage Platform to see what the attitudes and willingness of Sierra Vista residents are about the new paradigm of recycling.

Short term actions are things that could be done with little or no cost but would involve some staff time. Another option is to test the waters with a small step and reinstate the glass recycling drop off point that used to be at the Public Works' parking lot and perhaps exploration could be done with Bisbee to see if instead of transporting glass to Tucson, Bisbee would be interested in that material for their glass crusher and construction materials.

The ESC Group has been working with staff at Public Works and Public Affairs and continued to

write recycling tips and perhaps increase the frequency of those tips that are in the different publications and outreach materials that the City has.

One of the commissioners put together some sample questions and if they went forward with the Engage Platform, they would be working closely with City's staff to refine those questions to make them applicable to the City's operations.

Mayor McCaa asked about question four, willing to pay an additional amount in utility bill for a recycling program. Ms. Buffa stated that it was not completely thought out, but one of the ideas was to copy the City of Bisbee that has a separate line item on their refuse bill for collecting. They have an \$81 fee per year per household to pay for their recycling program. If the City wanted to start a recycling program again, then that would have to be funded somehow. The ESC group has some other thoughts on that tool.

Medium term actions would involve more City involvement. One thought was that the City could partner with local businesses for a cardboard drop off center. There are local businesses in the town that have balers and get money for cardboard. Another idea is making recycling fun, more in the reuse idea by having an art competition in conjunction with Art in the Park or some other City event to get people thinking about recycling. The City may want to form a task force to evaluate providing additional services with a focus on reducing that \$64 a ton drop fee considering some of the new market factors and technology that has come about with recycling.

The ESC group has learned that while the cost of recycling can be reduced by some of the things presented, it is unrealistic to expect it to pay for itself. Therefore, partnering with others in the community could further balance the equation. Arizona law prevents the City from gifting money to businesses or other entities, but perhaps an MOU could be a way for partners in the community like Fort Huachuca, businesses, and other entities that have a common goal of reducing the waste stream. Fort Huachuca being a DOD facility has a mandate to divert their waste and recycle and they could be a potential partner as well as Bisbee. They have already worked with the ADEQ to be part of this hub and spoke recycling model for rural Arizona, which the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is advancing to try to help communities get grants and partner with each other.

The ESC group is asking for Council support or feedback on moving forward with the resident survey about recycling attitudes and what they would be willing to do or pay; publishing once a month tips for recycling in either the newsletter, the newspaper, or social media; restarting the glass recycling drop off to test the waters; and looking into partnerships with other entities to expand and collaborate on recycling efforts.

Council Member Messmer asked if any stores have been contacted that would be interested in taking the City's cardboard. Ms. Buffa stated that the group has been a little reluctant as part of a Commission. They did not want to go to a business, but they have people on the Commission that are willing to do that, but they thought they needed the go ahead from the Council to do be able to do that.

Council Member Messmer asked if anyone has checked on the price of the machine that would bale and compress. Ms. Flissar stated that she is not sure what a baler would cost. They are not inexpensive, and the cost is about six figures. The City did have a baler for several years when it was running its own recycling program. The City then started taking the recyclables to the Cochise County Transfer Station and they were the ones that were dealing with the recyclables at that point. Therefore, the baler was transferred to Cochise County. She added that she does not know if it was sold to Cochise County or if it was by agreement given to Cochise County. What has become of that baler since, last she saw it was still sitting out at the County Transfer Station and whether it is in operating order, she does not know. Regardless, all the City's waste is obligated to Cochise County by agreement and that includes recycling.

Mr. Potucek stated that all the City's solid waste is committed to Cochise County in the County Solid

Waste System. The County was doing the actual recycling and transporting them to Tucson or wherever they could find a market to sell it. For a while it was making some money, and the money would go into the landfill fund and help keep the tipping fees low for landfill disposal at the time, but when the market collapsed, the County could not make any money and fewer recyclables were marketable. At that point that is when the City had to make the difficult decision to get out of the business at that time. Ms. Flissar added that the County was willing to continue, but they were going to charge the City the cost of doing that because it was not a break-even system.

Mr. Potucek noted that there is still have drop off at the County Transfer Station. There is still an opportunity to recycle.

Council Member Benning asked how the Commission is going to promote and increase participation if the City went back to a drop off location when the City did away with its sponsored curbside pickup. Ms. Buffa stated that it currently is less than one percent, 629 households.

Council Member Benning stated that in 2018 the City did away with curbside and went to a drop off location, but the participation rate was only eight percent. He asked how the ESC group plans to increase that if the City started another drop off location. Ms. Buffa stated that the ESC group thought about that and one of the solutions was to locate a drop off center in a more centralized location and do more outreach promotion of that because people had to drive out to the Transfer Station. The thought is that if they have it in a centrally located area, near where people are shopping, like Bisbee does, that people will take their recycles when they go to Walmart or the mall, and perhaps partner with a local business there that has a baler that could be operated near Home Depot, Best Buy, or one of the big box stores that have a baler that could potentially bring some more activity in business to the mall if it was in that location. There are a lot of opportunities that are better located, and it would take work to analyze that and do more research.

Mayor McCaa stated that he likes the marketing study and asked how long it would take to get a full study done. Ms. Buffa stated that she would have to talk to a marketing expert to be able to answer that question, but if the Council is interested, the ESC group would contact a marketing expert and find out. Ms. Flissar stated that 30 days would probably be sufficient time to gather information. A full-fledged marketing study would require a longer time frame and she would not be able to guess on the cost of that. She added that the Commission has been great to work on this and one of the things that she and the Commission have discussed are the challenges of potentially looking at a 501C3 and starting a recycling program, a model that has been done by Sedona. However, they must determine at what point that would divest from the Commission and become its own separate operation and if they are doing a survey using the Engage Platform, they must be mindful of the fact that any questions being asked are things that would inform City operations and not necessarily those of the 501C3, which is now a private entity. It gets complicated depending on which direction it goes, which could still be a variety of different options.

Council Member Benning asked if it would cost less to utilize the Engage Platform for one month to do a survey on recycling. Mr. Curtis stated that it can be done at no cost, but the Department wants to leverage their in-house free marketing materials. He would probably wait for a Vistas cycle to include that in the survey period and then they would do a lot of earned media and publicize it as well as they could for free. That is not necessarily a statistically valid study, but they could gage the pulse that way.

Council Member Landry thanked Ms. Buffa for her presentation and all the time and effort that was in her discussions and in gathering the information. She noted that recycling does come up a lot during conversations with the public. A lot of people want to recycle, and the City used to recycle. Although, Sierra Vista is small, the drop off it is out of the way. She likes the idea of having a centralized location. She also appreciates the tips on social media.

Ms. Buffa stated that one of the things that the ESC group worked on the different things that can be recycled at the drop off center. The City website has been updated to where to drop off cardboard, batteries. The ESC group also thought about getting information into the schools, but they had to

boil it down.

Mayor McCaa asked for consensus to extend the work session past 4:30 p.m. There was Council consensus to continue the work session.

Council Member Landry stated that she likes the idea of checking the pulse and seeing what people's thoughts are and if people know that it is a possibility, maybe more people will be willing. She also likes the idea of finding creative things to do like a contest during the Art in the Park from recycled materials. She voiced her appreciation at the summary page of the presentation is interested in seeing where this would go. Lastly, she stated that if anybody is not taking their aluminum cans to the animal shelter, they can start.

Mayor McCaa stated that he would like the study to go forward.

Council Member Messmer stated that the information provided is great, but she would like to see the study, the cost and see if the City could partner with a business that has a baler, what the City will get in return if they give its glass to the City of Bisbee, and the cost of a new baler.

Ms. Buffa stated that the City would be saving \$64 a ton for every trash dump. All the glass that is not getting recycled is part of the cost.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey concurred with Council Member Messmer and thanked Ms. Buffa for all the research that the commissioners did. The Commission has a better understanding than most people did while the City was going through this. She is impressed and appreciates all the time it took and the meaningful thoughts because there are a lot of good ideas worth considering. She then asked Ms. Flissar about the number of people that were participating in the City's drop box. Ms. Flissar stated that she does not recall getting addresses from people participating; therefore, she does not have numbers. It would be a guesstimate at best on that. She added that she and Ms. Buffa talked about as she was preparing for this presentation is the number of bins that were out before. The 60ish percent was a set out rate and that was estimated by the City's drivers as they were out on the routes. It is a snapshot in time while the drivers are going around - how many bins are out on a Thursday or an average Friday. However, it is unknown which is critical is what was in those bins and how full those bins were because when the City introduced the curbside drop off program and they went to the one in one, there were people that told the City flat out, "you are not taking my second garbage pickup away and I will just throw my garbage in the blue bin and you will not even know about it. Unfortunately, they did that. The City's contamination rates indicate they did that. She emphasized that this was the setout rate. It was the best that the Department could estimate at the time. However, there is no data on how full those bins were and what was in them.

Council Member Benning noted that the reason that the City went straight to privatization after four or five months was that fact that the number of people that were dropping stuff off was low. Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey stated that the City had the drop off down by the compost, one on the West End, and one other location; however, it was so poorly. She added that she thinks that the number of 629 customers might be higher than who was participating in the single stream drop off.

Ms. Buffa stated that she got the five percent through a quote by the City when they closed the drop off, "we are getting 95 percent volume drop off". Ms. Flissar stated that this is volume compared to volume of mixed stream recyclables with garbage mixed in, which is where it gets complicated.

Ms. Buffa stated that everyone agrees that mixed stream recycle is not going to happen anymore. It is not a good model and that is not what the Commission recommending.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey voiced her appreciation for the breakdown of the difference and the fuel costs for the compressed cardboard and the loose load. She asked how much it costs for Bisbee to operate the drop off center that they have. Ms. Buffa stated that she is unsure if a cost was received. Matt Gurney in Bisbee's Public Works has those figures.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey asked if cardboard was profitable again. Ms. Buffa stated that she is aware that it can be sold. Mr. Potucek noted that the prices fluctuate. Ms. Buffa stated that a lot of factors would need to be taken in i.e., the distance transporting, etc.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey stated that she loves the ideas and is interested in exploring some of these.

Ms. Buffa stated that the ESC group will work with the questionnaire and asked Council if they would like the ESC group to pursue the glass recycling, partnering with businesses, or reaching out to businesses to find out if anybody is interested.

Mayor McCaa stated that the consensus of Council is to proceed with the survey so that the Council can get a good sense of how to move forward with glass or cardboard.

D. Notice of Call to Election and Soliciting Pro and Con Arguments for the General Plan, if approved

Ms. Adams stated that this is the third election that the City has held since the change from holding a Primary and then carrying over to a General Election. There persists some confusion on the voters as to not receiving a City ballot at the Primary or a ballot in the mail that does not have a City race on it. She explained that the call to election is not required by Statute. However, this year she is going to get out in front of it after the vote on the General Plan on Thursday, June 27, 2024. There will be a notice of the call to election published in the Sierra Vista Herald on Sunday, June 30, 2024 and it will also be posted on the City's website. There will also be press releases so that people can be advised before the Primary so that they are not looking for a City question or candidates and to let them know to make sure that they vote in November because that is when the City's going to be doing their business. Also, there is the opportunity for citizens to submit pro or con arguments in the voter pamphlet that will be done for the General Plan. There will also be an advertisement on the City's website explaining what must be done and where to go if they would like to have their opinions published in the voter pamphlet. The voter pamphlet was professionally prepared, and it will be translated into Spanish and distributed to every household in the Sierra Vista area. The voter pamphlet will also have the ballot language for a General Plan because of the Statutory nature of it and because the City cannot have any language whatsoever that is pro or con, it must be neutral. This is standard and it will mirror every other general plan question that they have in the state and that was used 10 years ago. Lastly, she stated that she has a draft pamphlet ready if Council would like to read it and it summarizes the General Plan, talks about the elements, and explains the process. It also contains voting information and where to go for vote centers.

E. Report on Recent Trips, Meetings and Future Meetings

There was no discussion.

F. Future Discussion Items and Council Requests

Ms. Yarbrough stated that there will not be a regularly scheduled work session on July 9, 2024. The next work session will on July 23, 2024, where there will be discussion on the final budget. There is a special meeting scheduled on July 8, 2024, and there is an executive session scheduled for Thursday, June 27, 2024 before the regularly scheduled Council meeting.

3. Adjourn

Mayor McCaa adjourned the June 25, 2024 work session of the Sierra Vista City Council at 4:45 p.m.

Clea McCaa II, Mayor

Minutes prepared by:

Attest:

Maria G. Marsh, Deputy Clerk

Jill Adams, City Clerk

A recording of the Council Meeting is available at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8PtUpIbkQsixhSy-jeR_Q/videos