



**Comments/ Questions to be answered from Council's Neighborhood Listening  
West Sedona Area (West of Rodeo Road)  
Sedona Library**

**September 28, 2011**

Mayor Adams welcomed the group, explained the purpose and format of the meeting, and introduced the council and staff. The following Council members and staff were present at the listening:

Mayor Adams  
Councilor Ward  
Vice Mayor Hamilton  
Councilor McIlroy  
Councilor Rayner  
Councilor Litrell

City Manager Tim Ernster  
Assistant City Manager Alison Zelms  
Communications and Public Affairs Manager Ginger Graham

Mayor Adams provided a brief update on the City's positive financial condition and the status of progress on the Council's priorities over the last year.

**Comments from the Meeting**

**Questions**

**Q: It seems like over the last 2 years there have been major flooding problems in the Tlaquepaque area. This cannot continue to happen, as it has been in 2009 and 2011. It appears that since SR 179 was reconstructed the water comes down and rushes into the wash between Los Abrigados and Tlaquepaque. This is dangerous. What is going to happen with drainage in that area?**

A: Staff is very aware of the drainage problems that exist across the community. The City has a 15 year drainage master plan and has been working to make improvements related to that plan over time. The City is currently working on phase 2 of the flood control project in the Harmony –Windsong drainage area. The Storm Drainage Master

Plan has prioritized areas and projects to improve drainage to a 25-year flood event. In some instances even once the improvements are made, if a storm event exceeds a 25-year event, there may be drainage overflow. The City is looking at some short term improvements and expansions to its drainage maintenance program to try to address some of the identified areas from the master plan in the near term. The City Council is planning a workshop on October 19, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers that will include discussion of the Storm Drainage Master Plan.

**Q: In January 2005, there was a very bad rain that caused issues on Oak Creek, not on the washes. Is this ADOT's problem?**

A: This is not ADOT's problem. There is a difference between the impacts of winter vs. summer storms in Sedona. Typically a winter storm will cause impacts to Oak Creek due to the combination of snow run-off from Flagstaff, saturated soil, and new rain. This sometimes causes the creek to rise, although there is usually advanced warning of possible flooding on Oak Creek, allowing the City to institute evacuation measures. Summer storms are usually monsoon storms with little warning. Depending on the amount of rain, location and movement, and how long the storm stays focused on one area without moving, flash flooding can occur on local drainages and washes.

**Q: The speaker would like to know what the Council thinks sustainability is? The speaker looks at it as "sustaining human life."**

A: Councilor Litrell answered with the following: Depending on who you ask you get a different definition of sustainability. In general, what is unsustainable will end, and what is sustainable continues on. The Sustainability Commission, in looking at their workplan, is trying to ensure that things in Sedona do not end. Councilor Ward answered with the following: Some folks look at sustainability as a dirty word that sustainability means government is trying to interfere and make life difficult. That is not the goal of the Commission. Rather, they are trying to encourage certain positive behaviors rather than to prohibit others. The Commission is very engaged and passionate and is looking at logical good practices, not telling you what you can and cannot do.

**Q: The speaker read an article in the paper saying that the census indicated that the population of Sedona declined by 9%. Is that accurate? What caused this and what are the implications for the future?**

A: The Census population for Sedona in the 2000 Census was 10,192 and in the 2010 Census is 10,031. The State updates population figures for the purpose of distributing state shared revenue every fifth year, and in 2005 Sedona's projected population was adjusted upward to 10,935. The reduction that is regularly quoted is the reduction from the mid-census update and represents approximately an 8% reduction in the population figures used to distribute state shared revenue.

There is not a definitive reason for the population decline from the 2000 and 2005 population figures to the 2010 Census. However, there are several factors that are likely to have impacted the decline in population. The spotlight on immigration issues in Arizona, culminating with the approval of SB 1070 may have negatively impacted the

response rate from the Hispanic community and may have also resulted in some members of the Hispanic community moving away from Sedona. In addition, inflated mid-census population figures were a factor in the decline in population relative to State Shared revenue. Also, there may be a correlation to the weakened economy and fewer available jobs.

The housing vacancy rates have been released, and show that the vacancy rate for Sedona in 2000 was approximately 13% and in the 2010 census shows this vacancy rate at almost 22%. That is a significant increase in housing vacancies in Sedona and is also a likely factor in the reduced population.

The population reductions do present some difficulties. State population has grown, while Sedona's population has decreased and at the same time the state is sharing a smaller pot of funds. The impacts to shared revenues do present some concerns – especially considering that Sedona's population doesn't really show the amount that Sedona provides economically to the State, due to our visitation levels.

**Q: It seems that Sedona will probably always have a somewhat limited ability to provide jobs/growth in various sectors other than hospitality due to the nature of Sedona and other possible locations for industries that would bring jobs. Is this accurate?**

A: Sedona is very dependent on tourism now but it is important to look at the bigger picture. Sedona is represented along with other Verde Valley communities, on the Verde Valley Regional Economic Organization (VVREO). The goal of VVREO is to look at what the Verde Valley is as a region and what the options are for growth regionally. For example, developing the regional wine industry may bring positive impacts to tourism, agribusiness, and other associated companies for the region, including Sedona. Sedona is trying to rise to the top of the food chain in terms of being a visitor destination, have an economic plan, and look at other ways to bring people in to spend money in the City.

**Q: The speaker recently became aware of the referendum on 89A. Is the referendum binding and if it passes what is the City prepared to do to move forward?**

A: The outcome of the referendum is binding. The referendum will either affirm the Council's legislative decision to acquire the roadway or it will void that decision. If the referendum affirms the original council decision to move forward with a route transfer, the City Council could approach ADOT and offer to renegotiate a route transfer similar to the one that was originally approved by Council. However, under this scenario, ADOT still has the discretion to renegotiate a route transfer or not. If the referendum does not uphold the original City Council decision, the City Council's February 22, 2011 decision to acquire the roadway from ADOT is voided and ADOT will continue to own the roadway because the City will have lost the legal authority to renegotiate a route transfer for this particular roadway. The City staff has had informal discussions with the Arizona Department of Transportation about partnering with the City on daytime safety improvements in addition to the continuous roadway lighting. ADOT has informally responded that they are willing to discuss daytime safety improvements in

addition to the continuous roadway lighting and may be willing to possibly share the cost of additional safety improvements. However, if ADOT continues to own the roadway, it has complete discretion concerning what safety improvements, if any, will be implemented.

**Q: Recent news coverage has suggested that there is no money available for roadway improvements in rural Arizona in ADOTS long-range plan. Is the original funding for the route transfer still in place?**

A: The funding and projects related to 89A improvements and route transfer costs still appear in ADOT's five-year plan. The cost and funding for improvements as an ADOT owned roadway or through a route transfer agreement are similar.

**Q: Why was the Sunset Park parking lot repaved a few months back? It seems like the parking lot was fine.**

A: The parking lot at Sunset Park was showing wear from use. This includes depressions that were holding water, sub-sub-surface cracking and deterioration along the edges. In addition, this lot was done as part of a capital project that included all the parking lots at the parks, as part of a long-term overlay program. Overlaying all the lots at once provides a cost efficiency for programming.

#### **COMMENTS:**

The improvements to the Sunset Park tennis courts are great.

The other day someone came to the speaker's door with a petition. An excavating company was asking permission to excavate some drainage in the area of Sunset Rd. The speaker does not want the City to approve the excavation permit.

The speaker is a Litter Lifter on 89A in West Sedona. From Foothills South to Dry Creek Road, the irrigation system has never worked correctly in that area. It appears that there needs to be some maintenance/improvement in that area. Although the City is now finally able to spray for weeds, and the cattails have been removed, there is still work to be done to improve the area.

The City/residents should use permeable concrete or that type of driveway/walkway so that drainage is better.

The City/residents should capture rainwater to be used for irrigation.

The Verde Valley Regional Economic Organization (VVREO) is an important group that looks at the entire regional economy, instead of just each community. The promotion of the wine industry is important and tourism will likely be positively impacted by establishing that industry here. It is a great endeavor.

Yavapai College Vision in Sedona – Yavapai College has been here since 1980 in some fashion. The College is continuing with their programs, including OLLI, but awaiting movement on development of the property in order to expand. The College

promotes life long learning, culture, including the Book Fair, and keeping the Zaki Gordon Film School, which is morphing, growing and changing. So long as the College has enrollment, they will continue to offer credit courses as well as the general interest courses at OLLI.

College staff enjoyed the Listening and hearing the comments and questions.

Dr. Wills joined the college as its new President recently and is looking forward to a dialogue on what the Community needs the college to be.

The speaker encouraged starting a sustainability program at the College. Location in EPA region 9, could mean that this area would receive expansion programs from the region. Region 9 is very progressive due to California being in the region and already having laws etc. that encourage sustainability. The College can apply to get credit programs that began in California colleges this year, which offer green jobs to folks who are able to get the credits. This also might apply pressure to the state of Arizona to get more aggressive in the recycling industry. The programming could be attractive as weekend programs to out-of-towners. Could be a win-win for the City and the College.

The speaker recently read an article in Time Magazine that deals with drainage issues. In the article, a large eastern US city was having problems with storm water and wastewater combining and exceeding their system capabilities. One option was to spend funds to upgrade the system capacity another was to get people to build permeable surfaces, harvest rainwater etc., to reduce the amount of runoff water. The reduction concept could assist in reducing runoff and drainage in a different way, through incentives to change behaviors versus the cost of "fixing/increasing" the drainage system.

The College is moving forward with reclaimed water and solar concepts with Verde Valley communities to draw folks in as attractions where people can see a facility at work and learn the process.

Clarification was made that, a statement made earlier in the meeting that ADOT had taken \$10 M off the table was not accurate. Possible funding is not "off the table" but rather the original transfer agreement is not valid as it expired on June 30, 2011. Without a valid agreement, ADOT was not able to transfer the approximate \$10.6 Million in up front cash to the City. If the referendum upholds the original decision to enter into a route transfer agreement, the City would seek to renegotiate financial arrangements with ADOT that were similar to the original agreement.