Sierra Vista City Council  
Work Session Minutes  
February 8, 2022

1. Call to Order

Mayor Mueller called the February 8, 2022 City Council Work Session to order at 3:00 p.m., Council Chambers, City Hall, 1011 N. Coronado Drive, Sierra Vista, Arizona.

Mayor Rick Mueller – present  
Mayor Pro Tem Rachel Gray – absent  
Council Member William Benning – present  
Council Member Gregory Johnson – present  
Council Member Angelica Landry – present  
Council Member Mark Rodriguez - present  
Council Member Carolyn Umphrey - present

Others Present:  
Chuck Potucek, City Manager  
Victoria Yarbrough, Assistant City Manager  
Adam Thrasher, Police Chief  
Brian Jones, Fire Chief  
Laura Wilson, Parks, Leisure and Library Service Director  
Sharon Flissar, Public Works Director  
Matt McLachlan, Community Development Director  
Jeff Pregler, Planner  
Tony Boone, Economic Development Manager  
Dianna Cameron, Management Analyst  
Judy Hector, Communications and Marketing Manager  
Jill Adams, City Clerk

Mayor Mueller stated that during work sessions, he does not normally have a roll call, but he wanted to mention that the Mayor Pro Tem is absent today and on Thursday, February 10, 2022 due to her sister passing away. He asked to keep her and her family in one’s thoughts and prayers over the next week.

2. Presentation and Discussion:

a. February 10, 2022 Council Meeting Agenda Items (agenda attached)

Mayor Mueller stated that the Council Meeting for Thursday, February 10, 2022, starts at 5:00 p.m. with the call to order, roll call, invocation, pledge, the acceptance of the agenda.

In response to Mayor Mueller, Mr. Potucek stated that there will be a JPA Board Meeting for SECOM on Thursday, February 10, 2022 in the morning; therefore, he will be able to update Council. He will also have December’s sales tax numbers, which look promising.

Mayor Mueller stated that next on the agenda will be the awards and presentations of the Water Wise Youth Poster Contest for both 2020 and 2021 that is always interesting.

Item 2 Discussion and Possible Action of Resolution 2022-004, Series 9 liquor license application for an interim owner, owner transfer, limited liability company-type of ownership for Michael Joseph Basha on behalf of Raley’s Arizona LLC dba Food City at 85 S. Highway 92, Sierra Vista, Arizona – Ms. Adams stated that the first public hearing item is for a transfer of the liquor license that is currently owned by Basha and operated over at Food City. They have recently sold some of their stores and so there is a new company that is taking that over, which is Raley’s Arizona, but still
operating as Food City. The notice of the public hearing was posted on the facility the required 20 plus days. No comments have been received from the public. A background check of the applicant, Mr. Basha was done by the Police Department and there is no objection to this moving forward and if approved Thursday, February 10, 2022, it will be returned to the State for final action.

Item 3 Discussion and Possible Action of Resolution 2022-005, a location transfer of a Series 6 limited liability-type liquor license for Wacey Austin Barta on behalf of DUB Ventures LLC dba Punchy's Tavern, 1939 Frontage Road, Suite A, Sierra Vista, Arizona – Ms. Adams stated that after a long time coming, this license was formally the King's Court liquor license that the City received when Doctor McCormick donated that facility to the City. The City sold it to Mr. Barta several years ago, and he has finally found a location and is doing construction and remodeling to open a bar called Punchy's Tavern. The notice of the public hearing was posted on the facility and the City has received no comments, pro or con. A background check was done and there is no objection from the Police Department on this moving forward and if approved Thursday, February 10, 2022, staff will send it up to Phoenix for final action.

Item 4 Discussion and Possible Action of the Regular City Council Meeting Minutes of January 13, 2022 – There was no discussion.

b. General Plan Update

Mayor Mueller stated that when Janet Napolitano was Governor, the legislature required all cities to have a general plan. The legislature also specified which elements of the general plan certain sized cities should have, but a city could have more than what was required by the State. Sierra Vista opted to add to its general plan and has had a general plan since 1960, which is good for a town that was founded in 1956. This was not like many of the organizations that he has been a part of, where they have a good general plan, and it sits and collects dust on the shelf. This has not been the case for the City of Sierra Vista. The plan must be updated every 10 years and it is voted on by the public. The plan is basically general goals of where the City is to go in the future. Council then comes up with a two-year funding plan where the Council gets together and looks at what can be afforded to make the community better. He added that this is how Council comes up with the two-year plan that the City works on a regular basis, and it is his guess that the City is due for an update - the halfway mark, where during a work session(s), Council can discuss whether they need to make any midterm adjustments. Lastly, he noted that the annual budget feeds all of that, but it is critical that everyone understands what was in the current general plan and how far they must go before the next general plan.

Mr. Pregler stated that he will be providing an update on the General Plan and answering the following questions:
- What is a general plan?
- Why does the City need to do a general plan; and
- How is the general plan going to be updated into the future?

Mr. Pregler stated that he found a couple of definitions of general plan from other communities. The general plan is an expression of community visions, aspirations, values, and goals. It is a short and long-term decision-making guide to achieve the vision and it fulfills state legal requirements. The next definition is more along the lines of general plan amendments because the general plan is a living document and the visions of the community often change in 10 years; therefore, this gives people the ability to revise their visions, and there is a process in place to provide amendments for those changes. A general plan is a broad, flexible document that changes as community needs, conditions and directions change. It can be revised through city-initiated amendments, citizen property owner requests, or through referenda. Ultimately, the decision to amend is in the hands of the City Council.

Arizona Revised Statute 9-461.05(A) states that each planning agency shall prepare, and the governing body of each municipality shall adopt a comprehensive long range general plan for the development of the municipality. Arizona Revised Statute 9-461.06(K) states that general plan with
any amendments is effective for up to 10 years from the date the plan was initially adopted and ratified; On or before the 10th anniversary of the plan's most recent adoption, the governing body of the municipality shall either readopt the existing plan for an additional term of up to 10 years or shall adopt a new general plan as provided by this article.

In response to Mayor Mueller, Mr. Pregler stated that it is staff's recommendation to adopt a new general plan. He further stated that the Arizona Revised Statute 9-461.06(M) states that a governing body of any city or town having a population of 10,000 or more persons, shall submit each new general plan adopted to the voters for ratification. This came into effect in 2000, where the general plan is to be ratified by the voters. Previously, it was simply an approval or adoption by the City Council.

Arizona Revised Statute 9-461.05(C) states that the general plan shall consist of community goals and development policies and include the following elements: land use, circulation, open space, growth, environmental planning, cost of development, and water resources.

Arizona Revised Statute 9-461.05(C) states that cities with a population under 50,000, the general plan may include these following elements: conservation, recreation, public service and facilities, public buildings, housing, redevelopment, safety, bicycling, energy element, neighborhood preservation, and other elements based on community feedback.

The current General Plan, Vista 2030, includes all these elements, and although they are optional, the City decided since 2000 to include all these elements in its plans, and the new general plan will also include all these elements.

Approval dates:
- On June 26, 2014, the City Council adopted Vista 2030, replacing the previously approved general plan called Vista 2020.
- On November 4, 2014, the citizens of Sierra Vista did ratify Vista 2030, a 65/35.
- The next general plan needs to be ratified in November of 2024.

At this point, City staff has conducted an evaluation and appraisal report, which basically was an analysis of all the goals and policies in the current general plan. A quick definition of the environmental appraisal report stated that it is a review of the adopted general plan to determine how well the City is meeting the elements, goals, and objectives as set forth in the general plan, including what issues need to be addressed to meet expectations, and what tools could be used to address the issues raised in that community.

Staff analyzed each element in the General Plan and provided an evaluation of each strategy and goal. This evaluation was presented to the Planning Zoning Commission at various work sessions in 2020 and 2021. The City Council has been provided with the staff's written background information of each general plan element's, strategies, and goals.

Mr. Pregler stated that he organized each general plan element's, strategies, and goals by themes rather than by elements because it is a better comprehensive analysis because there can be three or four different elements in one theme.

Mayor Mueller recommended to the Council that they review the handwritten and lengthy items because it really does give a good analysis of what has happened in 10 years and shows how far the City has progressed. Mr. Pregler added that this is something that highlights the major achievements that have occurred in the last eight years since 2015.

Growth and land use trends that have been seen over the last eight years:

Residential:
- 5,000 acres developed of residential land.
- 23,000 acres is undeveloped, and this is because there are large chunks of vacant land, such as the state land and Tribute, which have remained vacant.
- 378 undeveloped residential parcels, and this is because of the large vacant land from the State and Tribute.
- 13,854 developed residential parcels.
- 445 new single family residential homes constructed in the City since 2015.

Commercial:
- 670 acres of developed commercial land.
- 760 acres of undeveloped commercial properties.
- 378 undeveloped commercial parcels.
- 492 developed commercial parcels; and
- 15 new commercial properties constructed since 2015.

Industrial:
- 110 acres developed.
- 283 acres undeveloped that includes the 200 acres on Fort Huachuca.
- 48 undeveloped industrial parcels.
- 32 developed industrial parcels; and
- one new industrial parcel constructed since 2015.

Redevelopment and neighborhood enhancement:
- In 2017, the City had the adoption of the West Sierra Vista Redevelopment Area Partnership Program that provides grant opportunities for buildings and site improvements on the West End.
- 2015 to 2021, the City has had several infrastructure upgrades and improvements, i.e., walkability, connectivity, safety, drainage improvements, and landscaping.
- 2020, the City has had updates to the Urban Infill Incentive District Policy, which provides fee and development reduction and waivers for developments in the West End.

Affordable housing:
- Eight affordable housing developments and there are three more potential developments on the way.
- Development fees are waived for affordable housing projects and site plan review and processing fees are reduced by 50 percent.
- Developments within Infill Districts can require a waiver or reduction in fees (building plan and permit) which meet certain criteria.
- Code amendments allowing apartments within the General Commercial Zoning Districts, as well as hotels and motels to be able to convert to apartments in Commercial Zoning Districts.

Mr. Pregler stated that this is a trend that is being seen more and more, and there are probably at least two or three that City's staff has been reviewing, which are converting from hotels to apartments in the community.

Code amendments allowing for accessory dwelling units in Single Family Residential Zoning Districts provided certain standards are met.

Mr. Pregler stated that this is another form of affordable housing.

- Emergency Home Repair and Disabilities Modification Program, which provides funding to make repairs to substandard housing and accessibility modifications for disabled homeowners.
- The City supports organizations, i.e., the Good Neighbor Alliance through the CDBG Program to help with site and building improvements.
- City supports the Cochise College Residential Construction Program by waiving the sewer connection fees.
- Every April the Council recognizes the National Fair Housing Month.

Transportation Connections and Enhancements:
- Safe Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes Plan, which prioritizes multi-modal projects approved in 2011.

Mr. Pregler stated that this is prior to 2015, but there have been so many projects that have been accomplished and completed since 2015, which all stem from this original Safe Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes Plan. These projects have been included in the Metropolitan Planning Organization Long Range Transportation Plan as well.

Connectivity Enhancement Projects:
- Multi use path on the West side of State Road 92 from Foothills Drive to Avenida Cochise.
- Multi use path on east side of Buffalo Soldier Trail from Golf Links Road to Fry Boulevard.

Mr. Pregler stated that the City has received FTA funding for these two connectivity projects.

- West Fry Boulevard/North Garden Avenue Project, a form of multimodal project that will have the abilities for bicycling, walking (these are the larger pedestrian connections).
- Current subdivisions that have provided multi use pathways since 2015 that connect to pedestrian ways and washes include Summit Heights, Canada Vista, The Retreat and Holiday, and the Tribute Specific Plan proposes similar multi-use path connectivity.
- In 2019, several additional bus stops were added to the bus routes to better serve the community.
- Short-Range Transportation Plan was adopted in August of 2021.

Urban Design:
- Electronic message signs, outdoor lighting codes were approved in 2015.
- Bicycle Parking code amendment in 2017, which required bicycle racks, really constructed commercial buildings.
- Architectural design standards were approved in 2019.

Environmental and Sustainability:
- City provides funds to the Water Wise Program, which offers water conservation services, and youth poster contests as well.
- Approved water harvesting standards, continue to enforce water conservation measures.

Mr. Pregler stated that he has provided a graph in the background information placed in the reading room, which indicates the water usage reduction since 2000 that has been reduced from 7,633-acre feet to 6,814-acre feet in in 2020. He added that even though the City has grown, the amount of water that is being used has been reduced in 20 years.

- City implements the Toilet Rebate Program.
- City is a founding member of the Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network, which implements, and designs projects designed to increase groundwater recharge and protect groundwater resources.
- Wash and Drainage Maintenance Policy was recently amended to include language about wildlife habitat protection.
- The Schneider Electric Project replaced light bulbs at all City facilities, buildings, parks, and fields to efficient LED bulbs. Soccer fields were constructed or replaced with artificial turf, which again save both energy and water at the City facilities and parks buildings.
- Adopt-A-Area Program which is a stewardship program where the public can maintain and clean washes, streets, parks, and events.

Parks, Facilities and Services:
- Parkland Level of Service Standards-10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, which totals 440 acres.

Mr. Pregler stated that the acquisition of new park land, Rothery Center, Roadrunner Park, and eventually the Tribute Parks will see will be able to meet this standard.
- New Parks Master Plan was approved in August, August 12, 2021. This plan addresses park improvements, amenities, and programs, which will be included as a new appendix to the General Plan.
- EMS Substation was approved in 2021, which provides quicker response times for emergency service vehicles.

Mayor Mueller noted that the location of the new EMS Station prevents the City from having to move Station 2 to another location to provide services for The Tribute and the areas on the southeast side of town. The City will probably need a fire station down there and noted that having not to close and rebuild is cheaper; therefore, the City will save money in the long run. Mr. Potucek added that the Tribute Plan will include provisions for another station and with the way that the City is currently doing business, Station Two could probably be easily converted into another EMS Station.

- Southeast Arizona communications facility (SEACOM) started in 2017 and as a regional hub for 911 dispatching and emergency services coordination.
- Public Library has also had additional audio books and online services which has increased their ability to serve more citizens, especially during the pandemic.

Mr. Pregler stated that these are the kind of the goals/achievements that the City has accomplished over the last eight years. These are all based on the goals and strategies from Vista, 2030.

Mr. Pregler proceeded to explain how the City is going to develop the new general plan moving forward and looking at the organization in the format of the new general plan:
- Vision - a critical step in articulating the shared values of Sierra Vista residents, business owners and community leaders, i.e., outstanding livability, exceptional experience, or a community vision.
- Values will be at the forefront of the decision making and implementing the City’s vision, community aspirations and goals found in the general plan, i.e., collaborate and engage, revitalize responsibly. These are the values that a community can strive to accomplish.
- Themes - categories that have similar characteristics.

Mr. Pregler stated that the idea for the general plan is to organize it into themes as opposed to being organized by elements like it currently is. Several elements can apply to a specific theme. For example, sustainability and environmental planning can include elements of open space, environmental planning, conservation, and water resources.

The advantages of organizing into themes are being able to better address the values of the community, reduce the duplication of information of which there is a lot of duplication in the current general plan.

Mayor Mueller asked if the general plan will still have the elements required by law. He also asked if the difference is that the elements will be organized into groups so that there is no repetition. Mr. Pregler stated that he is correct. This way it is more effective, and many other communities have used this format as well. Lastly, he noted that the advantage of themes is that it requires measured and objective strategies and goals.

Major themes and issues that will be looked at being placed into the new general plan:
Growth and land use:
- Monitor and find opportunities to reduce building vacancy rates.

Mr. Pregler noted that the vacancy rates have been going down in the past six months. The pandemic resulted in a lot of vacancies, but they have gotten better in the last six months.

Mayor Mueller asked if the major focus was on commercial versus residential or both. Mr. Pregler stated that it was commercial.
- Ensure future development does not compromise or negatively affect the missions on Fort Huachuca or adjacent jurisdictions.

Mr. Pregler stated that the City and Fort Huachuca are in the process of completing a Joint Resource Utilization Study to ensure that the goals and strategies of Fort Huachuca and the City do not conflict with one another and certainly complement one another moving forward.

- Coordinate new developments with Fort Huachuca and other applicable government agencies.

Mr. Pregler stated that this is currently done. The City wants to ensure that any development in the City does not compromise the missions on Fort Huachuca. Typically, the City will ask Fort Huachuca to provide comments about a particular development and if they have no additional comments then the City moves forward with that project and that development.

- Continue to pursue annexations in the proactive annexation areas.
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- Pursue growth opportunities in the industrial sector.
- Infill development of the State Trust Land located within the City.

Mr. Pregler noted that there is still a lot of State Trust Land. Canada Vista Subdivisions is one little section of that entire master plan from the State Land that goes all the way from Fry Boulevard down through Busby and almost Golf Links Drive. All the area is vacant, and it is right for infill development at some point down the road. Mayor Mueller noted that the area just south of the City is also State Trust Land. There are almost two full sections within the City of State Trust Land in various places, but the challenge with the State Trust Land is that they cannot get rid of it rid of it, unless it is the best and highest use to gather the funds for the State Education System. They are also very particular, and they must follow a bid process, and most developers do not want to deal with it.

Mr. Pregler stated that a lot of this property has been master planned by the State and there is already existing zoning on the property across. The City's zoning in the zoning map reflects the zoning on the Master Plan; therefore, when a developer comes in, they must develop it per the zoning that is on the Master Plan and in the Development Code. This can pose a challenge as well, especially if the developer does not think that it is the highest and best use.

Redevelopment and Neighborhood Enhancement:
- Continue with public safety and neighborhood enforcement in some of these areas.
- Continue with the upgrades and infrastructure improvements.
- Compatibility, and look at the character the definition, the design standards, and sense of place.

Mr. Pregler stated that the City is trying to do that now with the West End as improvements are going on the West End and Fry Boulevard.

- Infill, reuse, repurpose some of the vacant buildings.
- Continue policies that encourage investment and development.

Mr. Pregler stated that this is particularly true in the West End. The City has Infill Incentive District Policy with the West Sierra Vista Partnership Program.

Affordable Housing:
- Mix of more affordable housing in the community.

Mr. Pregler stated that the City had eight developments earlier, and seven of those are apartments and the City has the housing project off Denman Avenue, but the City needs to have a greater mix of affordable housing in the community.
- Expand programs to repair and rehabilitate existing affordable housing stocks, i.e., Emergency Home Repair Program.
- Increase communication with Cochise County Housing Authority and Arizona Attorney General's office.

Mr. Pregler stated that in the past couple of years there have been a lot of individuals placed in substandard housing. The City can be involved because it is more of a blight issue in terms of the building and the City follows up with abatement, if necessary. However, people are living in these substandard homes. The City is trying to figure out a way to prevent this from happening on the front end and back end, to be more proactive with this.

- Neighborhood enforcement and abatements.
- Synergy and coordination between Continuum of Care organizations.
- Update the Housing and Needs Assessment Plan to reflect current trends.

Mr. Pregler stated that he believes that the City will end up hiring a consultant to provide a new Housing Needs Assessment Plan, which will then ultimately be an appendix to the general plan moving forward. The last time the City had a Housing Needs Assessment Plan was in 2007.

Transportation Connections, and Enhancements:
- Update the Access Management information to be provided by a consultant and included as an appendix, which is something that the Planning and Zoning Commission and staff have been discussing for a couple of years because there have been some concerns about access to commercial businesses and integrate that into the Development Code.

Mayor Mueller asked Mr. Pregler if he is talking about access to businesses or to transit. Mr. Pregler stated that it is a combination of both. It started off as a discussion about commercial developments, but it morphed into other areas as well. They are looking at hiring a consultant to look at these needs and it will require a Development Code Amendment because the City will be amending its own Access Management Plan in terms of providing appropriate connections to commercial facilities.

- Integrate the data from the updated Traffic Circulation Plan into the Land Use Maps.
- Update roadway construction standards to be reflected in the Land Use Maps.

Mr. Pregler noted that this is something else like what was talked about with the Access Management Plan. This is about roadway construction standards. For example, roadway widths, the width of lanes, width of the right of ways. All this is going to be looked at in the next couple of years, which will also be integrated into the general plan as well as a Development Code.

- Include the updated Short Range Transit Plan as an appendix to the general plan.
- Include the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan as an appendix.
- Continue to apply for connectivity grants as prioritized by the State Bicycle Pedestrian Routes Plan.
- Ensure that transit services and facilities can accommodate citizens with differing abilities.

Urban Design:
- Recommending that gateway overlays or standards to provide for a higher level of building and site aesthetics or properties located along major roadways entering the City.

Mr. Pregler stated that this is seen in a lot of other communities, specifically on major arterial roadways where there might be a higher level of architectural design or roadway enhancement, additional landscaping.

- Consider distinctive architectural design for the West End.

Mr. Pregler stated that this is something that has been discussed for the past couple of years as
well.

Mayor Mueller asked if when talking about architectural design, staff is talking more than just having the fancy light poles and the planners except on the public side. Staff is also talking about as new businesses come in, to be a little more liberal or have a set of standards so that things look cohesive, not similar, so that you know in an area. Mr. Pregler stated that he is correct.

Mayor Mueller stated that this is going to engender some future discussion, because what he likes, she may not like, or he may not like, or she may like it too, and to get a get a cohesive thing from the Council is going to be a chore as well as getting the business who are spending the money to go along with it. Therefore, he is a little unsettled about that. Mr. Pregler stated that he can appreciate that for sure, and he is aware that this is something the West End Commission has been pushing recently. It could be a challenge, and it may not go anywhere, but at least it will be potentially in the general plan for consideration.

Environmental and sustainability:
- Continue to find ways to save energy and water in all city facilities and buildings, referencing the Snyder Electric Project.
- Expand water conservation standards for new developments and continue the Toilet Rebate Program.
- Continue to support Waterwise.
- Continue partnership with the Cochise Conservation Recharge Network; and
- Expand stewardship programs like the Adopt-A-Area Program.

Mayor Mueller stated that one of the things he would like to throw out for thought on the electrical, staff might consider how to attract in the hotels and in the main shopping areas, a company if the City is not doing itself is the electric power/recharging stations for vehicles. He further stated that if the City is going to all electrical vehicle stuff, there are people visiting the community on business, an event in the park, that may need a place to plug in overnight. This will need to be looked at long term and have a plan so that the City does not have those things popping up everywhere. Mr. Pregler stated that this is a great idea, and he made comment of that so that there is something included like that in the general plan.

Mr. Pregler stated that these are the major goals and the policies that City staff has certainly recognized at this point, and there will be more due to the public outreach component of the general plan:
- Band The Table and virtual meetings will be the primary form of outreach.

Mr. Pregler stated that there will be limited in-person meetings or attendance at public events, but there will be a few meeting events, certainly necessary as some people do not have access to computers and whatnot. Primarily most of the information and public outreach will be through virtual means.

Mayor Mueller stated that he hopes that the pandemic is well gone by 2023; therefore, staff may need to plan for some additional in-person meetings depending on the situation. He added that it has taken people a while to get back to what used to be normal, so this may be the best way to go.

Schedule and Timeline:
- November 5, 2024 is Election Day and so that is the day that the general plan must be on the ballot to be ratified by the voters.

Mr. Pregler stated that according to State Law, the Council approval must be 120-days prior to the ratification of the public, which is why the date has been set for June 27, 2024 for Council approval. A 2/3 vote is required.
- Planning and Zoning Commission public hearings (two are required):
  - May 28, 2024 is the first public hearing, and it must be offsite and somewhere in the
community; and
  - June 3, 2024 is the second public hearing.

Mr. Pregler noted that State Law reads that the date that the draft plan must be distributed is 60 days before the first public hearing notification. March 7, 2024 is the date that the City must have the draft ready to go and out for review. Essentially the City has two years and three weeks to complete the plan. Staff is currently in the process of doing the data collection, analysis, and public input document writing.

Council Member Rodriguez stated that important to him are the comments made during the last slide regarding public feedback. Consultants are great, but Council needs to know what they are supposed to write, cost, and how the public feedback is going to feed into that.

Council Member Benning stated that he agreed with Councilman Rodriguez regarding the price for the consultants, and what they are going to provide. However, in going through Mr. Pregler’s briefing, when someone talks about what Sierra Vista currently looks like, etc., one does not realize how much has changed. Seeing it on paper, and going through it, since 2015 Sierra Vista is a different city, and it is growing even better and even more. It is one, great to be a part of, and two, great to watch. Lastly, he stated that Mr. Potucek and his staff do amazing work.

Council Member Johnson asked about substandard housing. Mr. Pregler stated that these are typically all rentals.

Council Member Johnson stated that he does not know how the City works with apartment owners, but perhaps there needs to be an inspection prior to the new rental. If people are renting places that are substandard, he believes that it is the City's responsibility to make sure that these apartments or places are not substandard. This is human dignity.

Mayor Mueller stated that housing is one area where the City has not been directly involved as it probably could be. The State of Arizona is responsible for that aspect, but the City can assist. He added that several years ago there were shortages of housing, and the City was able to attract folks to put into housing that is not substandard. Eliminating a lot of the pre1976 trailers got rid of a lot of substandard housing; therefore, there are things that the City has done in the past. However, if this is put in the general plan, the City will have to focus on it in the future and address those things. The City does not control housing and the City does not have a housing agency like a big city would; however, he is not even sure that there is legislation that would allow a city to do that. All this needs to be delved into.

Mr. Potucek stated that the study that was done in 2007 focused on more of the availability of affordable housing. In this go around, staff wants to focus on not only the availability of affordable housing that is being seen in certain parts of town, with the redevelopment of some of the trailer areas, but the component of substandard housing. Council would then have options to look at on how to address that in terms of code enforcement and other things in the future. Therefore, staff is going to add that component to the next study.

Council Member Benning stated that he is aware that contractors and maintenance people for the different apartment complexes, are coming to get their inspections and stuff like that for the maintenance side of it, but he does not think that they are doing anything for the beginning of it. It might be a good idea to look at that.

Mayor Mueller stated that the problem needs to be identified first, and that is exactly what Mr. Potucek is saying, define the problem and then develop appropriate solutions. In closing he encouraged Council to read the more detailed copies that they received via email and noted that there is a lot of good things listed on the land use. He also stated that he had additional questions for Mr. Pregler on those after he read them, and if anyone needs historical context, they can come
and see him to talk about this because he has been through this twice. He thanked Mr. Pregler and stated that he looks forward to getting this done.

c. Council Executive Report

Mr. Potucek stated that so much of what staff does is process, and Council was just briefed on one of those things, the general plan, which is something that must be done every 10 years. With the start of the New Year, the City is now entering the budget process; therefore, the Council’s next work session will be the midyear budget review, which will also effectively be the kickoff of the next fiscal year’s budget process. He added that Ms. Yarbrough and staff have put together a budget plan for the year and she will be emailing that to the Council. There will be several sessions regarding the budget over the next few months. The other process that some of the Council Members are familiar with is the annual CDBG process that will be addressed at a future work session very soon. There are some excellent statistics in the Executive Report, and many projects are already underway, which he will report on Thursday, February 10, 2022. Council is going to see a lot of activity around town the rest of this fiscal year and beyond.

Council Member Landry stated that she always loves these executive reports. It has so much great information and breaks things down nicely. She added that she liked seeing the Better Buck’s breakdown, since it started at the end of last year, and how it is going, which means that those are being utilized. Mr. Potucek stated that staff appreciates the Council’s support of that program, and it has taken off probably better than it was hoped and turned out to be a very good program.

Council Member Umphrey stated that it was wonderful to read the impact that it is having on the community and with the stores and the shoplifting going down. She added that there is a chart in report.

In response to Council Member Umphrey, Police Chief Adams stated that shoplifting is from a store, theft is typically somebody stealing something from an individual, and a burglary would be breaking into somebody’s home and stealing something. A vehicle burglary would be breaking into a car and stealing something. A lot of leads are due to individuals having stuff missing from their homes. They believe they know who might have taken it, and it is somebody that would have had legal access to their place. Things stolen out of front yards would be stuff that would be classified under theft and not shoplifting from one of the others. A robbery would be using force to remove property from a person. The robbery would be what people refer to as a mugging. Mr. Potucek stated that he does not think that there is enough data to say that Better Bucks resulted in the decreases that Council Member Umphrey is referring to. Police Chief Adams stated that the report is on one store that has stated that they take the Better Bucks. The overall shoplifting was considerable during COVID because they had mask mandates, people waiting at doors, people coming in and out. He added that he thinks that seen are the effects of the shoplifting reduction because of the Covid restrictions that were placed it stores. The one anecdote was one store that takes the Better Bucks that has seen that the reduction in shoplifting and they relayed that to Corporal Borgstadt.

Council Member Umphrey stated that she is grateful to see all first responders working through COVID because she knows that it has been extra crazy with the virus being so widespread, but it is finally on a decline. She also stated that there was a blurb about the work that the West End Commission is doing on planning the West End Celebration. She noted that she sat in on a couple of meetings and she loves hearing how it is coming together. It is going to be an amazing event. Mayor Mueller noted that it is the West End Fair for the Next Generation.

Council Member Umphrey further stated that she is very excited about the event, and she got to see someone utilize the on-street parking recently, who had his two little kids run from the car to the park and then the ice cream shop without having to worry about any cars. She was also very happy to see the demo, removal and cleanup of the unsafe structures that were probably being used for substandard housing. She noted that Mike Norman is being listed as coming back to work with the City, and lastly, she congratulated all the retirees at the Police Department.
In response to Council Member Umphrey, Ms. Hector explained that gathering b-roll is jargon for extra video footage that can be used to plug in where needed. The Department wants to promote festivals, events, and activities, and when working with the Police Department, Mr. Boyd will take quite a bit of video footage of the Police Department officers talking about how awesome it is to work there. He will then take bits and pieces out to use for the project but will save all the pieces that are not going to be used, considered b-roll; therefore, when there is another project, the Department is already got it ready to go.

Mr. Potucek pointed out some of the police and fire statistics and stated that the City is seeing some growth in the community, new construction, hopefully now reversed the trend, and seeing some population growth, which is needed. However, disproportionately the number of calls in the police and fire departments have gone up more than the growth rate. He asked the chiefs to do a little deeper dive into those numbers so that there can be a better determination as to what that is. Maybe it is COVID or effects of that causing some of these trends. The numbers need to be looked at to address those either with manning, facilities, or training going forward because there seems to be a disparity between the growth in those areas and the other growth being seen in the community.

Council Member Rodriguez stated that he likes the crime rate statistics as a lot of people ask him about that. Once the crime rates are broken down it shows the facts or if there is an actual trend or not. The response times as well goes along with what Mr. Potucek stated, call volumes out there along with the DCIP grants, which people ask questions about, how these coincide, the building of a new station. He added that the West End stuff is good and noted that he gets a few comments about the West End every day, and they are either happy or mad about things i.e., a traffic study, addressing problems, accidents, placing a stop sign because there is a lot of congestion that was not expected because traffic is not flowing the way it was expected based on a study that was done two years ago. Mr. Potucek stated that Mayor Mueller and he were talking about that a while ago, and the intent of the West Fry Project is to narrow the road and to slow down the speed as well. A slower speed determines that there is no need to have stoplights, particularly one at Garden Avenue. Traffic studies were done before embarking on this process. It would be good to follow up after the project is finished to see how much traffic is being generated, and how fast they are going. He added that it is currently kind of hard for people while they see it under construction to envision what the completed project is going to look like. The City will follow up with the North Garden part of that next fiscal year too, which could also have an impact.

Council Member Rodriguez voiced his appreciation of the breakdown of the Christmas setup and wished that a picture had been shown as the big tree blew over, but it was quickly picked up that is another testimony as to how quickly the Parks staff is on it. He also stated that he was looking at the chart on housing availability and noted that there are only 24 houses available in Sierra Vista. However, he does not know where that number came from or equated. Mayor Mueller stated that the table shows more than just Sierra Vista. The numbers in the table are the Sierra Vista area and not just in town. There may only be 24 in town. Mr. Potucek stated that those are probably single family. He added that he talked to Virginia Kleven during the Rotary Club meeting, and she mentioned that there were 46 total properties on the market. Some of those may not be single family, but it is a small number. It is a tight market, and he believes that the private sector is having a little trouble with labor and materials to try to get the new housing up in a timely way, and that kind of constrains the housing and restricts supply, and when that happens, prices go up. Council Member Benning noted that there are no rentals.

Council Member Johnson stated that he saw on social media that there was a person complaining about the traffic along the construction zone. This person was trying to turn from North Street or North Avenue, left to go eastbound on Fry Boulevard, and they sat there for quite a long time. He added that he had a friend that gave him the same complaint; therefore, he drove that area and he looked at what was going on. He stated that he thinks that the major thing is that the traffic signal at Carmichael is not activated yet. People are driving through that stop sign with a California stop, where they kind of like slow down and then keep going. There is no break in traffic, but it is something the Council should consider and maybe even lower the speed limit. Mayor Mueller stated that he has experienced that too. They are supposed to come to a full stop at the interchange and
then go on, and if they do that properly, they can basically skirt out north and go on their safely and make a left-hand turn. Council Member Rodriguez stated that unfortunately, construction stop signs do not have the respect of a real stop sign.

d. Report on Recent Trips, Meetings and Future Meetings

Mayor Mueller reported that on Friday, February 4, 2022, he attended the League of Cities and Towns Meeting, where they talked about the first brush of legislation, and there is only one that is really alarming. This was a Republican, right wing, and a Democrat, left wing, that got together, and wanted to solve the affordable housing program in the Arizona. They looked at a piece of legislation that had been talked about in California, and basically, they proposed a similar thing, but this is a piece of legislation that states that if you are a property owner, you can do anything you want with your property, to include putting in 12 apartments on it. They want to change the planning laws that the cities can use so that if somebody wanted to put in 12 apartments on what is now a single-family lot, they can do that, and they would not require a public hearing. They would not be required to notify the neighbors, they would not be required to go through P&Z, and the only place they would go to would be the city council. It was doubtful the way it was written on whether the city council could tell them no. This is a bad bill, and the League of Cities is working on getting that killed. He added that there is a need to address affordable housing, but the legislators did not meet the mark at all on that. Due to Sierra Vista’s population, which went up slightly, and everybody else went down slightly, Sierra Vista’s dues will grow.

Council Member Benning stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission met on February 1, 2022. He reported that the Commission is going to take on the public input for Roadrunner Park on March 19, 2022, where they will have their meeting to try and get the word out to the whole community, especially around the Canyon De Flores. He added that sometime in March, they will have the next park cleaned up, which anyone is welcomed to join. The Commission is also going to be looking at current policies regarding parks ball fields, to see if there are differences in the language to specify what is a dog park, ballpark, and community park. He also reported that they are still waiting on the rock bevel at Soldier Creek, and lastly, he announced that the Tour De Zona has 580 plus reservations, 35 plus hotel reservations, and countless RV’s and tents that will fill the park area.

e. Future Discussion Items and Council Requests

Assistant City Manager Yarbrough stated that on the work session for February 22, 2022, there will be discussion on the mid-year budget review scheduled, which is really one of the first budget work sessions. She added that she will send out the budget calendar to Council via email, and on the following work session, there will be discussion regarding Council’s six-month strategic plan update report. There are also plans to schedule a legislative update; However, staff is waiting on all the bills to be dropped first to be able to give Council an update on what is out.

Mayor Mueller noted that the Senate closed last week, and the House closes this week.

Council Member Benning asked for future discussion to look at the City’s tax levy since the City was able to pay off its debt early, and with online sales tax now coming to the City. He added that he would like to see where the current sales taxes are in relation to what the City’s budget could be, and what is needed in the future. Mayor Mueller stated that this will be a part of the budget discussion. He added that this is a good time, once Council knows what their requirements are going to be for next year, to sit down and decide whether there needs to be rate adjustments. This is something that Council should look at every year. It should be part of the budget process. Mr. Potucek stated that discussion about those rates takes place when money is needed, and currently there are more spending needs.

Mayor Mueller stated that in looking at those unfunded requirements that are in the back of the budget book, everyone can see the millions of dollars needed, but there are some priorities at the top that probably should be funded, at least for the next couple of years. If the revenue largess
continues in the future, he thinks that this should be a consideration in addition to PSPRS as well as the street maintenance. He added that he was in one neighborhood the other day and noticed that the City has done part of the streets on one side of, but the other side is still required. Therefore, the City needs some serious money, and that street problem needs to be rebuilt.

Mr. Potucek stated that he thinks Council is going to be very pleased with the numbers that they will see coming out in the mid-year budget review in a couple weeks. The City is the second or third lowest sales tax rate in the State of Arizona and maybe the first or second lowest combined tax rate in the State of Arizona.

3. Adjourn

Mayor Mueller adjourned the February 8, 2022 work session of the Sierra Vista City Council at 4:18 p.m.

Frederick W. Mueller, Mayor

Minutes prepared by:

Maria G. Marsh, Deputy Clerk

Attest:

Jill Adams, City Clerk