

Minutes of the Regular Agenda Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of South Tucson, Arizona, held Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., at the City of South Tucson Council Chambers, 1601 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, South Tucson, Arizona.

Staff Present: Veronica Moreno, Interim City Manager  
Lourdes Aguirre, Finance Director  
Danny Denogean, Public Safety Director and Chief of Police  
Josue Licea, Planning Director  
Jon Paladini, City Attorney

Councilors Present: Mayor Paul Diaz  
Vice Mayor Herman Lopez  
Acting Mayor Rita Rogers  
Councilor Anita Romero  
Councilor Cesar Aguirre  
Councilor Brian Flagg  
Councilor Roxanna Valenzuela

Others Present: Dwight Metzger, Resident  
Mark Mayer, Non-Resident  
Anthony D’Onofrio, Non-resident  
Glenda Avalos, Non-resident  
Michael Alfaro, Non-resident  
Douglas Levy, Non-resident  
Mohyeddin Abdulaziz, Resident  
Michael McGuire, Resident  
Emily Greenspan, Non-resident  
Pedro Gonzales, Non-resident  
David Karp, Non-resident  
Alexander Rivera, Non-resident

Mayor Diaz called the Regular Agenda Meeting of Tuesday, March 5, 2024, to order at 6:02 p.m. Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, and Land Acknowledgment and Mission Statements.

#### ITEM #03 – LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND MISSION STATEMENT

Vice Mayor Lopez: On behalf of South Tucson residents, we honor the Tribal Nations who have served as caretakers of this land from time immemorial and respectfully acknowledge the ancestral homelands of the Tohono O’odham Nation and the multi-millennial presence of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe within South Tucson. Consistent with the City of South Tucson’s commitment to diversity and inclusion, we strive toward building equal-partner relationships with Arizona’s Tribal Nations.

Acting Mayor Rogers: The Mission Statement of the City of South Tucson is to build up our community through mutual cooperation between we, your public servants, and you our citizens so that jointly we can build a safe and stronger City. Amen.

Mayor Diaz: Thank you.

ITEM #04 – ROLL CALL (By City Manager Moreno):

Vice Mayor Lopez. Here.

Acting Mayor Rogers. Aye.

Councilor Romero. Here.

Mayor Diaz. Here.

Councilor Flagg. Here.

Councilor Aguirre. Here.

Councilor Valenzuela. Here.

ITEM #05 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Diaz: Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 20<sup>th</sup>. Are there any deletions, corrections, to the Minutes?

Vice Mayor Lopez: Mr. Mayor, I make a motion that we approve the Minutes for February 20th.

Acting Mayor Rogers: Second.

Mayor Diaz: It's been Moved and Seconded. Roll Call.

Vice Mayor Lopez. Yes.

Acting Mayor Rogers. Aye.

Councilor Romero. Aye.

Mayor Diaz. Yes.

Councilor Flagg. Yes.

Councilor Aguirre. Aye.

Councilor Valenzuela. Aye.

Mayor Diaz: The next item is the Call to the Public.

Vice Mayor Lopez: Mr. Mayor, can I read a statement, please.

Mayor Diaz: Ok.

Vice Mayor Lopez: Thank you. First of all, I want to thank all of these firemen showing up here attending tonight's meeting. I just wish you would show up for work when you are supposed to instead of making an easy phone call to management. The other thing is that I want to apologize if my statement I made at the last meeting was taken by the wrong context of what I said, and I just want to extend my apologies, and I want to thank you for serving our community and your dedication to the community. Thank you. That's all I have, Mr. Mayor.

Call to the Audience

Mayor Diaz: Would anyone in the public like to address the Council at this time? There's cards to be filled.

Ms. Aguirre: Mr. Mayor, we actually have quite a few here, so we can get started with them. The first card that we have here is speaker Dwight Metzger, resident, address 238 E. 26<sup>th</sup> St., and the topic is Real Leadership - Cease Fire Now.

Mr. Metzger: Good evening and thank you, Mayor and Council. Thank you for your leadership and for the important vote that you have today. I want to compel you to really dig deep into your hearts and minds and think about what example you set for this community, for the State of Arizona, for the United States, and for the World. I ask that you stand with the nearly unanimous opposition to the genocide in Palestine with the rest of the world. All but the United States is opposed to the killing of innocent people and starvation of people, women, children and men, for capitalism and misdirected politics. I know you believe differently, you're better than this. I've seen your work in the community; I know you care. South Tucson is a very special place with very special challenges and all the work that you do, the good you bring to this community, can be reflected in this one Resolution. What you could do tonight will send a message to Tucson and to Arizona and beyond, and to the people in Palestine and around the world that are struggling daily and dearly to find some kind of peace and an end to this terrible war on the Palestinian people.

Councilor Flagg: Yes.

Mr. Metzger: So please, support this Resolution. It's the right thing to do.

Councilor Flagg: Right on.

Ms. Aguirre: Next speaker is Mark Mayer, not a resident, address is 3361 E. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and topic is Item #9 Ceasefire Resolution.

Mr. Mayer: Good evening members of the Mayor and Council. I'd love to speak just from my heart but in respect to time, I will read my statement. I'm speaking to you from the surrounding southside community and urging that you adopt the Ceasefire Resolution that is now before you. This is a small but vital step that South Tucson can now take to stand up against the genocide being committed against the Palestinian people. By taking this step, you can also blaze a path and exercise leadership for the wider community where to date our own elected officials have been turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to our pleas to stop sending made in USA bombs to slaughter civilians. For South Tucson to be the first local jurisdiction to stand up against this genocide is well rooted in the community's experience. I think of my friend Rene Franco and the countless other (inaudible) Pecos who sought refuge from the genocide in their country in the 1980's at the nearby Southside Presbyterian Church on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, same street I live on. That genocide in which 200,000 perished was funded by our U.S. tax dollars and the military training for it was provided by the same apartheid Israel that is now slaughtering Palestinians. I also think of my dear sister, Carmen Garza, from 40<sup>th</sup> Street and how it reminds me of the Yaqui experience that is so well rooted in the heritage of South Tucson. For many decades in the late 19 and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Yaqui put up the fiercest of all resistances to the Mexican government's attempt to occupy ancestral lands of Southern Sonora. In the end, however, the Mexican Army launched an unrelenting genocide that cost the lives of 60,000 people with the survivors fleeing northward and ending suddenly in what is now South Tucson. With this depth of historical knowledge and experience, the actual genocides, South Tucson is well suited to be the first jurisdiction in Southern Arizona to officially speak out against the onslaught Palestinians are now facing. I urge you to do so by adopting the Ceasefire Resolution before you, and I will close my remarks by simply saying, stop the genocide, stop U.S. aid to Israel, and free Palestine.

Ms. Aguirre: Next speaker is Anthony D'Onofrio, not a resident, topic is Local 479 Support for South Tucson Fire.

Mr. D'Onofrio: Good evening, Honorable Mayor and Council and citizens of South Tucson. My name is Anthony D'Onofrio and I have met some of you before. I am with Tucson Firefighters Association Local 479. Local 479 also represents the City of South Tucson Fire Department. I come before you today to stand in solidarity with the firefighters of South Tucson and to express our support in rebuilding the South Tucson Fire Department by hiring the already trained and qualified firefighters who serve the community within South Tucson's Reserve ranks. Of the more than 30 Reservists who are already employed by South Tucson, many are already qualified and probably trained to serve in positions as Fire Captain and Engineer. Hiring these current employees will not only preserve the heritage and tradition of this once proud Fire Department but will also ensure the timely and continual delivery of emergency services throughout the community of South Tucson. That's all I have. Thank you.

Acting Mayor Rogers: Thank you.

Ms. Aguirre: The next speaker is Glenda Avalos, not a resident, and the topic is Ceasefire.

Ms. Avalos: Good evening, Buenos Noches. My name is Glenda Avalos and I have invested in serving South Tucson for the past 22 years in different capacities from children to elderly, and my current role as caretaking for unsheltered community and those in need. Ceasefire and peace should never be controversial, should never be controversial. Preserving human life should always be the mission, preserving human life. I believe in a God of justice, a God who commands me to love my neighbor, to take my shirt off my back and give it to the one who needs it, no matter what the circumstance is. I stand before a Council who I know is people of faith. You are people of faith. I have stood with you in Mass. I stood with you in Mass, and I am just reminding you what the good Lord asked us to do, especially during this Lent season, to care for our brothers, to care for our neighbor. And what Christ has said to us, that we are all one in Him. We cannot stand and say that we are faith-based and that we are believers and that we are under God and not do right by losing (inaudible). There's people suffering. Maybe our loved ones are in bed, sheltered, clothed and fed. There are those in need and if you have an opportunity now to act upon what God has commanded you to do, let's do that, because one day we will stand before our Creator and he will keep a count of exactly what He has asked us to do, and we can either lay down our heads or stand still, and raise up our heads and say we account to you and no one else. There is a whole multitude of community that says they are faith based, that their hands are tied. Our hands are not tied. As South Tucson we are proud. We might be needing so much, but when it comes to faith, that is something that is big here in South Tucson. That is one of our deepest roots that we have. We provide for one another; we provide for those in need. As you look into being the first City, this is an opportunity to speak out when no one else is speaking out. Let's Ceasefire now, South Tucson.

Councilor Flagg: Amen.

Ms. Aguirre: The next card we have is for Michael Alfaro, not a resident, topic is Speak to Vice Mayor.

Mr. Alfaro: Good evening, Mayor, Members of the Council. How are you doing today?

Councilor Flagg: Good.

Mr. Alfaro: That's good to hear. Mr. Herman Lopez, how are you doing today?

Vice Mayor Lopez: Wonderful.

Mr. Alfaro: Good, Sir. My name is Michael, last name Alfaro. I'm speaking to you directly, not just for myself but for my fellow firemen in the back, ok. Originally, I wanted to come and ask respectfully for an apology for the comment that was made last board meeting, but you already gave us that. We appreciate that. On the other hand, it was kind of disheartening to hear you give us a compliment and disgrace us at the same time in front of the whole crowd here.

Acting Mayor Rogers: Yep.

Mr. Alfaro: I feel that if you have certain opinions or issues with the Fire Department, we respect that, but we also ask for the support, ok. So tonight, I am not asking for another apology. I'm just asking for less discrimination and more support on your behalf. So I am a little emotional right now because I take this to heart, not just myself but my fellow firemen back there, we put our lives on the line here in this community. I have been on three major calls here. 420, an arson fire, Crossroads fire and just recently the Spanish Trail fire with other members in the back. Very dangerous calls, so to hear that kind of discrimination is just very, we take it to heart, very disheartening. So, I just ask that you support us, not just speaking respectfully about us, but offering us more support, logistical wise also. That's all I have to say. If you have anything you would like to say, to address to me, I am more than happy to hear it.

City Attorney Paladini: You can't ask for a comment back during a call to the public.

Mr. Alfaro: Ok, no worries, I didn't know. You all have a good evening. You do the same, Mr. Mayor. Thank you.

Mayor Diaz: Thank you.

Ms. Aguirre: The next speaker is Douglas Levy, not a resident, address 283 S. Scott Ave., the topic is #9, Cease Fire Resolution.

Mr. Levy: Good evening.

Acting Mayor Rogers: Good evening.

Mr. Levy: Thank you for giving us an opportunity to speak. I speak in opposition to this City Council taking a position with regard to House Resolution 786. It was introduced in the U.S. Congress back in October. It had only 18 sponsors. It has never been debated. It has never been taken up for a vote and it will not be taken up for a vote. As you all know just from reading the newspapers, there are ongoing talks in Egypt, Qatar is there, United States, representatives from Israel have been there, so negotiations are ongoing hopefully for a meaningful ceasefire. I should mention, while I am not a resident, my office since 2006, I'm a trial lawyer here in Tucson, 100% of my cases are representing individuals only. I don't represent companies or corporations. I'm a civil trial lawyer and my office is at 283 S. Scott Ave. I have lived in the City of Tucson since we moved here in 1995 and I raised my family here. I want to comment that every member of the community, I am a very active member of Tucson's Jewish community, we mourn the death of every single innocent woman and child in Gaza and the West Bank who has passed away. There was a ceasefire as of October 7<sup>th</sup> that was in effect. I think you should hold everyone who comes and speaks in favor of this particular Ceasefire Resolution, make them acknowledge, and your Resolution should do the same, the 1,200 Israelis who were murdered on October 7<sup>th</sup> and there are still 134 hostages in Gaza. So if you want to do a Ceasefire Resolution,

it should call as well for there should be a ceasefire. That's the U.S. position and that's Israel's position. Israel, as you know, has agreed to enter into a ceasefire immediately, but Hamas will not release any names of any hostages it intends to release. This has been a national tragedy for Israel, in addition to the 1,200 people who were murdered. Think about these families where the 134 hostages are still being held. We had a pause, there was a pause, and a number of hostages, 100 hostages were released several months ago, but there's still 134 (inaudible) the United Nations and Israel and the U.S. believe that of that number, at least 35 of those are now dead. And Hamas can't even find it amongst, in their hearts, to release those dead bodies. I just want to point out that, I just wish that you would postpone this until the next City Council meeting so we can have other representatives from the Tucson and South Tucson Jewish community address you. Thank you.

[Several booing and outbursts]

Mayor Diaz: Excuse me, excuse me. Order! Order!

Mr. Levy: I'm not a murderer.

Mayor Diaz: Please, please. If you want to continue this, we will do it respectfully, otherwise, we will clear the room. Next speaker.

Ms. Aguirre: Next speaker is Mohyeddin Abdulaziz, not a resident, address 2032 N. Cloverland Ave., topic is Ceasefire Resolution.

Mr. Abdulaziz: Good afternoon.

Acting Mayor Rogers: Hello.

Mr. Abdulaziz: Peace be upon you and the people of the City of South Tucson. My name is Mohyeddin Abdulaziz, and I am a Palestinian Arab American. I am an immigrant and have lived here for more than 45 years, longer than I have lived anywhere else. I have been working for the University of Arizona and the Arizona Court of Appeals for more than 30 years. Thank you for considering a Ceasefire Resolution and thank you for giving me the opportunity today to appeal to a wise leadership to adopt this Resolution. For the past five months, our communities are being tortured every minute. By the news of unimaginable horrible death, destruction and distress of an entire people. Most are children. Thousands are killed and buried under the rubble and thousands more are suffering separation of an arm, a leg, an eye, or all of the above, while there is no care available for them. And more than 20,000 children are without their parents or other relatives. Humanity is calling for a ceasefire to stop this catastrophe we are all witnessing in Palestine. Your voice matters. Our country can make it happen. You can help. It would be amazing if the City of South Tucson would give wise and courageous leadership and becomes the first City in Arizona to adopt a Ceasefire Resolution. Other cities are working on it, and you would be a great model for them and for our country. It is important to recognize that the genocide, the violence and war are happening in our name, using our weapons and our money. So, we are all responsible and we need to do whatever possible to do the right thing and join the rest of humanity and people of cultures everywhere and end war and violence and use our resources to help our communities here at home. Your decision today matters. Similar decisions in the past helped end apartheid in South Africa for example. Let's stand together for justice, equality and peace. Thank you.

Councilor Flagg: Alright, right on!

Ms. Aguirre: Next speaker is Michael McGuire, resident, address 3001 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and the topic is Ceasefire.

Mr. McGuire: I live in South Tucson, and I am very proud to be here. I was part of a movement back in the '60's and '70's that was one of the most powerful social movements that has ever existed in the entire world. The French had stood up to their government and said stop the war in Algeria. A much bigger international movement happened in the '60's and '70's when we compelled our government, the United States of America, to stop killing Vietnamese. Our government killed 3 million Vietnamese. A lot of people don't understand that number, don't really know, can't really relate to it. That's half as many people as Hitler killed in the dungeons. We prevailed and we are proud of what we did, but there is a larger movement worldwide. It's strong in the United States, it's strong in Britain, it's strong in South America and Africa and Asia, and it's going to be a bigger movement than ours was. Ours was one of the greatest movements that ever took place on this planet, where the citizens could be so democratic as to rise up against our government, say you are wrong, our country is wrong. We are not wrong, we are right. We didn't kill 3 million Vietnamese, our government did. And we stood up to that government and told that government to stop it and it took way too long. Way too many Vietnamese people died. But now Vietnam is one of the happiest countries in the world. Now, South Africa is one of the happiest countries in the world, rising above horror like that, even if it's a fight, even if it's a struggle, even if there is bloodshed, that's supposed to be a proud thing, to be an American, to be for revolution and all that. Well, there's a worldwide revolution going on and it's a revolution for peace. It's a revolution that is not being fought with bombs or guns, it's being fought with civil disobedience and with marching in the street and with Congress members, and coming to City Councils like this, and you here, the seven of you that will vote on this, have a chance to be part of a movement that is international. It is happening in Asia, Europe, America. It's the biggest anti-war movement and those are the biggest and best movements humanity has ever seen. Join us. Thank you.

Ms. Aguirre: The next speaker is Emily Greenspan, address is Oro Valley, North Tucson, is not a resident, and the topic is Ceasefire.

Ms. Greenspan: Hello. My name is Emily Greenspan. I am the granddaughter of two Holocaust survivors and two Jewish anti-war activists. I was raised in a Zionist Synagogue where at the age of ten I learned that Israel was essential to my safety, that criticism of Israel was a threat to me and my community. I remember thinking Palestinians hated me because of who I was. I remembered fearing them because of who they were, who I thought they were. I grew up and learned more about my grandparents' pro-Palestine activism. I met Palestinians, Muslims and Israelis and American Jews who taught me about all the ways Israel has been brutalizing Palestinians for decades. I travelled to Palestine Israel four times and saw the occupation with my own eyes. I examined my childhood from mainstream American Jewish institutions, those that are shouting no ceasefire have recognized the very real pain of the Holocaust to justify enacting pain onto others. My grandparents taught me what injustice feels like, how to recognize it, and how to act against it. I see what Israel is doing, claiming self-defense, claiming to act in the best interest of the hostages, while turning down ceasefire negotiations that would bring hostages home, burning hospitals and Mosques and Churches and schools and even tents. Snipers are shooting grandmothers in the streets, and starving people running toward food. They even shot three Israeli hostages waving white flags. Tanks are crushing living human beings to a pulp of organs and broken bones. According to the New York Times, one in 73 Gazans have been killed since October. Entire bloodlines have been wiped out. My whole family can count at least 26 family members who were murdered during the Holocaust. In Gaza today, it is common for people to have had that many family



members killed. Some have lost over 100 family members. It is no secret that Israel is deliberately attacking civilians. Israeli journalist Yuval Abraham wrote about this back in November. Those still alive in Gaza suffer infectious disease, hunger, thirst and grief. Some are trapped under the rubble where they may die. This suffering is intentional. Israel severely limits who can go into Gaza as it has been doing for 17 years. Children are having their limbs amputated without anesthetics. Women are using tent scraps for menstrual products. Our own country has come to see that Israel cannot be trusted. They will not allow in life saving supplies waiting at Gaza's border, and no air drop supplies to Gaza at a very high cost, but we are trusting Israel with the bombs we pay for, which are killing people in mass. This is completely absurd. Israeli leaders have called Palestinians animals. They have called for Gaza to be flattened. They have called for a second (inaudible). A few weeks ago, a conference was held in Jerusalem planning new Israel settlement in Gaza. A few days ago, Israelis crossed into Gaza to build a settlement post. This has nothing to do with self-defense, or with hostages, or with fighting Hamas. This has everything to do with ethnic cleansing and genocide, never again is for everyone. Never again is now. We need a permanent ceasefire now. It is the absolute bare minimum we can do. Thank you.

Councilor Flagg: Thank you.

Ms. Aguirre: Mr. Mayor, we have two cards left. The second to the last is Pedro Gonzales, not a resident, address is 423 S. Elias Avenue, and the topic is Barrio Libre - Item #9.

Mr. Gonzales: Buenos Tardes.

Vice Mayor Lopez: Good afternoon.

Mr. Gonzales: I'm here not to tell you what is best for Barrio Libre. I'm here to remind you about what happened in the 1960's with Barrio Viejo with genocide, ethnic cleansing, what the City and the Federal government did to our Barrio, Barrio Viejo. So I just want to remind you that it is not just happening in Palestine, but it is happening here in Barrio Viejo. Three-quarters of our Barrio got wiped out back in the 1960's. There's a lot of young people here, so I want them to know that it has happened here in the United States, in Tucson. Our Barrio got wiped out, because you know, we were brown. I just want to remind you, and I also want to remind you that I don't live in South Tucson, but I bank in South Tucson, and I eat in South Tucson. Thank you.

Ms. Aguirre: The final card we have here is from David Karp, not a resident, address 1161 E. Paseo Pavon, topic Ceasefire Resolution.

Mr. Karp: My name is David Karp. I live outside of South Tucson. I have a Tucson address. I have lived here in Tucson since 1999. I thank you for giving me the chance to speak. I empathize with all of you because this is a really sensitive situation and you have people who feel so strongly on both sides, it's really hard, so I know you are in a tough spot. So I just want to say, I just came in, so I think most people here have the best of intents. They are fighting for things and speaking for things they believe in, and I am here to say that there will be people who disagree with me. I've heard Gaza described as an open-air prison, ok. I'm Jewish, my wife has family in Israel, and I've been there multiple times. I am going to agree with that. It is an open-air prison. The thing is, the jailor is not Israel, it's Hamas. And that's the piece that,

[Outbursts]

Mr. Karp: Hang on a second.



Mayor Diaz: Respect.

Acting Mayor Rogers: Quiet.

Mr. Karp: It's Hamas, in fact, I remember meeting a former negotiator for Abbas, leader of the Palestinian Authority, and he, very anti-Hamas, I don't know if you have heard of the son of Hamas, one of the sons of the founders of Hamas, he will speak out on Hamas. Hamas, they hide all of their equipment, they do everything, they want to have as many Palestinians killed as possible, so if you support, if you pass this Resolution, you are supporting them. You are actually harming the Palestinian people because, you know what, here's the thing. You know, you could have a ceasefire in 24 hours if all the hostages are released and you stop firing rockets, you would have a ceasefire right there. You had a ceasefire on October 6<sup>th</sup>. There were no Israeli troops inside Gaza before this happened. And I am going to say something. I did have family killed by Abba. The real people who are the Nazi like are Hamas. When they went in on October 7<sup>th</sup>, just killing people, how many people they can kill, that was the goal. They cut off women's breasts, they did things that were unbelievable.

[Audience member: That's a lie.]

Mr. Karp: The thing is, it is not a lie, it is not a lie, but here's the thing. Look it up and find it. I know many Israelis. None of them, may I speak, none of them want to kill Palestinians. In Israel there are two million Arabs and Palestinians who live there peacefully. There's an Arab who was on the Supreme Court in Israel. It's funny, because we have had some great leaders for peace here. (Buzzer went off). My time? Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak. I appreciate it.

Acting Mayor Rogers: Thank you.

[Audience chanting: Ceasefire now, ceasefire now].

Mayor Diaz: Order! Order! Come on, you guys. I will respect your voices and opinions and I'll go ahead and let you speak. Be respectful and we will continue with our meeting. Thank you.

Ms. Moreno: Excuse me, Mayor. I was just handed a card. Would you like the Council to include with the Call to the Audience?

Mayor Diaz: Ok.

Ms. Moreno: The person's name is Alexander Rivera, 253 W. Walnut, not a resident, and topic was blank.

Ms. Rivera: I just want to say very quickly my late stepfather was Jewish. Some of my closest friends are Jewish. And I would just like to remind you all to not equate Judaism with Zionism. They are not the same thing. Do not think that by listening to Zionists that you are helping those voices of the Jewish people. They are not the same thing, they are not equatable. Thank you.

Councilor Flagg: Thank you.

Ms. Aguirre: That is it.

Mayor Diaz: Thank you. We will move on to Item #06.

#### ITEM #06 - MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS: REPORTS OF CURRENT EVENTS, FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Diaz: Do any members of the Council want to report any current events?

Vice Mayor Lopez: Mr. Mayor, I've got three events. I want to say I attended the grand opening at the Sahuarita Health Care which is over there behind Pueblo High School at the shopping center where the Market is. They had the grand opening of the Medical Center there. The three Mayors attended the Rodeo Parade as participants, and also on the 7<sup>th</sup>, from 3-4:30 our City library is having a community discussion called the Frank Talk, and it is put on by the Tucson library so hopefully people have an opportunity to speak their mind. That's all I have, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Diaz: Ok. Anymore? I would like to request the Copper letter thanking the Lopez family for the long contributions to the City of South Tucson. If we could go ahead and do that and we will have a presentation here at a later date. Thank you. And also, the next item is the future agenda item. Does anybody else have any agenda items?

Acting Mayor Rogers: No.

Mayor Diaz: I'd like to add -

Councilor Flagg: That's it? I'd like to hear about the RTA meeting that happened, the RTA Board meeting, and I know the Mayor had to leave early, but you were there, Josue, right?

Mr. Licea: I didn't attend in person but I did watch the meeting on virtual. No specific action came out of that meeting other than there's a lot of back and forth between the City of Tucson and the smaller jurisdictions, you know, is the battle going on about comments that Tucson shared being that it is the largest jurisdiction in the RTA. That's the battle that's going on right now. Tucson wants a certain share where some of the rest of the smaller jurisdictions do not want to give up their entire share -

Councilor Flagg: Right.

Mr. Licea: That the City of Tucson is asking for. So the most specific action that was taken at the special meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, there was a lot of conversation about bond amounts and contingency. Other than that, nothing much happened. They could have the next meeting of the special Board, I'm sorry, it's not a special meeting of the RTA Board, April 4th.

Councilor Flagg: I'd like to request that we get a report back, like the Mayor is our rep on the RTA Board, with the Mayor backed up by Staff so the Council knows what's going on so we can make intelligent decisions about how we deal with the RTA.

Mayor Diaz: Ok, we'll do it then, but the discussions are really regional, not local, so keep it regional as far as, we will have it. Thank you. Also, for the next agenda item, I would like to at least have a discussion on the mutual aid agreement and what the Arizona's mutual aid agreement reads and the City of Tucson and also City of South Tucson. But we will see what their intent is and what they say, so we will just have a discussion on it so everybody's on board in regards to mutual aid agreements. That's for the next agenda item.

Ms. Moreno: Mayor, if I may, Mayor and Council. Could you please elaborate specifically, are you talking about every single IGA or are you referring to one in particular?

Mayor Diaz: Arizona has a mutual aid agreement that has certain articles that pertain to the State and how they handle mutual aid agreements. And also, the City of Tucson has 38 pages of it explaining what they do in respect to mutual aid. And I don't know if we have a written mutual aid agreement with anybody.

City Attorney Paladini: We have an IGA agreement with Tucson currently, but I'm unclear on the, are you talking about the (inaudible) mutual aid agreement that the Department of Emergency Management?

Mayor Diaz: No.

City Attorney Paladini: I'm not sure of the State one you are talking about.

Mayor Diaz: There is a foundation, the Fire Department's foundation that has written the whole mutual agreement with the State and it's big.

City Attorney Paladini: With the State of Arizona?

Mayor Diaz: Right. What their responsibility is to all the jurisdictions. Any more discussion on that?

ITEM #07 - CITY MANAGER AND DEPARTMENT HEADS: REPORTS TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Mayor Diaz: Do we have Planning and Zoning?

Ms. Moreno: Yes, Mayor and Members of the Council, we do have a report from Planning and Zoning, as well as Public Safety Director. I just want to reiterate what you just mentioned regarding Mi Nidito. They have been here for 72 years and I agree with you so it will definitely will be done from the community for the Lopez family, and we will have that by the next Council meeting. As it pertains to restaurants, you all received an invitation from McDonalds. They will be having a grand re-opening of the dining area and that is scheduled for next Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. And we do have an update, Council, from Planning as well as a report from our Public Safety Director.

Mr. Licea: Is it ok if I just stand from here?

Ms. Moreno: Yes.

Mr. Licea: We are working on the newsletter. We sent out an email about a week ago. We want to get some of your bios and pictures to include, that way to get the community to know who's on the Council. I'll send a friendly reminder out this week so we can get information. We want to get this first newsletter out by sometime around March 15<sup>th</sup>. Some other topics we are trying to include in there, we have talked about recap of Council meetings, brush and bulky dates, you know, and the Primary Election that's coming up later this year. Also, one of the other topics we have to put on there is we talked about Mi Nidito. Obviously, they have been a staple to the community. We will make mention of Mi Nidito and the family. And then also there will be an update on the lawsuits, there's two left, there's a lawsuit going on with the local properties here at the south end of South Tucson, so there will be a quick little brief mention of the lawsuits, nothing that has not been made public already. Just want to give update, too. There's another item that's going to be for consideration here today, but I was going to ask if you could kindly table it for the next meeting. There's been, since the packets were put together for this Board meeting, or Council meeting, excuse me, we've had about three other applications come in. So I think it's worthwhile to consider everybody that has submitted, we just didn't have the time to get them into the meeting packet in time, so if you give us enough time, if you can table it and at the next meeting we will have a full slate of applicants to consider then.

Acting Mayor Rogers: Yes, I would like to meet them.

Mr. Licea: That's all I have for now unless you have any direction or thoughts for Planning and Zoning. Ok, thank you.

Mayor Diaz: Thank you.

Councilor Flagg: Thank you.

Mayor Diaz: Financial, are you going to report?

Ms. Moreno: No, Mayor, not this evening.

Mayor Diaz: Ok.

Chief Denogean: Good evening, Mayor and Council. It's always fun to get up here in front of you guys. So I am here to report on the fires that happened on February 22, 2024 over at 305 E. Benson Highway and 425 E. Benson Highway. So, on February 22, 2024, at about 1955 hours, South Tucson Fire and Police were dispatched to the desert area of 425 E. Benson Highway. (Inaudible) IDV, LC about one brush fire and two homeless encampment fires. Engine 141 extinguished one brush fire and one homeless campfire, and Engine 1 City of Tucson Fire Department extinguished the three, the third one was campfire. There were no injuries and it is unknown how the fires started. Later on that night, about 2200 hours, Engine 141 along with Tucson Fire was dispatched to a second call where a structure fire at 305 E. Benson Highway. The owners Brian and Margo Bowers, Torino Avenue, LLC, the fire was in the round part of the building and did not (inaudible). There were no known injuries and the cause of the fire is unknown. The fire was under control at about 0400 hours, so it took about six hours to get the fire under control. This was a 2-alarm fire. Through the IGA with the City of Tucson Fire Department, assisted and arrived with a total of approximately 52 personnel on scene and approximately 20 fire vehicles. Fire suppression for the City of Tucson Fire Department included 8 fire engines, 2 ladder trucks, 2 Battalion Commander vehicles, one District Fire Chief vehicle, two paramedic vehicles, one air-power vehicle, and four miscellaneous vehicles, and again, 52 personnel. The City of Tucson provided a great deal of resources. We would not have been able to handle this fire without them. The fire is still under investigation. Both 305 and 425 East Benson Highway are attractive places for the homeless to camp and use narcotics. If both places were cleaned up and secured, I believe these fires and fires in the past may have been avoided. That night we had our three firefighters in Engine 141 at the scene. As always, our three firefighters responded and served with honor and courage as they always do. They always do the best that they can to their ability and always serve with honor. They are a great group of guys.

Acting Mayor Rogers: Yep.

Chief Denogean: But reality hits us in the face as it always does. There was no way we could provide the personnel that we needed that night. A ladder truck was needed. We don't have a ladder truck. The personnel, there's no way we can match that personnel that came that night. So it's, you know, that's just one example of why we need to move forward. Just yesterday, we had two firefighters call out. We were able to get one, or two, one for the front half, so we had two for the front half, and we were able to get a third, so two more for the back half, so we had three. But again, we are always facing these issues with staff. It comes down to three major issues here, folks. It comes to finances, resources and staffing, and equipment. The amount of money to overcome that is almost insurmountable. This is why I continue and will always continue to recommend that we need to move forward with the Tucson Fire Department. On a lighter note, a little bit about the Police Department. In the month of February, we had the Love of Reading month. We have two elementary schools in the City of South Tucson, Ochoa and Mission View, and so through February, so from the 11<sup>th</sup> through 16<sup>th</sup>, we had officers go over and read books to the kids. We have done this on a yearly basis. On this past Saturday, there was a Law Enforcement event at the Tucson Mall. We had our Explorers go out

there. They set up a tent and talked about the Police Department, and they had coloring books and crayons to hand out to kids, so we interacted with the community there. Thank you.

Mayor Diaz: Thank you.

Chief Denogean: Oh, and one more thing with the Police Department, we have a total of three new vehicles that we put out. We had the vehicles actually for approximately six months, but to get the Liten put on there and get everything done took that long. Every Police Department is having issues with getting equipment put on and getting that taken care of, it's just a backlog that's affecting everybody.

Mayor Diaz: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lopez: Thank you.

Mayor Diaz: Are there any more reports?

Ms. Moreno: No, Mayor.

ITEM #08 - APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCY TO THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Mayor Diaz: So we are postponing Item #08, is that correct?

Ms. Moreno: Yes, Mayor and Council, if your wishes are to table the item for the next meeting, we will put it on the next agenda.

Mayor Diaz: Ok, thank you. Item #08 has been tabled until the next regular meeting.

ITEM #09 - RESOLUTION NO. 24-04 OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOUTH TUCSON, ARIZONA, REQUESTING THAT ARIZONA'S FEDERAL DELEGATION SUPPORT H. RES. 786 CALLING FOR AN IMMEDIATE DE-ESCALATION AND CEASEFIRE, AS WELL AS OTHER LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS THAT ADVANCE THE GOAL OF ENDING VIOLENCE IN THE REGION

Mayor Diaz: Do I have a Motion?

Councilor Aguirre: I'll move to pass Resolution No. 24-04.

Vice Mayor Lopez: I'll Second it.

Mayor and Diaz: It's been Moved and Seconded. Is there anymore further discussion?

Councilor Flagg: I'd like to say something. You want to say something?

Councilor Aguirre: Yeah.

Councilor Flagg: Go for it.

Councilor Aguirre: So, you know, I just, for some people I understand that this could be a touchy subject, but I've never been at war. I worked through the war on drugs, and I've seen a lot of my friends be killed, a lot of my friends and other people kill each other. I've been on the path of violence for a really, really long time. Growing up with so much violence and around so much violence, it was something that I got to a certain age and I started having kids and I needed to make a change in my life. That's why I chose to do the things I have done in my life and led me to here eventually. But with that being said, you know, aside from the fact that

there is a war going on and there's people being killed with our tax dollars, when you look at the size of Israel, it's smaller than Pima County geographically. Geographically speaking, it's a country that is smaller than the size of Pima County but yet we got \$3 billion of U.S. funding going over there every year for war. Military assistance, nothing else, and it's ridiculous that in our Country, in our streets in South Tucson, we have people homeless without shelter, without food, on opioids, yet we get loaded with opioids in our Country, but we can't get the money we need in our City. It's ridiculous, \$3 billion of funding going to war. I just can't stand for that, and that's my position.

Mayor Diaz: Go ahead.

Vice Mayor Lopez: Mr. Mayor, I would like to say something. As a product of a military retiree, I've been through many wars and it's kind of rough to see all of these innocent people being annihilated because of two countries disagreeing and I think it is time that people do more talking instead of shooting because I think that if we don't set the example of wanting to push peace and harmony throughout the world, it isn't going to happen. But somebody has to start it and I am happy that we are going to get it started here tonight.

Mayor Diaz: Go ahead.

Councilor Flagg: Two things, this has everything to do with South Tucson. We are a one square mile City and maybe like ten years ago the average family income was \$15,000 a year. That's determined by Census numbers. Then it went up. It was a whole \$18,000 a year family income. I think things are changing for the worse, I kind of suspect it, and the reason I ran for the City Council was to deal with the gentrification of our barrio, and what our barrio needs is money. We need resources. We need money here in this one square mile to pay for our cops. Our cops are the worst paid cops in the whole State, but they are still out there working their rear ends off, you know. You've heard stuff about the Fire Department now. We need money for Fire, you know. Our Fire Department is in dire need of money, either if we go with the City of Tucson or the way it is done now. We need money. Our fire trucks are 30 years old. In this town, we need housing, and we need programs so that all these people that are on these damn drugs, it's almost like fentanyl has been decriminalized and people are on every corner doing these drugs. There ain't no treatment places to send them to. We need money for treatment for all these things and where is the money going. And you know who is the biggest private employer, the biggest public employer, is federal government with the Air Force and the U of A, and the biggest private employer is Raytheon. They are raking in huge amounts of profits with like bombs that are going to kill tens of thousands of people in Palestine and so that has got to change. And this hopefully tonight is the first step toward changing where the resources are going so our places like our barrio get served and get justice and get equality and get human rights. It's about resources and money and that's what this is about tonight. It's all about South Tucson. One other thing, one other thing. This might be the moral issue of our times, of my life. I'm an old man now and I haven't seen anything like this, like 30,000 people killed, and 70,000 people wounded since October. It's crazy, it's insane. It's a huge, moral issue, and not only has, a lot of us are Catholics, and you know like Tanya was talking about International Women's Day, I'm not going to sit here and tell you how great my church is about women's rights, but I'm going to tell you that we've got this Pope, Pope Francis, he has repeatedly come out and said that this is wrong, denounce this, and he wants a ceasefire. And even our Bishop of Tucson, Bishop Edward Weissenberger, has come out and said that we need a ceasefire. And I would say you don't hear it from too many pulpits in Tucson, but you know what, it's a moral issue, and at least we have some moral leaders that are saying the truth about this stuff. That's all I've got to say.

Mayor Diaz: Is that it? Anymore?

Acting Mayor Rogers: No.

Mayor Diaz: Ok, so there is no more discussion. Roll Call.

Vice Mayor Lopez. Yes.

Acting Mayor Rogers. Abstain.

Councilor Romero. Yes.

Mayor Diaz. Abstain.

Councilor Flagg. Yes.

Councilor Aguirre. Yes.

Councilor Valenzuela. Yes.

Ms. Moreno: Motion passes.

ITEM #10 - ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Aguirre: If I could, Mayor, I'd like to make a Motion to Adjourn.

Vice Mayor Lopez: Second.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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Veronica Moreno, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Regular Agenda Meeting of the City Council of South Tucson, Arizona, held on the 5th day of March, 2024. I further certify the meeting was duly called and a quorum was present.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.



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Veronica Moreno, City Clerk