

**TOWN OF FOUNTAIN HILLS**  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION  
MARCH 18, 2026

A Regular Meeting of the Strategic Planning Advisory Commission was convened at 16705 E. Avenue of the Fountains in an open and public session at 4:00 PM

Members Present: Chairman Patrick Garman; Vice Chairman Geoff Yazzetta; Commissioner Paul Smith; Commissioner Joseph Reyes

Members Absent: Commissioner Bernie Hoenle, Commissioner Polly Bonnett, Commissioner Randy Crader

Staff Present: Town Manager Rachael Goodwin; Deputy Town Clerk Angela Padgett-Espiritu

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CHAIR GARMAN: I call to order the Strategic Planning Advisory Commission meeting for the town of Fountain Hills, March 18th, 2026.

Looking through the new agenda items, I've been told that we need to do the Pledge of Allegiance. I get the head nod. All right. Our flag is to the right. Please help me.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Yeah. Next on the agenda is the invocation. And we're going to do a moment of silence.

Okay. I think that's good. Thank you. It's the first time going through that.

Angela, can you do the roll call for us, please?

MS. PADGETT-ESPIRITU: Yes. Chair Garman?

CHAIR GARMAN: Here.

MS. PADGETT-ESPIRITU: Vice Chair Yazzetta.

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Here.

MS. PADGETT-ESPIRITU: Commissioner Crader. Commissioner Reyes.

COMMISSIONER REYES: Here.

MS. PADGETT-ESPIRITU: Commissioner Bonnett. Commissioner Hoenle. And Commissioner Smith.

COMMISSIONER SMITH: Here.

MS. PADGETT-ESPIRITU: We still have a quorum. We have four members present.

CHAIR GARMAN: Awesome. We got a lot of business to do today, so that's good.

Agenda item four is a statement of our participation. But we also have -- if anybody from the public shows up and wants to talk, we also have agenda item ten for that.

Was there any submitted cards, any comments?

MS. PADGETT-ESPIRITU: No, there was not.

CHAIR GARMAN: All right. Thanks, Angela.

All right. So we're going to move down the agenda item five, which is summary of current events by the director. That's a new agenda item. I look forward to hearing summary of current events.

MS. GOODWIN: By which director?

CHAIR GARMAN: I'm looking at you.

MS. GOODWIN: Okay.

CHAIR GARMAN: It says by director. So yeah, not specific. I think Angela said had this --

MS. PADGETT-ESPIRITU: That's because typically in these roles for -- as planning commissions, it's typically a director that oversees a lot of our commissions and boards.

So that's why it says director on that one. Otherwise it would be town manager.

Absolutely.

MS. GOODWIN: All right. Summary of current events. I think for this body, one of the most current events, meaning as of earlier today, you may or may not know that the council gave directive to do a survey of our community regarding the interest and, sort of, appetite for potential bonding for street repairs and road work. So the results came back today. We'll be sharing them back with council and then proceeding with any follow up from there. But I can share off the top of my head, I think, that there was just under participation of about 56 percent of those registered to participate in our flash surveys, which still meets the threshold for statistically valid. So we'll be compounding that and, kind of, giving out, sort of, takeaways as we pull that together. So it'll be interesting to see, but --

CHAIR GARMAN: So I know we got that yesterday, which was great, filled it out. But then I got another one today and I was too busy to open it up.

MS. GOODWIN: It's all the same. They're just reminders. Because it was issued -- you basically issued it on -- I can't remember if it was Monday or Tuesday, but it's really only has a 72-hour lifespan. It's -- you got to do it so that we can get the results back and go from there. So yes, but it is a -- it is a -- again, it's not intended to be the end all be all. It's just one more set of data that we can help use to make decisions and educate the council on public opinion.

CHAIR GARMAN: So this is why this meeting is going to last longer than it did last month, because I can't be quiet. But I really like those things. I know you guys created that and I think it's great.

MS. GOODWIN: Yeah.

CHAIR GARMAN: It's great. It's a great vehicle. I mean, is that for use for all the town commissioners or just the council?

MS. GOODWIN: At this time, we've only invested in it for four -- once a quarter. So at this point, it's pretty restricted. If we find that it's a more valuable tool and the budget allows, we could potentially expand. But right now it's only limited to once a quarter.

CHAIR GARMAN: Are you allowed to say how many folks you send it out to in emails?

MS. GOODWIN: I don't remember off the top. I want to say it was close to 800 that we had sign up that wanted to participate. That's why I want to say we had just under 500 participate in this, which was about 56 percent. But again, I'm on the record, so I don't remember exactly. I read the -- I read the email quickly earlier today, but yes. So I want to say -- but we had -- we have good -- very high community participation, especially for a community of our size based on what other -- the vendor has used in other communities. They were really impressed with how many participants we have.

CHAIR GARMAN: That's great.

MS. GOODWIN: That's probably the most primary update for the good of this group. But I'm happy to answer other questions as things come up.

CHAIR GARMAN: I know it's March, but the -- I know the council had a retreat, right? A working --

MS. GOODWIN: They did back in February.

CHAIR GARMAN: Anything come out of that related to strategic planning? Did you let them know that probably next year this time, you know, we'll have a completed plan for them to get through?

MS. GOODWIN: We didn't talk too much about that simply because we will have a new council body by that time. We have a pretty big election, obviously, this summer, so we will -- if you haven't already looked at the, sort of, layout of the election coming up, we will have three new council no matter what. So it will be a very different group this time next year. So that will be an interesting process.

Out of the budget came, sort of, a reinforcement of a lot of things that we have been doing, which is streets first, trying to find more funding for streets, more conversations

about how do we make more progress on our streets faster.

Conversation about the lake liner. Simply put, the lake liner is in good shape and we would like to make sure that we continue to monitor it, but do under the idea that we aren't looking to make big changes right away. Originally, we had, kind of, targeted 2030. We no longer think that that is a reasonable timeline. There's nothing to think that we -- that the liner will be failing at that point. But we will be working with council to try to get their approval for us to begin working with a firm to develop the process for when the lake liner does need to be done. Not calling it a survey. I've been calling it a playbook because it's a very actionable plan that we need to develop so that when it happens, we're ready to go. We're not two years off in planning before we actually have a workable approach. So we're working to do that as part of next year's budget. Looking ahead, next Tuesday afternoon 1:00, we have our CIP presentation with the council where we'll be talking about all of the projects that we're proposing for FY '27. One of the biggest and most notable is the downtown. It's the beginning of the -- what I'll call the construction phase. We've been working on the plans this year. Next year would be go on the start of the downtown renovations and restoration. Specifically, I think we're targeting not Parkview, but Verde River. Thank you. So that -- but that'll be part of the conversation next week to see if that -- that and all of the other projects presented get support or if the council would like to see changes there.

CHAIR GARMAN: Yeah, that's one of our topics for today.

MS. GOODWIN: Yes. Any other things you want -- anything else you want to know about? Any other questions? Joe, you good?

All right. Good. Yeah. It was pretty comprehensive for being as only four or five questions. It -- it gathers a lot of information, so. Great.

CHAIR GARMAN: Okay. That's agenda item five. Agenda item six I don't think we have any proclamations or awards or recognitions today.

So we're going to move down to agenda item seven presentations. We don't have any presentations either today.

Down to agenda item eight, which is consent agenda. So we do have one issue under

that is a -- which is consideration and possible action, just approving the minutes from the Strategic Planning Advisory Commission meeting for February 25th, 2026. And if anybody has any comments on that before we start? I was pretty quick. I read them all word for word. Does anybody -- is there a motion on the table?

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Move to approve.

MR. REYES: Second.

CHAIR GARMAN: We've got a second. So the motion on the table is to approve the minutes from the February 25th meeting. Any comments? Discussion to those motions? All right. We'll move to a vote then. All in favor of approving the minutes from February 25th, say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIR GARMAN: Any opposed? Unanimous, Angela. Thanks for doing those minutes. Okay. So now we're going to move down to regular -- our regular agenda for today, which is agenda item nine. So this is the meat of our meeting today. We have a lot to talk about which is discussion and possible action. This is for the future strategic plan. Signature strategy is economic development, which is always a big one. It's usually a pillar in almost every plan -- probably every plan I've ever seen for any town or city. If you remember, last June at our workshop, we teased out under the strategic pillars, which is economic development -- we teased out these signature strategies. We had four of them that we, kind of, filtered out, and they were: downtown planning, outdoor activities and tourism, Shea corridor, and diversification in business development. So thank you for coming today to help us with the discussion. I don't know if you want to pop up and get ready, but we're going to talk about downtown planning first. I think that we already mentioned that earlier in the meeting. But any commissioners want to get the ball rolling? Turn it over. I don't know if -- did you want to make any statements to get the gears greased before we talk?

MS. JACOBS: Chairman, Commissioners, I wasn't planning. I'm just --

CHAIR GARMAN: Okay.

MS. JACOBS: I'm here to listen and see what questions you have. And then again, we

have development services director John Wesley; our town engineer, David Janover. Because, of course, some of these topics were broad. We're not sure what type of questions. And this can bleed over very easily to development, planning, building, and public works and infrastructure. So just happy to hear from you.

CHAIR GARMAN: Is there a -- I'm sorry. Go ahead, Geoff.

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: So this plan -- we're going to take this year to finish developing this plan. It will be presented to council, I believe, second quarter of next year. So you know, say April, May of 2027. With what's coming down the pipeline with the downtown, the town -- specific downtown developments, what would be valuable to include in the upcoming plan that would, kind of, work alongside what you guys are already working on and, kind of, propel it further in the next five years? Does that make sense?

MS. JACOBS: Correct. Yes. Mr. Chair, Vice Chair, so good question. Because I saw downtown planning and then want to just make sure that everyone is aware that we do also have an updated downtown strategy. So that was a request as part of the community economic development strategy. And then, of course, as I started hearing from the community of realizing the previous downtown strategy was 15 years old and really the big focus was on the Avenue and it's much larger than that -- our downtown. So I think as part of the strategic plan, you know, continuing our eye on the ball of implementing the updated downtown strategy, which occurred in 2024. As Manager Goodwin mentioned, we also received support last year that, instead of doing an eight-year capital improvement project, they're, like, if we can do it in five years, let's do that. And then to expand, too, with economic. And then if a focus area is also -- continues to be financial stability, that there's also that. That what we're trying to do with the -- the downtown is, of course, change it. We don't want it to be if you're going on, we'll pick on the Avenue, where there's only a couple of restaurants open after 5 p.m. It doesn't help, again, day-to-day activity. And as we're attracting conferences and so we'll say we actually -- the town and the community center host every year the clerk's conference. So the clerks are, Madam Clerk over here, the clerks all over the State of Arizona come

here to Fountain Hills and that has been going on for years. Well, so they're in the community center until 5. And so I still meet with some of my previous colleagues from Oro Valley. And they're like, Amanda, you guys have such cute boutique shops, but they're closed. And so really to push on what's currently working hasn't. And so we're going to have to make some changes in order to hopefully encourage and incentivize some of the existing retailers to stay open and attract more restaurants and retail. And then I'm just going to pause for one moment. I see you, Chairman. But am I missing anything, John and Janover? Okay. Just checking with the team.

CHAIR GARMAN: (Indiscernible) --

MS. JACOBS: Oh, Chair, can you put your mic on about?

CHAIR GARMAN: You know, leaving the businesses, opening longer stuff. But you know, in the past, we've talked about over the last few years we've developed this plan, things like safety and how do we get from the Center -- the -- why can't I think of the name of the Center? Discovery Center, I apologize, Discovery Center to downtown to, you know, to Oka? Is there a way for people to walk back and forth to get there. And what's some definite, like, specific tasks you're talking about beyond, you know, hours of operations or streets, buildings, paintings, walkways, lighting, what?

MS. JACOBS: Yeah. So part of that downtown streetscape and then sometimes what we'll say may be challenging is then we have all these plans that do you repeat some of it within the strategic plan, or is it just one or two bullet points of referring right to the downtown strategy? So with the downtown streetscapes, Chairman and Commissioners, we're looking for -- so let's take Verde River and Parkview, as the manager was mentioning. Basic infrastructure doesn't even exist if you -- if you really think about it. I'm talking about safety, most of that area has no sidewalks. There is no lighting that we constantly hear about. So how do you -- how do you walk when it's -- again, we appreciate our dark skies, but it's pitch black. You can't see outside.

Adding shade areas and then also within the areas, some gathering places. So instead of just, you know, stopping at a corner, can we have mini activations there or just people

to sit around and gather. So then when you look at the business district, some of the office uses. If instead of being inside, they want to go outside or take -- as we already see within our Linier Park, where some people may go to Graze Craze or they'll go to Papaya'z. Right now it's lacking some of that outdoor seating. They're going within the Linier Park.

Expanding some of the sidewalks along the Avenue to allow for some of those activations, and some of it being the traditional -- a restaurant having outdoor seating. But there's also -- as you know, there are galleries. I'll call out P39 Apothecary and Gifts. So you go in, there's the gift shop. She, of course, has the CBD, but she's been activating inside her shop, but would love to do something outside of, you know, if you're wanting to -- if you're wanting to paint or meet with artists, that it's hard to do that right now. It's confined to the structure. And so how can we activate outdoor? So then it's just drawing people of that's somewhere I want to shop, somewhere I want to be. This is a place to hang out.

CHAIR GARMAN: But specifically, does that mean you're taking away parking to widen the sidewalks? I'm trying to get down to the nitty gritty here.

MS. JACOBS: I see that. So Chairman and Commissioners, no, it's not taking away sidewalks.

CHAIR GORMAN: Or parking?

MS. JACOBS: Or parking. And so by adding those sidewalks -- and then so I'll look to Mr. Janover. Do we have with Verde River and Parkview, remind me, the parking spots. And if you want to come up -- of just -- I'm putting him on the spot. But we're talking hundreds.

MR. JANOVER: Oh, yeah, it is. We're not -- we're not losing anything.

MS. JACOBS: So we're not losing any parking by adding those sidewalks. It's adding, especially with Verde River and Parkview and we're talking hundreds, you know, not adding just five.

CHAIR GARMAN: And on the Avenue of the Fountains, you said you wanted to open up more in front of the shops.

MS. JACOBS: Yes. So then wanting to expand the sidewalks and some of those nitty gritty, I know you want to really get there, Chairman. Some of that is we're currently in that process, so we don't have tons of answers to get to the nitty gritty. Because right now we're working on, based off of council direction, the design of Verde River and Parkview and then construction. So these are some things that we desire. But then we'll have to have it all play out through the CIP process and design.

Am I missing anything, Janover? Okay.

CHAIR GARMAN: Geoff, keep going here.

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Thank you, Amanda. One other question, and I can't recall if this was at the workshop or a recent town council meeting, but the public restroom adjacent to the Avenue, I believe that was scuttled, but it seems like that is an amenity that would be valuable. Is that something that would potentially be included in the next plan so that the town can continue to revisit it? And if you wouldn't mind just giving a refresher on what happened with that specific proposal and how we might be able to reboot it, or if it's even worth considering again in the future.

MS. JACOBS: So Chair, Vice Chair, Commissioners, within the downtown strategy, we actually -- and so I had to beg, actually, our elected officials to let me put it in there and to keep it. But is public restrooms. It is. We need to look at it. That if some of these things don't pan out, we do recognize that, again, if we're wanting to activate the downtown, there needs to be public restrooms. We will say that right now within -- so this is called with our downtown strategy we're within the civic district. So there are -- there are public restrooms here at town hall, at the community center, the library museum. The chamber also has restrooms that they're willing to advertise. And then, of course, if you're an avid walker, you could go to Fountain Park. So to say there's no public restrooms is not completely accurate.

But we understand where people are wanting it to be more central and right there between, sort of, the Verde River and the Avenue. For this body and Commission, we've been talking about this for two years. We'll share -- we try to look at a public/private partnership. It didn't pan out. And the most recent that the Vice Chair is referring to is

there's two common areas within Plat 28, so that's private property. One was adjacent to Fearless Kitty and Sofrita's, another by Zab Thai, and they reached out. So there was, sort of, this approval with condition of we want to reach out to the impacted property owners. So they did that and they did not like the proposed location of the restrooms, which was going to be near Sofrita's, Fearless Kitty. There's a gift shop over there.

There's also some behind -- there's condos that some people may not be aware of. And so Plat 28 did not have that support.

So then they asked could we swap? Could we go ahead and swap the spots and it be over near Zab Thai? Well, if you take Zab Thai and then look directly across to town hall -- so the parking lot over by Georgie's, we actually as a town have space there. So it's why would we put this on private land when we have our own land? And again, just hearing from businesses, the constituents, the farmers market are on the Avenue. It's still not a right location. And so we've decided, for now, to move on, but are continuing to look at is there some type of public/private partnership that we could do. So we're still looking at it, but for right now with what we were looking at with Plat 28, it's just -- it's not going to pan out.

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Back to the drawing board. Thank you.

MS. JACOBS: You're welcome.

CHAIR GARMAN: Any other comments from Commissioners about downtown?

COMMISSIONER SMITH: I really don't have a -- but I'm a little disappointed in the view of the restrooms downtown and where they're talking about because I think there's other -- there's other venues that can -- I mean, there's other things that can -- other places that can be -- that was the word I was looking for -- other places that they could be put more central. And I spoke about this before. If you're not a senior citizen and you're not a person with children that have to go immediately and can't walk all these places that they're showing, it's a very difficult thing. So and being involved in the farmer's market, I see it every day what a problem it is.

MS. JACOBS: And Commissioner, we agree that that was some of our talking points of that central location of letting our council know. And then I think I said it publicly is on

the farmer's market days and then as we continue to look at the restrooms, I deliberately was coming down to our public restrooms and then would see perhaps a senior citizen of I barely made it, or like I wasn't exactly sure where this was, or the mom with five toddlers and the -- and the baby and the toddlers booking it to find a stall. I get it. Sometimes it's where do we go and it's just not close enough.

COMMISSIONER SMITH: It seems to me like it'll become more and more of a challenge when the Dark Skies -- when they start bussing people in for that. And they will, as we all know, and that we're hoping to. That we want to get that revenue from these people coming in. It'll even be more of a problem then. I won't say anything else.

MS. JACOBS: No, we appreciate your feedback.

CHAIR GARMAN: Have you mapped out -- this is not the name of the street, but avenues, walkways, mobility lanes where people come from and where people go to as far as the downtown goes? Like, where -- I would think, you know, you mentioned the -- what's the middle park called?

MS. JACOBS: The Linier Park.

CHAIR GARMAN: I didn't know, yeah, that was the name but yeah, that's --

MS. JACOBS: We're trying to keep that branded.

CHAIR GARMAN: The park -- the park down to the lake, you know, we've always talked about having some type of sidewalk or switchbacks to get from the lake up the hill to the Avenue at that area, right.

Back to the Verde River and those roads you talked about sidewalks and things. Walking over from Bashas' or Ace's Hardware or from the Discovery Center to get to downtown, to get back out to other places. Is there a -- is there a thought of that? I mean, not something that's going to do, like, next year, but over time to understand where the people come from and where they walk to? And can they do that on scooters and things like that, electric bikes. I didn't mean to say electric bikes. I'm sure that's a sore topic right. It's a big topic at the high school.

MS. JACOBS: So give me a second while I look --

CHAIR GARMAN: But you know what I mean when you step back and kind of look --

MS. JACOBS: So give me one second.

MS. GOODWIN: While Amanda's looking, I'm going to chime in because a lot of these questions that are being asked are actually been answered at a lot of our CIP meetings and a lot of our council discussions. So a lot of this information is out there. So for the good of this group, understanding that when we build out the next plan -- the next CIP and you guys, kind of, already touched on it, it's got to look five years ahead. What we're talking about today is already in the works. So not to get so caught up in necessarily the next 18 months. Let's talk about what five years after that looks like and understanding that a lot of what Amanda's sharing has already been approved. We're already moving in the direction of downtown improvements of infrastructure adds, of sidewalk expansions, of parking space additions. So kind of anticipating what comes after. So just, kind of, wanted to put that out there.

MS. JACOBS: And then, Chair, I just -- what I was looking for I found it. Is there is again within the downtown strategy -- and we'll make sure that you guys have a copy. It's on the website. I know we've shared it previously, but explore options to improve pedestrian connectivity between downtown and Fountain Park. And so some of that was softened, some might think a bit generic and lacks, like, some teeth. And so as you will know, there used to be some thought of is there a roundabout? Yes. So we'll just -- we'll say that hopefully you're familiar. And so we've, sort of, moved on and especially when you're thinking of pedestrian connectivity, is that really the right tool.

And so Janover, I don't know if you want to talk any about the crosswalks within downtown of again, just trying to move between districts and Fountain Park?

MR. JANOVER: Sure. So you may have known -- I'm Dave Janover, by the way. You may have noticed that we have been prioritizing crosswalks and installing those as part of our crosswalk program mainly in the downtown area. We've had a number of crosswalks on Saguaro, at Verde River, at Palisades. So we have been trying to prioritize that. We know that our forefathers did not have an eye for sidewalks and for pedestrian connectivity when this town was incorporated when it was first conceived. So we're playing a lot of catch up now.

And in fact, we have -- in our CIP, we do have a program where we do sidewalk gap infill. The Bashas' sidewalk, for instance, was something that we did about a year and a half ago and that was part of that. That was that one big project for that particular year. So we are trying to catch up whenever we can. And so we're doing a lot of reflex, but we are doing a lot of planning.

We did -- we do have an active transportation plan that we are going by that, kind of, gives us our five-year horizon and our 30-year horizon of where we want to have sidewalks, one of which I know it's a little bit of a sensitive location, but Palomino, for instance, I know we're doing that right now. We're doing the full rehabilitation of that asphalt pavement there. And obviously that's not the downtown area, but there is supposed to be sidewalk there. That was part of the -- part of the -- in our active transportation plan. It was identified as an area where we want sidewalk. But we did listen to the public opinion. It did come before council and it was decided that we were not going to put sidewalk there. But that was -- that was not something that we would -- that was a -- that was a very, very big decision that had to be made.

And there was a -- there was a -- public meetings on it. It was -- it was -- it got -- it got quite in depth. But we ended up not going with sidewalks. But more often than not, we are prone to try to put sidewalks where they belong at these gaps. And we do that every year. We do multiple projects per year, some smaller, some larger. But that -- and a lot of them are prioritized in the downtown area.

CHAIR GARMAN: So that's one of the things that brought up. We don't want to put things in our plan now that's already in the works. We want to be five or ten years out to, kind of, put it on everybody's radar to start thinking about it. Like we did five years ago, we started talking about -- or more about the downtown before you -- I think before you got here.

MS. JACOBS: Yes.

CHAIR GARMAN: But you jumped in and just after that fact. So I mean, should we -- should we have the downtown plan in our strategic plan since you guys -- since there's all this energy working on it? Should we look elsewhere besides having specifics on

downtown planning in our five -- our ten-year strategic plan? Maybe we don't need it in this plan?

MS. JACOBS: Yeah, it's -- we'll leave -- we'll leave that to you.

And I just, Chair and Vice Chair, just real quick. We're at 4:33 just respectfully of again -- what the manager said we have a hard stop at 5. That if we want to stay just on this one focus area or if we wanted to move on, if you guys have questions.

CHAIR GARMAN: I got it.

MS. JACOBS: Okay. Okay. Perfect.

CHAIR GARMAN: Geoff?

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: The topic of sidewalk infill came up. I've noticed some mid-block crosswalks have been RFBs installed and I think others do not. There's one that's Gunsight and Saguaro. Is there any plan for adding additional RFBs at some of these crosswalks? Some of them -- that one in particular by Peaks Athletic Club -- at night, it seems a little treacherous. So just throwing that out there. I don't know if that's already in the works behind the scenes with staff, but --

MR. JANOVER: Not to my knowledge.

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Okay. Maybe that's a Justin Welby question.

MR. JANOVER: It might be a Justin Welby question.

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Okay. Got it.

MR. JANOVER: Yeah, he might -- he might have had -- I'm not sure if he spoke with town manager about that.

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Okay.

MR. JANOVER: We have not had that discussion, though. Right now it's just the Desert Vista one that we had. But as far as I know, there's no other plans for any.

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Okay. Yeah. The concrete and paint looks great, but --

MR. JANOVER: It does.

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: -- it gets some to call attention to the pedestrians because they don't always walk with a flashlight or, you know, other things that call attention to them, you know, after dark.

MR. JANOVER: So we actually have a -- it's pretty much our enhanced striping that we've started there. That was actually our first location where we did some enhanced pavement markings.

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Sure. Yeah. Thank you so much.

MR. JANOVER: You bet.

CHAIR GARMAN: Okay. I wanted to move along. I don't know if the Commissioners are looking in order. You know, we have outdoor activities and Shea corridor and diversification and business development. I didn't know if any of those stand out that we wanted to talk about first. They don't need to be necessarily in order. Was there any that -- I was looking at diversification and business development, actually. I wanted to make sure and cover that while you were here.

Maybe we can move down to number four then. I didn't know if we were going to get all of these covered today. We have a few meetings left before our January -- our June workshop, so we don't have to get all four done today. So I'm going to move it down to diversification of business development. You know, we all want, like, Microsoft and Whole Foods and everything else to move in. Well, maybe not everybody. But when we're talking about Fountain Hills, I mean, what do you see? I like comments from the Commissioners, too. I mean, when you hear diversification and business development, what does diversification in Fountain Hills mean to you as far as businesses go?

You can hit the -- hit your button.

COMMISSIONER REYES: We kind of kicked that football around somewhat in the past couple years and it seems -- and certainly spin-off from the Target mess and this and that and the other and come up with a lot of, I guess, fairly good ideas as to what to develop, ergo what we're just talking about. But I think now how do you -- how do you crystal ball changes to our ways -- our patterns, our ways of thinking? The things that we already have on -- you know, and all these plans and whatnot out four or five or more years without making some other very real changes in the composition of our demographics.

I mean, if we picked one -- if Bernie was here, we'd point to schools and we'd say, okay,

that's got its own, you know, dynamics because we, at one time, wanted to do a lot more and more and more and more in one direction -- facilities. And now it's like we're getting rid of facilities because we just don't have the support for that or the call for that. Do you see any other -- and we talked about the different types of businesses -- medical areas and so on and so forth. Are there -- and without getting into the IT, which is always going to be there and around, are there any other things that you've heard have come up as possible discussions on creating a little section over here that might be good for that or one over there somewhere? I'm asking you because I know you're intimately in there and with the business communities and certainly get a lot of feedback and input and whatnot.

MS. JACOBS: So Chair and Commissioner, with economic development you hope there be this nice order chicken and the egg and sometimes it just doesn't happen that way. So we'll go back to when I started, there were three targeted just areas that the town was looking at. So one was healthcare, as Commissioner Reyes mentioned. Another was IT financial and then it was professional services. I'm like, what is -- what exactly is that? And so when we talked to you, Chair, like, as you're asking, diversify is back then we're starting to see some changes. But when you look at our major employers, a lot of them are service based. -- they're the Safeways, there's the -- they're the Target, they're the school districts. But to balance a community, you need more than that.

So when we updated the community economic development strategy, which was ten years old, we then called out assembly, biosciences, financial services, healthcare, hospitality, retail, and startups. And so some of this is just based off some of these things we're seeing. So for instance, assembly -- like, some people are like why would we do assembly and thinking it's something big and bad. But you'll remember we had a watch company that was in Four Peaks and the former BIZ HUB. Unfortunately, they decided to relocate to Mesa. Mesa has economic development incentives. And then the president and CEO had asked his employees, where do you want to be? Because they were driving from Mesa and the Chandlers all the way to Fountain Hills. And not completely high wage jobs, but again, with gas, it was just a challenge.

We have behind the Target shopping center, that's really the town's industrial area. And so taking it further back, and then while you have John here right now, what is available is 0.5 acres to do something. So then part of the strategy and what we've been trying to work on and what I've told council, I've been here now four years if you can believe it, is we're looking within the downtown area, looking at adding some industrial as part of an overlay district. And so some of that why is because -- and we've now, sort of, missed that ball because again, it's four years later -- is there was a big developer in there that maybe people didn't understand. Someone innovative who does bioscience, who does startups. But in order to do that, you need to have the right zoning. They're not going to wait.

So use this as an example. I've been asking -- it's been four years. That person has now sold. So then some of it is okay, we have to start all over to position ourselves.

Manager Goodwin and I just recently met with the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, and so keeping them apprised of we're working on some of these things through the Planning and Zoning Commission and council and so they're teed up. Okay, Amanda, like, follow up with us and let us know when we're ready to go, because some of the inquiries may not come directly to Fountain Hills, but it's coming to the regional economic development organization, the EDO. So they're, like, if we're aware of this and you guys do have the right recipe of the zoning, the quality of life, let us know.

So then it's again, right, we're all positioning ourselves and when that opportunity comes, we can place somebody. But part of it is zoning. And then also, I'm not sure if we actually know off the top of our head or have to do this exercise of is the town about 75 percent to 80 percent built out. So just to be planning for that. And then do we have to look at redeveloping or revitalization? Does that help, Commissioner Reyes?

COMMISSIONER REYES: Yes, a whole lot.

MS. JACOBS: Okay.

CHAIR GARMAN: Did you have another comment or --

COMMISSIONER SMITH: Let me add a little -- let me add a little history. I'm the one that's been here 32 years. So I've gone through all the mayors, I've gone through

everybody. We've gone through all these things. We're going to have a college. Oh, no, we can't have a college. We're going to have a healthcare center. Oh, no, we can't do that. This has gone on and on and on. It's all -- it's all about well, we can't do this and we can't do that. I don't know anything about the business itself except the Elliotts Army is a sales training system that a couple of young guys started. Sales training system up in Fountain Hills? How do you do that? Innovative. And it's going to take some of that young, innovative ideas to say we can, not we can't because of, you know. So anyway, I think you're on the right track. I'm just -- I've been -- I've lived through it all. I love this town more than anybody.

MS. JACOBS: Commissioner, we'll have to go for coffee because sometimes it's again, we've been hearing this from constituents. And as Commissioner Reyes says, is we keep talking about it. And some of it is, you know, we're going to have to have the courage to change. Change is hard, but to get through it and the benefit and the value to make some of these changes will be beneficial for the entire town. We just have to have courage to do it.

CHAIR GARMAN: Yeah. I think one of my favorite quotes is, you know, people don't like change. People do not like change, but they want things to get better. And you have to keep both those in your mind. But change does happen. It just doesn't happen as fast as we want it to. There was no hospital here five years ago. I mean, we put in a health care plan -- or our strategic plan, we wanted to look at health care and not just health care, preventive medicine and what's it called? All the things, you know, lip fillers and what's that stuff to make you look better? There's a word for all that. Aesthetics? There's a word for it, right? I mean, we have those and you know what I mean. There's some of those have moved in. So it's a little different over five years. So you look back and things do change. Maybe not as fast as we'd like them to.

MS. JACOBS: So medical center, Honor Health, yes, there's some change.

CHAIR GARMAN: Diversification. What does that mean here? I mean, what do we have now and what do we want to diversify? Do we want to make a small -- like you said, you called it assembly manufacturing. You know, that would be a -- kind of a see change, I

don't know. To be a diversification, we have to have something the way it is now. What would we categorize what we have now and what would be different than what we have now? How would we diversify what we already have? Are we depending on do we just have restaurants and little shops? Is that what we have now? I mean, we have a pretty -- we have health care. I mean, we're trying to plan this around our town and the population we have, right. Does anybody have any specific tasks?

I remember doing this -- I guess I've been around too long. But when we did -- you know, did the last plan, we started to talk about health care and different types and preventive care and things like that that we put in there. Are there any other, you know, kind of genres that the town doesn't have that you think we should slowly move towards?

Do you all know what Elliott Army does? Do they interact with the town government?

MS. JACOBS: So Chair, Commissioner, we are working with them right now. So as Commissioner Smith said, started up, they were also in the BIZ HUB. Now, they're off of Saguaro and they're expanding. Anything else John, you want to add? So they're actively right now working with development services on expansion.

CHAIR GARMAN: Would we have any space in Fountain Hills for a hub for transportation? And you know, one hub from Phoenix. It's a shortcut to get to I-40, right? I mean, you do see some go up through Payson and go that way. Do we have any? When you say 80 percent built out, do we have room in Fountain Hills for a warehouse that would be a hub?

MR. WESLEY: No, not without tearing something down. Even then, the only place really something like that could go is that industrial area to the west of the Target center. And so it's not right on the beaten path. Currently, it's a bunch of different small lots and small buildings. So somebody'd have to acquire, tear down to create enough land to build something like that.

Going back to the previous comment, if I may, in terms of the Elliott Group and what they're doing. If you're driving along there, you've seen they've got some construction going on. That's for expansion of the Elliott Group's offices. There are three of the lots

in that area that they purchased and they're adding buildings to. You can probably see the one that faces onto Saguaro that started building the block on that one. They also have the corner lot where they're staging for the development, that's also theirs. And so they hope to also expand into that lot eventually. But there's some very significant parking issues that go along with such a active type of business there. So it's a challenge. But as Amanda said, we're trying to work with them and see what we can do to facilitate their growth.

CHAIR GARMAN: Yeah, they got to have room for their weight room, right? I don't know if you've been in there. Just so you know that -- I guess I don't want it in the transcript -- they're my neighbors. So they bought one big house and now they bought another big house and they bus people in on the weekends, so they must be doing pretty well.

MS. JACOBS: Yes. And yes, to see the level of expansion, yes.

CHAIR GARMAN: No other comment. By the way, this was not the easiest conversation either five years ago when we talked about this. I can remember sitting around and talking about what business development looks like in a town like Fountain Hills, but we did, kind of, rally around healthcare and some of the things that we put in the plan. Okay. No other comments.

You know, maybe in ten minutes. Did you want to give us an update on, you know, Shea might be another thing like downtown planning where you already have a plan that's going right? Did you want to go over Shea real quick?

MS. JACOBS: So right now, what we'll say to you about Shea is, again, we know it's in the existing strategic plan. It is also within the community economic development strategy. But the focus, again, with limited resources being the stuff here, as well as what's coming from the council, the focus has been downtown. So again, when we went through the exercise of the economic development strategy, it was what are areas we need to look at. So it was -- it was the downtown, Shea corridor, looking at Saguaro, and then Fountain Hills Boulevard and Glenbrook.

And then so we asked the community, as well as council, to prioritize that and so have

our marching orders particularly looking at the downtown. And then, of course, with the Four Peaks Plaza, the Target shopping center. Target of just looking at that specifically, we know that council approved a couple of years ago the rezoning request. We still have not received a formal submittal yet for the apartments. But you'll see what then we're were wanting to do with the commercial is the developer stayed true. The property owners and the staff of that's not going to turn into apartments, too, it's we need to revitalize that commercial center. They've -- Sprouts has broken ground and so hopefully they'll open later this year. That, of course, too, is permit fees, one-time construction sales tax, development impact fees, and then of course just sales tax and having them here. And so we're looking forward to that occurring.

And then if you stay up to date on some of my economic development updates as some of that was happening, and specifically when council approved the apartments, the dark Walgreens, which has been dark the whole time I've been here and probably before then, it is very interesting where Walgreens was still retaining the lease, but it's dark. But a developer has purchased that and reached out to John and me of -- he was like, hey, I know Sandor, the property owner, knew before we were to announce what he was up to regarding the apartments as well as Sprouts, and so he is hoping to revitalize that.

But we've made it clear he presented, we'll just say, some things that weren't sales tax generators and being along the Shea corridor of that, we're not going to settle for some things that he was looking at. And so we've been specific on restaurants, retail. He even spoke to could we try to get a Trader Joe's? That's still just not going to -- it's not going to happen. Commissioner Reyes knows. He's already starting to shake his head. But willing to, okay, let's ask these questions. Oh, you're interested in XYZ restaurant or retail really partnering with us to target some of these folks. So it's again, sometimes, Chair, as you said, like, things are happening behind the scenes, maybe just not fast enough.

CHAIR GARMAN: So Joe and Paul, I wanted to ask you, do you think people are more -- would be more understanding of higher -- what's it called? Higher density living

arrangements? More cars, more trucks off of Shea Corridor than other places in our town?

COMMISSIONER REYES: See, everybody wants all of these nice things, yes, but it comes at a price with respect to a lot more of the things you just mentioned. And bottom line, I don't think so. I think -- I think they -- I think our neighbors look at it as, oh, those are great things, but not in my backyard or not, you know, on this side over here. Do it over there. So I don't know. I think there's a -- it's going to take a lot of doing to get the right message and to get a coalition going and the momentum that's needed to bring something like that to fruition. That's, kind of, my -- I hate to say it, but we're just waiting for the right thing to push that button and go. And I think it will happen. It always does. Takes longer sometimes.

CHAIR GARMAN: John?

MR. WESLEY: Excuse me, Chair. Just a piggyback a little bit on what Amanda said. The general plan also suggests that looking at the Shea corridor, specifically Shea and Swallow, kind of, intersection, that area is a place we should focus on a specific plan at some point in the future when we get the support to move forward with that. So it is there on our list also. And so some direction on where that should be in the priority list would be helpful.

CHAIR GARMAN: Yeah, I'm just trying to keep my eye on the next thing out ten years, you know, beyond what the focus is right now. Did you have a comment, Paul? No, no. Okay. It's a hard one, diversification.

So the middle two, though, I'm thinking that maybe we can push those to the next meeting. I'm looking around. If you guys think that's okay, get us out of here at a decent time tonight. But I do -- when I say the military, we talked about Shea. I'm talking about outdoor activity and tourism. I did want to really rehash that when we -- when we had a minute in the future. I think that's an important one, because it's the -- you try to look at the strengths of the town, you know what I mean? Outdoor activities and I think it is tourism comes through. It is definitely a strength of the town. So that's something I want to bring up at a future meeting.

So just looking around, I mean, I don't think we need to take a vote on that. Are you guys all right with me putting that on the agenda for a future meeting? We'll just add it on to the next topics. Okay. Okay. I think we're good with that.

Okay. So we're going to move on from the discussion and possible action on economic development. I know we get frustrated about what's going to happen in the future, but we always do that in small towns. It could be in a small town in Ohio and it's the same kind of conversation. All right. Thank you.

MS. JACOBS: Thank you.

CHAIR GARMAN: Geoff, in the few minutes we have left, we're going to move down to b under regular agenda, which is update from the commission work groups.

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Yes, thank you. Angela sent a briefing packet out for the two events that we have scheduled for getting community input. The first one is Saturday, April 4th. It will be from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the community center. And the second one will be Thursday, April 16th from 4 to 6 p.m. That will be at the Fountain Hills Unified School District Learning Center. With regard for time getting out here at 5:00, please check your emails. If you have any questions, you can reach out to me directly about that. Thank you.

MS. GOODWIN: Chair, can I ask a quick question about that? I wanted to double check that have you been in touch with Mike Pelton (phonetic) to help?

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Yes. He's going to send out a flier, I believe, tomorrow.

MS. GOODWIN: Okay. Just wanted to double check.

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Thank you.

CHAIR GARMAN: How do you think you're going to get people over at the school? Is Bernie helping with that or is that you think advertisement?

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Yes, he is. Yeah, we're going to have a flier sent out through the town's channel and then Bernie can mirror that with the Fountain Hills Unified School District.

CHAIR GARMAN: So you think it'll be a school stakeholder heavy maybe?

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: That's the plan -- or the goal, at least. Yes. Yeah.

CHAIR GARMAN: All right. Thanks. All right. That's the -- that's the main -- that's the only work group we have going on right now.

I'm going to move down to c under regular agenda, which is discussion and possible action on the consideration of future agenda items pertaining to the strategic plan. I wanted to mention this. We have -- we have one, kind of, pillar with the different signature strategies underneath of it, which is, I guess I'll just call it quality of life and safety, which is a big one. So we're going to schedule that -- I think we'll finish up with tourism and outdoor activities at our April meeting and then start in on quality of life and safety. I got a lot of ideas on that, too. So that'll be another robust discussion.

MS. GOODWIN: And then just communicate with Angela what staff you might want available for that meeting so that we can, kind of, coordinate with them, as well.

CHAIR GARMAN: Yeah, it's great, I know. Jason and --

MS. PADGETT-ESPIRITU: I do know that we do have the Community Services Director available if you chose to do the safety one for the 21st of April.

MS. GOODWIN: Which arguably they do go hand in hand -- the conversation of tourism and outdoor activities. Given that our community services is the primary driver of our town-produced events and activities. So it may make sense to have both -- have him there for that discussion, too.

CHAIR GARMAN: Yeah, they'll go hand in hand, but I'm good -- I'm good -- I will try to, like, weave in some businesses that might do -- you know, help with outdoor activities, that type of thing we've done with it. Yeah. Sounds great. So that's, kind of, what we're doing next month. I, kind of, think that might go beyond next month, too, and go into May a little bit. Finish up in May, have another workshop in June, and then put together a draft strategic plan over the summer and bring it back to you all, start it in, like, August and start, like, finding out where a comma should be and what should be capitalized and what in a -- in a strategic plan, so -- and then --

COMMISSIONER SMITH: I think with a June date is a good date for that type of workshop because it'll take us May to get through the next two things.

CHAIR GARMAN: Yeah. And then we'll work in the fall on the strategic plan and maybe

have a -- rely on you to have a plan to socialize it. You know, I would like to go take the plan hat in hand to each office. But I understand Fountain Hills doesn't want us to do that. So we'll have to do some kind of group setting and we'll work in the fall and, hopefully, we'll have a plan solidified, pie in the sky. You know, in the fall, we have the -- we have a good solution and we can bring it back for some type of vote in January, February, or March, or something like that in 2027. Awesome. Love it when a plan comes together.

Okay. With that, that's the future agenda items. We're going to look at ten, which is call the public. I don't see any calls to the public. Right, Angela? We're good with that?

MS. PADGETT-ESPIRITU: Correct.

CHAIR GARMAN: Is any of the commissioners, did they want to comment on anything? Any experiences or anything? I know we're past time, so folks got to take off, but is there anything you wanted to -- we usually did this at the beginning. I don't know if the commissioners had any comments they wanted to make on any topic relevant to strategic planning. No? Looking around, I don't see any. Okay. We're going to move down -- we talked about future agenda items. I talked about that in C.

Okay. I think we're done with this -- with this new agenda.

Okay. So we're going to move down to 13, which is agenda and any motions on the table as far as adjournment?

COMMISSIONER YAZZETTA: Move to adjourn.

CHAIR GARMAN: Motion on table to adjourn. Is there a second? I need a light and a verbal second.

COMMISSIONER REYES: Yes.

CHAIR GARMAN: We got -- we got a second? Thanks, Joe. So the motion on table is to adjourn. Any discussion?

COMMISSIONER SMITH: Second.

CHAIR GARMAN: Hearing nothing for discussion, all in favor of adjourning the meeting today say aye.


IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIR GARMAN: Any opposed? Hearing none, the meeting today is adjourned.

Thank you.

HAVING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, CHAIRMAN PATRICK GARMAN ADJOURNED THE MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION HELD ON MARCH 18, 2026, AT 5:02 PM.

APPROVED:

  
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PATRICK GARMAN, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ANGELA PADGETT-ESPIRITU, DEPUTY TOWN CLERK

CERTIFICATION

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE FOREGOING MINUTES ARE A TRUE AND CORRECT COPY OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION, FOUNTAIN HILLS, ARIZONA HELD ON MARCH 18, 2026. I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT THE MEETING WAS DULY CALLED AND HELD AND THAT A QUORUM WAS PRESENT.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ANGELA PADGETT-ESPIRITU, DEPUTY TOWN CLERK