

District 5 Neighborhood Meeting, May 11, 2023

10 residents signed in, though several more were in attendance who did not. A couple of people attended online.

First hour time turned over to Mayor Michelle Kaufusi. She introduced the department heads who sat across the front of the room, available to answer questions. Included were Amanda Erkenbrack from Community Services, Bill Pepperone from Development, from Provo Library, Dave Decker from Public Works, John Morgan from Administration, James Miguel from Provo Fire Department, Troy Beebe from the Police Department, and Doug from Parks and Recreation. The mayor then showed a recorded [presentation video](#) about the four Provo Pillars of being Economically Vibrant, Safe and Sound, Forward Looking, and Welcoming and the mission statement "Exceptional Care for an Exceptional Community". This was followed by a series of talking points showing progress Provo is making in each of those four pillars.

First addressed was "Welcoming". The national recognition of Provo's Parks and Recreation department gaining a Gold Medal and the new city hall were mentioned before going in to more detail on the Regional Sports Park under construction. That is projected to bring an annual tournament visitation of 200,000 people per year into Provo with local spending of \$30 million. Provo has never been able to host regional sports meets and a number of our citizens travel around the country to other parts of the country instead. Travel sports tourism to travel destinations is big and we have better weather than current host cities; many would rather play in the up to 90 degree heat here than the 115 degree heat in Arizona. Our facility's design will also be unique as it allows for traffic flow for people to get in and out between games. It will be close to a I-15 and Lakeview/way Parkway connection. They have been doing the infill for the site for 1 ½ years and are 70% done. The sewer and water connections are all underground and they are building out the electrical. It will join the Recreation Center, Fieldhouse/Peaks Ice Arena, and Covey Center for being known as top recreation facilities in the country.

Big news in welcoming will also be the fact that BYU is joining the Big 12 Conference. Oklahoma is the first team coming, and they have tens of thousands of fans who travel to see their team play. They will come a few days before the game and Provo will be their first impression.

Moving on to the Safe and Sound pillar, Provo was recently named the safest city in Utah and the 2nd safest in the nation. Our new city building holds our safety services and has been getting awards. Fire Station 2 was the first new fire station built in 20 years, and replaces an old home renovated into a station that had all sorts of code violations like having the fire fighters sleeping in a basement with no windows. Fire Station 1 will be rebuilt on the same city center block that it existed before. They did a study on where the best place for it to be located to serve its section of the city and its prior location came out clearly as remaining there. When it is rebuilt they will also add an additional fire truck.

Provo was part of a Tiger Grant for three pedestrian bridges. The first was the one by UVU over I-15, the second is being built over the tracks at the Frontrunner Station ([update here](#)), and the third was not addressed in the meeting but was listed in the display as being over University near the old Provo High. The one over the Frontrunner at 600 South and 100 West will be done in October and open in November this year. It will accommodate bikes and is a huge win, especially considering all the footage showing people weaving through trains.

The Fire Department had a new Fire Chief sworn in that very afternoon after their old Chief retired. It is working on a Wildland Urban Interface Program creating fire breaks by clearing out brush that could cause problems. They were able to get funding for this program, which is in progress. The recent fire at 2700 North showed that it is already working, as the fire stopped right at one of these fire breaks instead of continuing up Y Mountain.

In the Economically Vibrant section, Mayor Kaufusi emphasized that the city has amazing employees who get so much done. A huge percentage of Provo's land is taken up by a private university, temples, churches, regional hospital, and court houses. This means that 52% of Provo's land requires city services while they do not pay the taxes which maintain the infrastructure for those services to exist. We are the only city in the state with such a high percentage, and so it makes it tricky to squeeze every penny from the tax revenues that do come in.

Target is coming in to East Bay in the old Dillards location and will serve the grocery needs of residents in southeast and southwest Provo, entering in the east on the second floor of the Provo mall. Its footprint will be over twice the size of the Smith's on Freedom and will have parking for grocery pickup. It is expected to open in the first quarter of 2024. There is an unnamed big box store interested in coming in on the other side of the mall.

The Provo airport has already outgrown its facilities, being fully at capacity. No taxpayer money or debt was used when it opened. The city is talking to other airlines about possibly coming to Provo and adding international flights. Some airlines have come forward with letters of intent. When they did the ground preparation, they included 10

additional hookups already in the ground for future expansion, and could pull up 3 more. They have landed county and state funding to open more capacity in 3 years.

Residents are invited to sign up for the mayor's blog on the [Provo Advantage](#). Provo has been named the Nation's Best Performing City two years in a row. #2 was Miami, #3 Austin. In the Forward Looking pillar, city department are asked to think 30 years out when they are proposing any project, addressing whether they will be glad or regret the move that far out. The city is working on updating its 10-year-old website and accompany it with an app, doing this in house as much as they can by having the information officer in each department figure out what should have on their part of the website.

Dave Decker from Public Works addressed information on Provo's water. The wastewater/sewer treatment plant will meet anticipated future regulations. It is starting to go vertical and will open in a year. The old one was built in 1956. They encourage coming on a tour in Summer 2024 when it is ready.

There are about 150 full-time employees in public works, covering 12 different areas. They have a lot of training, work experience, and provide a lot of quality for the program. One of these areas is drinking water. Provo has 150 years of history making smart decisions on water rights. It draws from 16 wells that tap into the groundwater aquifer. There has been a decline in this over the years. Near the entrance to Provo Canyon you can see that it has dropped 100 feet. Sustaining this aquifer is a priority, so they are building a water treatment plant that follows the historic Mill Race, and so the city bought property on Freedom north of Raintree Apartments. It will take water from the Provo River and run it up to Rock Canyon to assure water supply in the aquifer. There are two flumes in the stream coming down Rock Canyon measuring to see how much water drops into the aquifer, and currently it is about 1 gallon per linear foot. This project will help assure both quality and quantity of Provo's drinking water in a sustainable way. The department looks out 5-10 years on the supply of water at the surface (some other water departments only look out 1-2).

Flooding is possible given the VERY good year of snow. Electronic measurements at Cascade peak of the historic maximum and minimum show this year is 50% higher than the previous maximum measurement. Tony Peak has 50" and Snowbird 70" of water sitting on the ground in snow that is just starting to melt. Snow on Timpanogos will not flow into Provo, but other high mountains do. They expect heavy runoff in the three frontal canyons including Slate and Rock Canyon, and are monitoring them with a 24 hour/day watch. 120,000 sandbags have been filled to date, and the city feels well prepared for issues along these areas. Streets that would need sandbags have been prepared and already marked if there is a need. In 1983-84 when the last flooding happened, a lot was learned and most of the pipe was put in place to help, but if there is an emergency, they are prepared.

Provo River is the biggest concern for possible flooding. So far it has not been running high because it is controlled by having managed releases from Deer Creek and Jordanelle Reservoirs. Both of these are being filled and once they have hit a certain level, they will pass the extra on in increased runoff down the river. It has been running at 1800 cubic feet/second, and so they are expecting 3-4 times that water coming down in June. Sandbags and sandbag routes are prepared along the river, though there is some concern about the new feature at the end of the river. The Delta Restoration project rerouted the river going into Utah Lake and they have some concerns about how the flooding will impact it. They are meeting with the federal and regional agencies over the concerns and are walking the route with them again. There will be an acute need for 1- 1 1/2 months to keep close tabs.

Because the time for the City Department Heads to attend was finishing up, Mayor Kaufusi mentioned that answers to the questions asked by residents before the meeting will be emailed out. They took some time to answer questions of people there in person.

Dylan Cindrich asked whether the city is having internal discussions about the housing shortage and affordability. Bill Pepperoni from Development asked if Rachel Whipple was present to confirm that they probably have not had a single meeting in three years without that discussion happening. Much has been discussed in terms of legislative zoning. Provo is the only city who can say they have done their part, but have never taken that attitude because there is so much to do and have their door open to projects. They have been trying to work with some non profits to get some single family detached housing affordable to 60% of median income. Most built recently were for moderate to 80% of median income. The city has areas with a density bonus and restrictive deeds where developments would keep a certain number of units affordable for 30 years.

Susan Keller asked if Provo would be bringing Neighborhood Housing Services back into Provo because it was in Orem now. She was referred to talk to Melissa McNalley about the CDBG and home funding and assured that Provo does have these type of programs currently operating in Provo. The Loan to Own program is going strong, and Bill rarely has a month where he does not sign off on one of those loans, so they are definitely going out.

Quinn Peterson asked Police Chief Beebe about the speeds on Center Street, where it is posted for 15 mph but the average speed is 35 mph. Chief Beebe said they are putting together a real blitz on enforcement now that additional signage is in place. Center is basically zoned as a mall. They have a traffic team that would love to do that, as state funding is available to give overtime pay as part of a program designed to change behavior.

Laura asked about the request for a name change of Joaquin Park in order to memorialize Cindy Richards (former councilwoman who passed away this week) put onto the agenda without the executive committee being aware of it. The city attorney said that there is a petition process that would have to be gone through according to a chapter in the city code about changing names. It could be filed by one person, but would then be followed up by research by the Mayor's office and passed on to the City Council for a decision. There was a feeling among residents present that it would be good to memorialize Cindy Richards in some other way than losing the Joaquin name. Later in the meeting it was noted that there is city money available to neighborhood districts and that maybe there would be something we could do with that to remember her.

Mayor Kaufusi dismissed most of the department heads and mentioned they had been here since 7 am and usually go home at 6 but were great to stay until 7 for us.

Laura Leavitt asked city staff to move on to address the planning items. [3A](#) dealt with ordinance text amendments that arose because there has been a problem with different types of parking standards in the downtown. Currently if a restaurant leaves, a different type of business coming in would be hampered by a need for additional parking for their use. There are several parking spaces available downtown and they would rather see those businesses being reused. Currently if they keep the same footprint, the same parking allotment is okay, but if the business adds square footage, they would need more parking. Quinn noted that this would be a wonderful change because currently if a business wants to change its use, the current regulations would drive them to demolish historical buildings to provide parking.

Item 3B addressed the subdivision approval for the [Lynch Apartments development](#) at 75 E 800 N (by Brick Oven). This is designed to be married student housing just off BYU campus, for which there is currently tons of unmet demand. It has not gotten to the Planning Commission yet, but is expected to be mostly 1 bedroom with some 2 bedroom apartments.

Bill Pepperoni mentioned that he lives on 300 West and Center in a development that was supposed to provide affordable housing for the community by having it restricted to lower incomes, but the reality is that much of it is occupied by married students who by definition will not be long term residents. This has been a problem throughout the city with students taking up the limited low income housing needed for others. The mayor has requested that BYU consider rebuilding Wymount to be higher density to help with this problem.

Laura asked that staff answer 1D instead of waiting for the answer via email because so many have been asking about the future of the old city center and its development. Keith Morey answered that the mayor has underplayed the accolades Provo has gotten—recently the Undersecretary of Commerce in Washington, DC called to ask what we are doing to have such success. This is a critical moment that we are grateful for. The RP is out right now, and developers need to respond with proposals. The city is hoping for mixed retail with possible higher density residential behind. They are not sure of including office space because of the current office market, and parking will be a priority to help serve the Covey and City Center. As before mentioned, Firehouse 1 will be included on the block, as it would cost 2-3 times as much to move it elsewhere.

The company that was contracted before was out of Denver. The city backed out of the agreement when the company wanted Provo to give them an additional \$70 million at the end to do the development. Provo residents have given all sorts of great wishful recommendations but the city is realistic about what it can actually do, and may end up doing something temporary until the market shifts. They don't want to put something mediocre in permanently. Dylan asked if there would be a public feedback opportunity to incorporate residents' vision. Keith reminded that last year the city did an in depth public survey that they still have the results from and are using. Those had driven some of the former costs of the project up toward the \$70 million the previous developer asked for. They had a great concept but it was hugely expensive. Keith assured that nothing will happen through a back door.

Rachel Breen noted that there was a [comment](#) from a Zoom attendee asking about a concern with landlords pushing off pest control onto tenants, together with a response from the city. Dave Harding noted that if the city is not enforcing code it won't work, so they should enforce what does exist rather than pushing forth a legislative effort. Violations should be reported to 311.