



May 26, 2014

Honorable Mayor Rothschild and City Council
255 W Alameda St
Tucson, AZ 85701

RE: May 15th DNARC position statement titled "City task forces: from necessary nuisance to effective citizen input"

Dear Mayor Rothschild and Council --

The Dunbar/Spring Neighborhood Association (D/S) voted unanimously to endorse the May 15th letter sent to Mayor and Council from the Downtown Neighborhoods and Residents Council (DNARC) regarding Citizen's Task Forces.

The DNARC letter titled "City task forces: from necessary nuisance to effective citizen input" echoes many issues D/S has had over the years regarding various committees of this sort, particularly when dealing with Downtown Links.

In addition to the 12 points covered in the DNARC letter, we would like to add another, somewhat complex problem area to the mix.

A consistent issue has been a lack of institutional memory of issues, concerns, and promises made by the City during meetings and other forums. While this issue is usually not intentional and can be due to staff turnover, it can provide an easy out for staff to change direction or forgo promises.

A recent example of this was when Downtown Links hired a team of engineers to study potential cost cuts (years after agreements and plans had been agreed to). As expected recommendations were made to slash various amenities and other items promised to residents. Some promises were large and compelled residents to work to improve the project instead of fight it outright. Downtown Links moved to cut the centerpiece of the project, a deck park and ped/bicycle crossing on 9th Ave and St. Mary's. Even though agreements had already been made, residents had to fight to keep this from getting removed from the plan. This is but one example among many of an ongoing issue.

While answers to this and others issues addressed in DNARC's letter may not be easy, streamlining and improving citizen participation is integral to democracy and a better City for all of us.

Sincerely,

Sky Jacobs, President
Dunbar Spring Neighborhood Association