



Minutes

The City of Douglas Mayor and Council met in a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., at City Hall Council Chamber, 425 10th Street. The Honorable Mayor Jose Grijalva called the meeting to order.

1. **CALL TO ORDER. 6:00 p.m.**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE. By Council.**
3. **INVOCATION.** Pastor Luis Zaragoza - Grace Ministries of Douglas. Pastor Zaragoza explained that Grace Ministries is located at 535 Eleventh Street, with Sunday services at 11:00 AM as their only weekly service. The mayor thanked him for his participation and welcomed him to return anytime.

4. ROLL CALL.

	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
MAYOR, JOSE GRIJALVA	X	
MAYOR PRO TEMPORE, RAY SHELTON		X (Excused)
COUNCILMEMBER, MELISSA RODRIGUEZ	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, JOSE MONTANO	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, GUSTAVO DURAZO JR.	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, MARIA DILLMAN	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, RICHARD C. ACOSTA	X	
CITY MANAGER, ANA URQUIJO	X	
CITY ATTORNEY, DENIS FITZGIBBONS	X	
CITY TREASURER, ALEJANDRO MARTINEZ	X	
CITY CLERK, ALMA ANDRADE	X	

5. EVENTS UPDATE.

Ms. Diana Manquero presented upcoming February events including relaxing activities on Mondays from 2-5 PM, STEAM club on Tuesdays at 3:30 PM, movies on Wednesdays at 3 PM with free popcorn and juice, and story time for children on Thursdays. Special events included Valentine's Day story time, nutrition classes for ages 18-29 on Tuesdays at 4 PM, office hours with Congresswoman Adelita Grijalva's staff on the third Wednesday of each month, a Valentine's Day paint night on February 20th, and book club discussion on February 25th at 6 PM. Ms. Manquero emphasized February as Library Lovers Month and encouraged community participation.

Aquatic and Recreation Departments reported on upcoming events including an author playwright performance at the Douglas Visitor Center on February 12th with doors opening at 5 PM, featuring a performance based on the book "Raulito" about Arizona's first Latino governor. The first 114 people to preregister would receive a free signed copy in honor of Arizona's 114th birthday. A Valentine's Day event was scheduled at the Cochise County Fairgrounds with Gemini and Lowe's App Zone, with tickets available at \$20 each from the Aquatic Center, water department, and Illusions Boutique. The Aquatic Center was set to reopen February 16th for lap swim Monday through Friday from 5-8 AM and 4-7 PM, plus Saturdays 7-10 AM. Facility updates included completion of surge tank draining, cleaning and replastering, fence sanding and repainting by staff, and demolition of men's restroom showers.

6. MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBER UPDATES AND/OR REPORTS.

Council Member Rodriguez reported visiting the Boys and Girls Club, noting significant potential for the facility. She observed that part of the space remained non-functional and suggested donating city equipment left behind by ACT, including desks that could benefit schools. She emphasized the need to expedite getting the Boys and Girls Club to full capacity to encourage more children to participate.

Council Member Montaño discussed golf course initiatives, reporting that had been inviting other areas to play, they probably bring 25 golfers and every person that comes down, they spend money in the community. He noted that

previously other schools would not compete in Douglas due to golf course conditions, but with city investment and improvement efforts, word was spreading. He expressed hope for future high school tournaments and invitationals, emphasizing that golf attracts people of all ages and serves as a resource to draw visitors to Douglas.

Council Member Durazo reported touring the airport and golf course to assess conditions and upcoming projects. He discussed ideas for stimulating the economy using these facilities as resources. During a meet and greet with constituents over pizza, donuts, and cookies, discussion arose about the 2028 or 2029 centennial anniversary of the Amelia Earhart air derby. He suggested this could become a major event, noting the uniqueness of Douglas hosting the air derby with Amelia Earhart. He emphasized the need to start planning immediately and coordinate with other cities for attendance. Additionally, he addressed constituent concerns about stray cats, with reports that people were feeding them, and planned to discuss the matter with animal control.

Mayor Grijalva confirmed that staff were already working on the Amelia Earhart event planning.

Council Member Dillman reported visiting the Last Supper Museum and being impressed with its comprehensive collection of Last Supper depictions from various countries, woodwork styles, and cultural interpretations. She thanked Eric for the tour and noted encountering visitors from Wilcox who were spending a day exploring Douglas, visiting museums, and dining locally. She attended the Elks chili cook-off, congratulating winners and thanking the organization for their community contributions. The Thunder Mountain Wrestling event drew approximately 200 attendees of all ages, with enthusiastic audience participation. She praised the wrestlers for their community interaction, especially with children, providing pictures and autographs after matches. The wrestlers expressed appreciation for Douglas and confirmed their return in April.

Council Member Acosta reported ongoing constituent conversations while driving through town. He noted that while the commercial port of entry construction was progressing, residents could not visually observe progress from the highway. He had requested and received photos from Mr. Pedroza, which he shared on social media to demonstrate construction advancement. Constituents frequently expressed concerns about grant money usage and desired infrastructure improvements like street paving and curb repairs. He emphasized his role in educating constituents about appropriate uses for grant funding and assured them of progress over the next ten years, even if not immediately visible.

Mayor Grijalva reported establishing quarterly meetings with law enforcement agencies including CBP and Cochise County Sheriff. A study session on FLOCK cameras was scheduled to address community questions raised during public comment. He thanked religious leaders for organizing a first responders' brunch that included multiple departments. He expressed gratitude to Senator Mark Kelly for securing \$20 million for the connector road, a long-awaited project.

The mayor described attending an economic development conference in Phoenix, which proved valuable for connecting with representatives addressing community needs. Cornerstone Group assisted with scheduling additional meetings during his Phoenix visit, including promoting the March 21st boxing event at a gym with participating youth boxers. He met with state legislators including their district's senator and representatives, as well as the appropriations chair, regarding a \$30 million ask from WIFA for commercial port infrastructure.

Mayor Grijalva emphasized a crucial conversation with legislators who initially considered the amount excessive until he explained the commercial port's purpose, its status as the nation's most modern facility, outreach to Mexico and various companies, and his advocacy for the entire state of Arizona. He stressed that the legislator wanted to hear directly from elected officials rather than staff or lobbyists, encouraging council members to actively engage with state and federal representatives to advocate for constituents' needs.

Additionally, Mayor Grijalva praised Thunder Mountain Wrestling's community impact, noting that 95% of attendees came from outside Douglas, representing successful tourism marketing that could drive hotel demand and direct visitors to local museums, retail stores, and downtown specialty shops. The event provided children with positive Saturday night entertainment. Thunder Mountain Wrestling had also facilitated Synergy Home Care opening a storefront on Cochise Avenue, with plans for a block party grand opening featuring wrestlers for children's entertainment.

The mayor reported a productive business lunch with Richard Rosales from APS, which resulted in APS providing solar panels for the asphalt plant after learning about power needs. He attended a mayors' luncheon in Tombstone

with Mr. Pedroza, noting that Douglas was uniquely positioned among county cities with positive developments rather than complaints about needs.

He described meeting Governor Hobbs in Sierra Vista, providing her with a state of the city pamphlet and requesting her advocacy for the \$30 million infrastructure request. The Governor pledged her support. At his first MPC meeting, he committed city support for golf course needs including the country club kitchen and dining room areas, monitors for reception areas, and sound systems for events. He mentioned a Boys and Girls Club board member's request for wall painting, which had already been completed.

7. READING OF PROCLAMATION.

A. ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING MONTH.

Mayor Grijalva read a proclamation declaring March 2026 as Anti-Human Trafficking Month in Douglas, Arizona. The proclamation recognized human trafficking as a global epidemic affecting millions annually, with the United States ranking among the worst countries globally and Arizona in the top 15 states per capita. It acknowledged trafficking's impact across all demographics including teenagers and children, emphasizing collaborative efforts among schools, churches, nonprofits, law enforcement, and businesses. The proclamation committed the city to joining the "not in our city" movement to increase public awareness, eliminate trafficking from the community, support frontline organizations and law enforcement, and encourage residents to report suspicious activity.

B. ARIZONA STATEHOOD and AMERICA 250.

Mayor Grijalva read a proclamation commemorating Arizona's 114th Statehood anniversary on February 14, 2026, marking Arizona's admission as the 48th state in 1912. The proclamation recognized Arizona's journey from territory to statehood, celebrating its resilient spirit, diversity, and enduring legacy including indigenous heritage, pioneers, cultural landscapes, and economic contributions. It acknowledged the nationwide America 250 celebration of the United States' semi-quincentennial anniversary and Arizona's establishment of an America 250 commission for statewide coordination. The proclamation highlighted Douglas hosting the Raul Castro playwright event on February 12, 2026, at the Douglas Visitor Center as Arizona's statehood celebration and local America 250 kickoff. It encouraged residents and visitors to participate in celebrating Arizona's history, community heritage, and shared American values, noting that Douglas Days and July 4th celebrations would incorporate America 250 themes.

8. PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL IN WRITING OR VERBALLY ON ANY ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA.

Diana Pacheco of 333 F Avenue, Market Manager for Douglas Market, reintroduced herself and announced the market's first official date of February 27th. She explained they had been organizing since October and distributed promotional flyers. The market would operate every Friday from 2-6 PM during winter hours, located at Tenth Street Park, except for May 15th due to Douglas Days celebration. She was actively seeking vendors and promoting community participation.

Rosa Rodriguez of 1701 E 7th Street, Director of the Boys and Girls Club, announced that building walls had been painted and invited inspection of the improvements. She emphasized the club's mission of building future leaders and strengthening Douglas' youth for generations to come. The club operated Monday through Friday from 2:30-6 PM and Wednesdays from 11:30-6 PM. Transportation coordination with the school district was in progress. She was conducting community outreach and attending meetings to promote awareness. The grand opening was postponed to a future date to be determined. Club tours were available from 9:30-11 AM. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, donations were tax-deductible, including in-kind contributions. Upcoming events included teen night on February 27th from 4-6 PM for ages 14-18, and the first family night on March 25th. She emphasized targeting older students to keep them engaged and out of trouble.

Supervisor Kathleen Gomez, 2350 12th Street, provided county updates, reporting ten proposals received from as far as Washington and California for an economic development strategic roadmap for the new Douglas commercial port and Hwy 191 corridor. The county was reviewing the top four proposals with plans for future work sessions with the city. She was surprised that each proposal included a hospital for Douglas as essential for economic development, which would eliminate her need for a separate feasibility study. She had identified potential hospital locations and spoken with three interested hospital administrators. She was lobbying for funding in Washington DC

and at the state level, with Congressman Ciscomani agreeing on the hospital's necessity and serving on the DC appropriations committee. She expressed confidence in securing funding, noting that land acquisition, traditionally the most difficult aspect, was proving to be the easiest.

Supervisor Gomez reported meeting with Congressman Ciscomani's staff and addressing the Fort Huachuca carnival scheduling conflict with the Cochise County Fair. The base commander was unaware of the conflict and agreed to coordinate scheduling to avoid competition while potentially establishing military appreciation day at the county fair. She noted the county fair's significance as the largest Cochise County event with 53,000 attendees over four days in the previous year. The county planned to begin marketing the fair and improve internet access for vendors.

She reported Congressman Ciscomani securing \$2 million for BDI updates and her commitment to preventing the fort from claiming Douglas airspace, which would be crucial for the new commercial port. She discussed the historical significance of BDI's screwworm distribution center in the 1970s and pushed for its reestablishment as screwworms approached Sonora, which would create jobs and protect the cattle industry.

Regarding FLOCK cameras, Supervisor Gomez reported the county's decision against FLOCK due to data storage and sales concerns with smaller companies offering better privacy control. She noted FLOCK's CEO claiming ability to eliminate need for sheriff and police departments within ten years, raising concerns about information gathering and storage. She encouraged the city to review the county's work session recording and conduct background research on FLOCK, noting that Tucson had decided against FLOCK cameras based on raised concerns.

She promoted the Rotary Club's eighth annual D-Hill Trojan Run on April 11th at 7 AM, with all proceeds supporting the Douglas Air Museum. She emphasized the museum as a treasure comparable to attractions in Bisbee or Tombstone. She highlighted Eleanor Roosevelt's 1928 inauguration of Douglas International Airport and suggested coordinating with Rotary Club for a 2028 celebration. She noted the historical significance of the Amelia Earhart Powderpuff Derby, the first all-female pilot race in the United States, and Douglas's participation. She invited city council members to join Rotary Club planning efforts for the 1928 celebration and committed to providing monthly updates on hospital development, the new port authority board, and county economic development initiatives for Douglas and the HWY 191 corridor.

Mayor Grijalva directed staff to add a standing item on the agenda for Cochise County Updates.

9. DISCUSSION/DECISION on APPROVAL of CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

- A. **EXPENDITURES** for the month of **JANUARY 2026** totaling **\$2,574,610.90**.
- B. **MEETING MINUTES** for **JANUARY 2026**.
- C. **BID AWARD** to **KP VENTURES WELL DRILLING** and **PUMP CO., LLC** for **DRILLING** and **INSTALLATION** of a New Water Production **WELL #20**.
- D. **CONTRACT AWARD** to **CLIFTON LARSON ALLEN** for **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR SERVICES** for Fiscal Years 2026-2028.
- E. **RESOLUTION NO. 26-1716**, a Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the City of Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona, **AUTHORIZING** the **SUBMISSION** of **TWO-YEAR GRANT APPLICATION** to the Arizona Department of Transportation encompassing October 1, 2026 to September 30, 2028 time frame for section **5311** and **5339 RURAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM** funds to continue to provide public transportation services via the **DOUGLAS RIDES PROGRAM**.
- F. **RESOLUTION NO. 26-1717**, a Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the City of Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona, **RATIFYING** and **GRANTING** a **UTILITY EASEMENT** to **ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY** for installation and maintenance of electric lines, together with appurtenant facilities and fixtures over part of city owned parcel number 408-34-008B, to service a temporary well site and authorizing the City Manager to execute all necessary documents.
- G. **RESOLUTION NO. 26-1718**, a Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the City of Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona, **RATIFYING** and **GRANTING** a **UTILITY EASEMENT** to **ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE**

company for installation and maintenance of electric lines, together with appurtenant facilities and fixtures over part of city owned parcel number 408-34-008B, to service the new commercial port of entry and authorizing the City Manager to execute all necessary documents.

- H. **RESOLUTION NO. 26-1719**, a Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the City of Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona, **RATIFYING** and **AUTHORIZING** the City of Douglas to **ACCEPT GRANT FUNDING** from **BEST FRIENDS ANIMAL SOCIETY** in the amount of \$10,000 for participation in the **BRING LOVE HOME CHALLENGE**.
- I. **RESOLUTION NO. 26-1720**, a Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the City of Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona, **PROVIDING** for **WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE COVERAGE** for **VOLUNTEER LAW ENFORCEMENT** personnel.
- J. **City of Douglas ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 4.90 DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY** for **FTA** and **FMCSA** Regulated Positions.

Motion by Council Member Acosta, second by Council Member Dillman to approve the consent agenda items as presented.

Roll call: Voted in Favor: Mayor Jose Grijalva, Council Members: Melissa Rodriguez, Jose Montaña, Gustavo Durazo, Maria Dillman, and Richard Acosta. Voted Against: None.

10. DISCUSSION/DECISION on APPROVALS.

- A. **ORDINANCE NO. 26-1228**, an Ordinance of the Mayor and Council of the City of Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona, **AMENDING SECTION 10.08.010, SECTION 10.16.020** and **SECTION 10.19.010** of the **DOUGLAS MUNICIPAL CODE RELATING to PARKING**, establishing severability of components of ordinance; and establishing an effective date thereof.

City Engineer Karl Rockwell explained the ordinance would modify sections 10.08.010, 10.16.020, and 10.19.010 of the Douglas Municipal Code relating to parking. He emphasized the importance of following the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for all traffic control decisions including striping, signing, crosswalks, and signal installation, noting that lawyers purchase the manual more frequently than engineers. Currently, traffic control changes require council approval through first reading, 30-day waiting period, and second reading, resulting in approximately 60-day delays. The ordinance would transfer responsibility for traffic control changes to the city engineer and city manager, enabling streamlined processes.

Motion by Council Member Acosta, second by Council Member Rodriguez to approve the placement of Ordinance No. 25-1228.

Ms. Urquijo added that the change would allow quicker service delivery and provide ability to update areas where code changes had not been implemented due to bureaucratic layers. The authorization would enable quick responses to limited parking change requests and allow comprehensive review with fresh engineering perspective to clean up inconsistencies and work collaboratively on improvements.

Council Member Montaña explained the ordinance originated from a constituent with a nonprofit requesting small parking structure changes, which currently required three months due to the two-meeting plus 30-day process. The change would enable the city manager and designee and city engineer to make decisions quickly without lengthy delays, representing a step toward simplifying processes.

Mayor Grijalva clarified that limited parking referred to ADA parking, disabled parking with blue striping, 15-minute parking, and loading zones, rather than general parking availability.

Roll call: Voted in Favor: Mayor Jose Grijalva, Council Members: Melissa Rodriguez, Jose Montaña, Gustavo Durazo, Maria Dillman, and Richard Acosta. Voted Against: None.

Motion by Council Member Rodriguez, second by Council Member Acosta to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 25-1228.

Roll call: Voted in Favor: Mayor Jose Grijalva, Council Members: Melissa Rodriguez, Jose Montaña, Gustavo Durazo, Maria Dillman, and Richard Acosta. Voted Against: None.

11. ACKNOWLEDGMENT of CITIZEN PETITION related to the DOWNTOWN STREETScape DESIGN.

A. DOWNTOWN STREETScape PETITION.

Mayor Grijalva provided background context, explaining that the petition was presented by Ida Pedrego last month requesting transparency. The process began years ago with two unpopular options, followed by a third option, with staff indicating that voting for the third option would cancel previous votes. The petition arose after a fourth option was voted on during a special meeting in May through a mayoral motion, which was unusual as council typically made such motions. After bid rejection, the petition requested further discussion of the streetscape design.

Ida Pedrego of 1815 5th Street, owner of Illusions Boutique, addressed the council representing over 300 merchants and residents who signed the petition opposing the current Douglas streetscape plan. She clarified their support for downtown revitalization and desire for G Avenue success, but opposition to a plan potentially harming businesses and a process that treated merchants as uninformed constituents rather than experts. She emphasized they were not saying no but offering a better approach.

She described the petition as representing a broad bipartisan cross-section of Douglas stakeholders requesting a slowdown. Their concern was that the plan was designed for larger cities like Tucson, Phoenix, or Chandler without proper scaling for Douglas. In smaller cities, cars equal customers who drive, circle for parking, make quick stops, and will avoid downtown if access becomes inconvenient, confusing, or congested, choosing other areas instead.

Ms. Pedrego presented five unanswered questions: What data proved increased foot traffic would offset vehicle access and parking loss in a city of Douglas's size? Where was data demonstrating majority constituent approval of the specific design? What was the specific funding plan to mitigate business losses during potentially months-long construction? What were success metrics, and how would they know if the project failed? Most importantly, what was the road back plan if the project harmed commerce, given the irreversible nature of curb movement and concrete pouring?

She proposed a pilot block alternative using a 3–6-month pilot program on a single G Avenue block with paint, planters, decorative tires, and removable bollards. This standard practice for cities respecting small business communities would measure traffic flow, parking utilization, business revenue during and after implementation, and customer feedback from actual shoppers. Successful pilots would provide data supporting permanent versions, while failed pilots would cost only thousands rather than destroying two downtown blocks.

Additionally, Ms. Pedrego addressed communication failures, explaining that social media and surveys did not work effectively in Douglas's bilingual community where many business owners and residents relied on personal conversation rather than Facebook polls. She called for city employees fluent in Spanish and English conducting door-to-door, block-by-block explanations. The current information gap had created suspicion with people feeling decisions were made for them rather than with them, describing the situation as lacking transparency and democracy.

She concluded by positioning merchants as partners rather than opposition, emphasizing their daily roles unlocking doors, sweeping sidewalks, and greeting neighbors spending money in Douglas. She requested pausing the plan for a reversible pilot program, thanking three council members Mr. Montaña, Mr. Durazo and Ms. Dillman, who had visited to ask and answer questions. She confirmed her passion as a Douglas employee working to beautify the city while advocating assessment before spending millions on potentially ineffective improvements.

Ms. Lawana Diffie of 1511 E 12th Street, computer business owner for nearly 21 years, endorsed Pedrego's comments entirely. She expressed concern about upcoming tariffs significantly impacting small businesses, citing a computer part increasing from \$17.45 to \$49.80 in one month. Combined with potential G Avenue disruption by reducing customer traffic during higher supply costs, she warned of potentially catastrophic effects for businesses operating on narrow margins. She praised ongoing community events and suggested using city hall sign to

announce upcoming events, advocating for a community calendar to attract visitors from Tombstone, Benson, and other areas with more than one week notice.

Supervisor Gomez of 2350 12th Street, spoke as a resident, referencing multiple expensive studies from 2007-2008 including consultant studies on revitalization and economic prosperity, plus airport studies that yielded no results. She emphasized the need to listen to community residents rather than continuing ineffective study cycles. She expressed frustration over Golden Time restaurant closure due to banner regulations, arguing that barriers to downtown occupancy undermined revitalization efforts. Without businesses occupying buildings, even improved sidewalks and paint would deteriorate within months. She advocated bringing businesses first, then revitalizing infrastructure, noting inconsistencies between code enforcement and allowing inappropriate development in the historic Barrio district. She emphasized that elected officials, being accountable to voters through elections, recalls, and jail time, must listen to constituents when hundreds of people identify problems.

Zheyla Baltierrez of 933 G Avenue, expressed initial excitement about G Avenue improvements that evolved into feeling blindsided by sudden plan changes. She emphasized preferring beautification over practical changes like larger sidewalks given limited pedestrian traffic, while maintaining desire for attractive improvements. She appreciated existing parking arrangements but wanted enhanced aesthetics. She compared the process to home improvement consultation, emphasizing merchants as stakeholders deserving input on changes affecting their daily operations. She looked forward to meeting with council about future projects and viewed the initiative as potentially successful for downtown and merchants, noting four business owners' attendance as evidence of importance.

Several council members responded with detailed discussions of their positions and research.

Council Member Acosta clarified that newly appointed council members had been educated about the streetscape timeline through meetings with the city manager the day after appointment. He disputed media reports quoting the mayor as saying council always followed staff recommendations, asserting that council voted based on their judgment as born-and-raised Douglas residents understanding downtown's urgent needs. He characterized the streetscape as vital and great for Douglas, emphasizing the need to attract investors, commerce, and new businesses.

Council Member Acosta noted that discussion had shifted from original turning lane concerns to pilot program requests without mentioning turning lanes. He referenced research showing 20% of small rural businesses fail within one year and 50% within five years. He cited research indicating two-lane roads naturally slow traffic and benefit businesses by allowing drivers to observe storefronts and windows. He praised bump-outs for extending sidewalks and providing shorter, safer pedestrian crossings. He presented the final concept showing angle parking and referred to comprehensive research available on the city's Engage website. He acknowledged appreciation for petition signers' community love while emphasizing council's independence from staff influence and commitment to making decisions benefiting the city and residents.

Council Member Montaño acknowledged speaking with multiple constituents including several mentioned by name, reporting mixed feedback with some asking why the project had not been completed after years of discussion. He argued that continuing delays while downtown businesses closed would result in more shutdowns, while streetscape implementation might attract investors recognizing area beauty and opening restaurants, breweries, or other businesses. He emphasized that maintaining status quo would likely result in additional business closures and building deterioration. He noted discussing the matter with petition signers who expressed frustration with decades-long delays and urged project completion. He worried that further changes would waste approximately \$300,000 in studies and drawings, requiring restart of the entire process and potentially resulting in continued delays with no progress after twenty years of discussion.

Council Member Rodriguez briefly agreed with Council Member Acosta and Montaño's positions, appreciating Ms. Pedrego's pilot proposal but arguing that 3–6-month pilots would waste time whether successful or unsuccessful by either doubling business impact duration or proving ineffectiveness. She noted contractors typically accommodate business operations during construction projects with detailed accommodation plans available on the website. As a lifelong Douglas resident wanting city prosperity, she emphasized the need to increase tourism like Bisbee's success through downtown beautification. She acknowledged economic challenges including tariff impacts affecting all shopping venues, arguing that beautification could create positive snowball effects attracting beneficial developments to the city.

Council Member Dillman emphasized community love and need for forward progress with the approaching commercial port of entry requiring downtown beautification and safety improvements. She noted current parking safety issues with car rear ends protruding into streets and highlighted potential infrastructure improvements needed as pavement was opened, including bringing facilities to code compliance.

Council Member Durazo contextualized the 2011 concept development during different downtown conditions with more businesses, emphasizing the need for adaptation to prevent extinction as businesses continued closing. He noted original three-block budget concerns due to inflation, stressing that further delays would increase costs and potentially result in grant loss with time limits. He argued that Douglas was losing businesses due to world changes, particularly post-2020 online shopping shifts closing prominent anchor stores. He referenced successful downtown Tucson transformation from traditional businesses to restaurants and attractions, advocating adaptation to attract residents and encouraging young people to remain in Douglas rather than leaving for cities with better amenities, commerce, and downtown safety.

Mayor Grijalva clarified his quoted comment about staff living in bubbles, emphasizing the need for elected representatives to engage with constituents directly rather than relying solely on staff input working within city hall's 9-to-5 limitations. He stressed the importance of ward representation, questioning ward effectiveness when representatives did not actively engage with their constituents' needs. He reiterated that staff should not determine community needs without direct community interaction, emphasizing elected officials' responsibility to be accessible and engaged with residents.

Council Member Montaño clarified that staff worked designated hours and should not be expected to extend beyond those hours for additional community engagement, emphasizing that constituent outreach was council members' responsibility. He reiterated his community conversations and belief that downtown revitalization was necessary to prevent continued business closures, arguing that investors would be attracted to beautified areas leading to new restaurants, breweries, and business development.

Eric Braverman of 1101 G Avenue referenced research from NAU University and other institutions indicating tourists preferred old school town appearances over modern designs. He advocated promoting existing attractions including museums, the friendly port, the Gadsden, Cultural Center, and Last Supper Museum rather than expensive modifications. He emphasized promoting Douglas's assets including superior weather and unique attractions, noting the Last Supper Museum's global uniqueness and six-day weekly operation. He criticized lack of promotion for existing events and attractions, suggesting better marketing of current assets rather than expensive streetscape modifications.

Michael Schumaker an investor with four G Avenue properties, expressed frustration that property owners were never approached for consultation despite significant local investment. He and his partner had invested substantial resources based on belief in community leadership and continued commitment despite feeling excluded from planning processes. He emphasized Douglas's rich history and criticized modern streetscape versions as inappropriate for the community's historical character. He suggested phased implementation using established funding while ensuring all business stakeholders received meaningful input opportunities, drawing on his lifelong Arizona business experience and commitment to Douglas as residents rather than speculators.

Tanya Duarte of 2001 9th Street criticized council members' tone toward constituents, business owners, and residents as offensive, emphasizing that council members served as representatives rather than authority figures. She stressed that residents were the actual bosses requiring respectful treatment and attention to downtown business owners' concerns, noting that council members lacked downtown business ownership and skin in the game.

Diana LaMar of 1303 F Avenue supported the previous speaker's concerns about council responsiveness to significantly affected residents. She criticized insufficient survey response rates for previous city surveys and emphasized community members' extensive research efforts, sometimes exceeding council members' preparation levels. She called for creative thinking and brainstorming to address concerns without abandoning beneficial aspects of the project.

Steven Helfrich of 1303 F Avenue detailed his \$300,000+ local investment in G Avenue and F Street properties with 95% local contractor and supplier usage despite higher costs. He emphasized his small business experience and urban streetscape expertise, noting community concerns expressed during J2 completion that were ignored

during construction document development. He had requested construction document copies since December without response, despite architectural contracts typically requiring full printed working document sets. He offered to review documents and provide technical education while sharing his six years of walking streets, alleys, and community interaction experience.

Rene Lopez of Douglas supported the streetscape project based on Litchfield Park experience with successful pedestrianization and road diet implementations that initially faced opposition before proving successful. While acknowledging business owner concerns and potential oversight, he emphasized the need for real revitalization attempts after decades of ineffective approaches. He disagreed with some J2 design elements while preferring historical appearances, drawing comparisons to Bisbee's successful downtown model and Phoenix metro area communities resembling Douglas's former appearance. He encouraged dialogue between opposing viewpoints while supporting council's revitalization efforts.

Multiple speakers provided additional technical and procedural comments before Mayor Grijalva directed staff to organize an informational session for downtown revitalization education. He emphasized the need for comprehensive information sessions beyond streetscape specifics to prevent future petitions on related aspects. The event would accommodate constituent schedules with staff explanations and council attendance to fulfill their duty of listening to residents.

Council Member Rodriguez apologized for any offensive comments while asserting her right to privacy regarding personal shopping preferences when questioned directly.

Mr. Fitzgibbons confirmed that staff could proceed with an informational session on downtown revitalization based on council direction, and that the petition had been properly acknowledged through agenda placement and council consideration as required by charter provisions.

12. CITY MANAGER REPORTS.

Ms. Urquijo provided updates on several items. The Small Business Development Center would offer a Business 101 workshop on March 17th at 2 PM at Cochise College covering business success building blocks using the business model canvas. Arizona Apex's accelerator and SBDC would host a government contracting workshop on February 19th at 9:30 AM at Cochise College SBDC in Sierra Vista.

The Aquatic Center was ready to reopen after winter maintenance break during which staff completed pump room preventive maintenance, facility projects, and began men's shower room construction. Men's restroom improvements would continue through March with restrooms remaining open but showers temporarily unavailable, with accommodation available through recreation or aquatics coordinators.

Ms. Urquijo reported full funding for the commercial port of entry connector road through the \$20 million CDS award to ADOT, thanking congressional delegation members, especially Senators Kelly and Gallego. The utility corridor remained the critical infrastructure project needing \$30 million additional funding, with \$19 million already secured for water, sewer, and broadband conduit west of town serving the commercial port and Cochise College water campus.

Fourteen solar streetlights were recently installed in Quail Run area with street name signs and street sweeping scheduled for the following week. Asphalt plant work continued with concrete footing installation for the large facility, with APS providing electrical panels scheduled for May installation.

A new generator was installed at well 17 near the public works barn on Sulphur Springs Road to ensure continued water delivery during power outages as part of water distribution vulnerability strategy. Boys and Girls Club ribbon cutting was postponed to March with date to be determined.

Community center funding required an additional \$83,000 for design concepts and expansion plans, with continued efforts to find funding for the community center portion. Cox's innovation lab ribbon cutting was planned as a separate event with date pending.

Development services hired new building compliance specialist Alejandra Machado with internal reorganization reassigning building reclassifications to compliance specialists. Luis Peralta and Alejandra would work cross-

functionally on building compliance, plan review, and building inspection while supporting each other. Cochise County Development Services continued providing planning assistance, mentoring, and backup inspection.

The futures meeting was rescheduled for February 25th to begin the budget cycle. Boys and Girls Club painting was completed. Raul Castro playwright event tickets were available through Eventbrite app for the February 12th 5:30 PM performance, with the app managing the lottery for 114 free book distributions.

Ms. Urquijo provided extensive streetscape project background, clarifying that she had not conducted additional feasibility studies after joining as city manager. The streetscape concept originated with 2008 University of Arizona student designs that lacked funding and sat unused. A 2011 streetscape study was similarly unfunded. Mayor dusted off the 2011 study with community input led by Cochise County Planning, resulting in resolution approval. Mayor and council hired J2 to develop preliminary concepts, which Ms. Urquijo inherited and advanced after securing \$2.9 million funding in 2023 plus \$1.3 million city contribution.

After funding confirmation, Ms. Urquijo conducted council retreat sessions reviewing all previous input on trees, lights, sidewalk lanes, and bump-outs, with council addressing each element individually. J2 incorporated public input through surveys, social media comments, and documented feedback available on the website. The process struggled with survey responses, prompting different outreach approaches including social media documentation and personal interviews within the three-block area, with all transcripts available on the website.

J2 developed a hybrid plan incorporating consensus element while maintaining ADA compliance guidance. They reduced extended sidewalk proposals due to concerns but required ADA compliance when touching existing infrastructure, including addressing high curbs. The design evolved from 24-foot or 20-foot sidewalks to 13-17 feet based on comprehensive community input documentation.

The project progressed through engineering phases from 30% to 60% to 90% to 100% completion enabling contractor bidding. All bid requests required contractor coordination with merchants in the three-block area providing construction timeframes. Contractors indicated minimal sidewalk disruption time focusing primarily on infrastructure improvements including electrical, irrigation, and broadband conduit for downtown Wi-Fi rather than aesthetic elements.

This preliminary engineering design phase addressed storm drainage and curb height for ADA compliance, with aesthetic elements including benches, landscaping, and colors remaining for future community input. The engineering design took over a year from 30% to 100% completion, with inflation concerns about the \$3.9 million budget, though the project remained viable due to conservative initial estimates.

Council approved the project in May 2024, authorizing Ms. Urquijo to proceed with established parameters. The next phase involved bidding for contractor award. She emphasized that revitalization information sessions would include streetscape details, historic preservation efforts, environmental cleanup initiatives, and tax incentive program concepts for property owners.

The city adopted Title 18 two and a half years earlier to become credentialed for historic preservation grants and awards, with delays due to administrative changes and federal agency restructuring. They were working to regain credentials for eligibility while seeking additional state legislative funding for potential project gaps. The city had also received \$2.35 million for commercial road resurfacing including G Avenue and Tenth Street covering nine community corridors.

Ms. Urquijo noted HUD pressure to begin utilizing the \$2.9 million grant with three-year usage requirements from drawdown initiation. Federal lobbyists were monitoring the timeline cautiously. She respected all community comments as a Douglas native who had walked G Avenue daily to her parents' TV shop, visited Arizona Drug for chocolate, Cokes, and Douglas Drug for French fries after school, both now repurposed as museum and tattoo shop respectively.

She characterized her role as carrying forward the baton from 2008 student studies through 2011 firm recommendations and 2019 mayor-led revival with all public input incorporation. Council had seen all processes and documentation from the beginning, making informed decisions on the hybrid approach incorporating necessary public feedback through various documented outreach methods available on the website.

13. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM REQUESTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL.

Mayor Grijalva requested adding county supervisor updates as a regular agenda item, like IDA's city update format during their meetings. He expressed hope for potential state reports if those became available monthly.

14. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion by Council Member Rodriguez, second by Council Member Montañó to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Prepared by:



Alma Andrade, City Clerk