



**Minutes**  
**Queen Creek Town Council &**  
**Apache Junction Council Joint Meeting**  
Community Chambers, 20727 E. Civic Parkway  
October 23, 2023 | 6:00 PM

**1) Call to Order:**

Dinner was served at approximately 6:05 PM; the meeting was call to order at 6:44 PM

**2) Introductions and Opening Remarks:**

Mayor Wheatley welcomed the Apache Junction City Council and staff, and introduced the Queen Creek Staff present at the meeting.

Mayor Chip Wilson introduced the Apache Junction City Council and asked City Manager Bryant Powell to introduce the Apache Junction staff present at the meeting.

Town of Queen Creek

Julia Wheatley, Mayor  
Jeff Brown, Vice Mayor  
Robin Benning, Council Member\*  
Leah Martineau, Council Member\*  
Bryan McClure, Council Member  
Dawn Oliphant, Council Member  
Travis Padilla, Council Member

\* *Absent*

City of Apache Junction

Chip Wilson, Mayor  
Robert Schroeder, Vice Mayor  
Darryl Cross, Council Member  
Peter Heck, Council Member  
Bambi Johnson, Council Member  
Tess Nesser, Council Member  
Bryan Soller, Council Member

**Staff Present:**

Town of Queen Creek: Bruce Gardner, Town Manager; Shea Joachim, Assistant Town Manager; Maria Gonzalez, Town Clerk; Scott A Holcomb, Town Attorney; Doreen Cott, Economic Development Director; Mohamed Youssef, Public Works Director; Randy Brice, Chief of Police; Constance Wilson-Halonen, Communications & Marketing Director; Heather Wilkey, Intergovernmental Director.

City of Apache Junction Matt Busby, Assistant City Manager; Jennifer Pena, City Clerk; Joel Stern, City Attorney; Rudy Esquivias, Development Services Director; Pat Ainsworth, Economic Development Director; Michael Pooley, Chief of Police, Johnny John, Asst. Chief of Police Chief; Joe Penze, Police Commander; Robert Wisler, Management Analyst; Ted Wolf, Public Works Director; Sydney Urias, Planning Manager; Al Bravo, Public Information Officer:

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### 3) Discussion and Review of 2015 Memorandum of Shared Intent Between Agencies

#### 2015 Memorandum of Shared Intent between Agencies

Town Manager Bruce Gardner noted that the joint planning efforts, commitments and intentions are important years in advance as we will see with prior commitments made by the Council in 2015. He reviewed the 2015 Memorandum of Shared Interest between agencies and discussed the intention behind Resolution 1085-15, specifically the paragraph describing the collaborative efforts of the agencies involved.

City Manager Bryant Powell reflected on the time between 2002 to 2008 before the Great Recession, where it was not known by the Arizona State Lands Department (ASLD) who would be responsible over the jurisdiction. Former Town Manager John Kross and City Manager Powell worked together to develop the boundaries, and as time passed, the interest in the area continued to increase. The Resolution set the stage for the commercial and residential developments between both agencies, and provided confirmation to the ASLD on who was taking responsibility for the area.

### 4) Presentation and Discussion of State Route 24 and Transportation Impacts to Agencies:

#### Presentation

Public Works Director Mohamed Youssef (Queen Creek) provided an introduction of the Superstition Vistas Multimodal Transportation Planning Study with an overview of the process and a status update.

Mr. Youssef discussed the membership, role and responsibilities of the Technical Advisory Group, and introduced the four Stakeholder Focus Groups consisting of 1) energy, water, flood protection; 2) public transportation providers; 3) rail and freight providers; and 4) bike user groups.

He noted the two rounds of elected official briefings with Councils from the City of Apache Junction, the Town of Florence, the City of Mesa, the Town of Queen Creek, and the Pinal County Board of Supervisors held either in person or virtually. The first round will be at the initiation of the project to introduce the project and solicit elected official input, issues, concerns, and/or objectives. The second round (tentatively identified for late 2023 / early 2024) will seek elected official input at the draft plan recommendation stage to seek inputs, suggestions, and priorities on draft recommended projects/needs.

He presented on the State Route 24 Interim Phase II (Ellsworth Road to Ironwood Drive) ultimate build-out, the 2030 level of service with and without the extension, and closed with an update on the LG infrastructure improvements.

### 5) Presentation and Discussion on Economic Development and Planning from the Town of Queen Creek and City of Apache Junction Staff Regarding Economic Development and Planning Efforts

#### Presentation Queen Creek

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#### Presentation Apache Junction

Economic Development Director Doreen Cott (Queen Creek) began with an overview of residential and the demographics. As of September 2023, the Single-Family Permit projections for FY24 is 800 with a monthly average of 151.7 in 2023. Ms. Cott shared maps depicting Queen Creek's single-family residential projects and multi-family developments that exist (1,174), are under construction (1,49), or have a site plan approved (791); total of 3,714 units.

With respect to the State Land development and new businesses, Ms. Cott presented on the strategic offerings, proximity to the Town's downtown core, and a review of the zoning map. Noteworthy is LG Energy Solutions investment of \$5.5B to build a battery manufacturing complex in the Town, leading the EV and renewable energy revolution with cylindrical batteries for EV and lithium iron phosphate (LFP) pouch- type batteries for energy storage systems (ESS). LG's investment represents the largest single investment ever for a stand-alone battery manufacturing facility in North America. Additional slides were shared regarding the 3,500 acres for development and artistic rendering of LGES, plus current images of the land being developed.

Economic Development Director Patrick Ainsworth (Apache Junction) presented on the \$42M expansion improvements to the Central Arizona College Superstition Mountain (AJ) Campus, such as new workforce development programs available; the renovation of Building C for a computer/VR lab, expanded EA Sports and public safety offices; and the future home of the LG Training facility (Building F, 15-20k sq ft); LG will receive a five-year exclusive to the building. He noted the Parks & Recreation Department's efforts to purchase the Apache Junction Rodeo Grounds for future rodeos, concerts, and other events.

Development Services Director Rudy Esquivias (Apache Junction) presented on the Brookfield by D.R. Horton development made up of a recent auction by the Arizona State Land Department of 2,800 acres; 6,600-acres annexed in total. The Master Plan area is approximately 8,100 acres, including land already within the city limits just north of Elliott Road. He discussed the infrastructure improvements underway that will support the new development in the area.

Mr. Esquivias shared development updates on Phases 1 & 2 of Radiance by DR Horton, as well as Blossom Rock by Brookfield consisting of five home builders, a multi-family developer, commercial corner, and a district park, all under contract. He discussed the surrounding development phases available for auction in 2028/29. In summary, there's anticipation of 27k new homes in both phases, representing an increase to the city's population by 60k. The current population of the City is approximately 40k. The auction piece alone is approximately 26k new residents, some of which have already moved into the area. In closing, Mr. Esquivias expressed the city's excitement and partnership on the regional efforts.

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Vice Mayor Schroeder asked what the estimated buildout timeline was for Apache Junction, and Mr. Esquivias indicated that it could be 10-20 years. Mayor Wheatley asked what the projected population will be and it is anticipated to exceed 100k residents.

#### 6) **Presentation and Discussion on Police Operations** Presentation Queen Creek Presentation Apache Junction

Police Chief Randy Brice introduced the Queen Creek Police Department (QCPD) which launched on January 11, 2022 as having four primary functional areas/divisions with nearly 100 different services, task forces, contracts, regional teams, and programs. Chief Brice shared the many functions of his team, the field operations best structure, and comparisons on calls for service, community engagement activity, crash activity, and property crime activity.

Chief Brice shared the equipment and technology utilized by QCPD and noted the partnership with Apache Junction and other agencies to share resources as available, and discussed QCPD's efforts to blend technology and community-based programs. He expressed the importance of regional partnerships to maximize effectiveness.

Discussion ensued regarding crime and lack of prosecution efforts from the business community, specifically retailers. Council Member Padilla suggested a letter be drafted on behalf of the respective Town Council to the business community to show support but encourage engagement with the police, while noting that a lack of effort to prosecute may invite crime into the community. He also expressed interest in sharing the letter with the media, to which Chief Brice deferred to the Council for further direction. Chief Brice added that there is great local support and cooperation but it has been difficult to manage things with large chains due to corporate policies. Any support provided from an elected body is appreciated. Vice Mayor added that he hopes police is prosecuting all the crimes rather than establishing a threshold be met first. Chief Brice added that without the victim's cooperation, the County Attorney does not have much to move forward on.

Vice Mayor Robert Schroeder inquired if QCPD was seeing success w/ the Flox system (LPR; license plate readers), to which Chief Brice indicated that locally and regionally it is known to be a great tool, which he has placed in public spaces. The data is secure and available to multiple law enforcement agencies, proving to be an effective and valuable resource for law enforcement agencies. The technology shared can identify cars that are trailing each other. Officers in QCPD and AJ contain the Flock Safety System alerts on their cell phones and they can set up a geofence of their beat or city/town boundaries. Chief Brice noted that QCPD had three (3) silver alerts resolved through LPR hits.

Council Member Soller, having experience with the Flock System as a Lieutenant with the City of Mesa's Police Department, expressed his support for the Flock System and noted the safety aspects for officers and solvability of crimes. He suggested developing a joint real-time crime center between Apache Junction and Queen Creek and save money

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to get it activated quickly.

Chief Brice reinforced the innovation, equipment and technology efforts between the agencies, as well as the importance of engagement and feedback to/from the community for his officers.

Police Chief Michael Pooley concurred with much of Chief Brice's comments and presented on the Apache Junctions Police Department 's (AJPD) personnel updates & initiatives, and statistics on calls for service and accidents.

In regards to the utilization of technology, AJPD received new tasers, bodyworn cameras, and began utilizing drones as the future of policing as a first responder to help resolve situations in a safer manner. Chief Pooley expressed his appreciation for the City Council's support with technology. He discussed the use of Spidr Tech which is an automated customer service platform. AJPD is also working with Truleo, also new to Queen Creek, and in research partnership with Arizona State University's Center for Violence and Prevention & Community Safety. The company will fund the technology for AJPD to use Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) through bodyworn cameras to predict/tell a story on officers being professional, good at deescalating, dealing with irate individuals, etc. This will give the department a better perspective on what the officer's are dealing with and their interaction with the public. AJPD will be one of three police departments selected throughout the country participating in a year-long study.

Chief Pooley discussed future planning related to facilities (to include a real time crime center), staff training and wellness, and the department's commitment to increasing community engagement. Through a state funded grant, AJPD will offer a 6-month program where officers and communication staff exposed to trauma can get help/improve sleep, relaxation, interaction with people. AJPD was recently recognized by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) for Leadership in Community out of 30k members. Chief Pooley expressed his appreciation for the support and partnership with QCPD as a professional and great organization, and added Apache Junction and Queen Creek are two of the most sought out Police Departments to work with/for.

Council Member Soller expressed his support for AJPD's engagement with Truleo and shared his experience with it.

Mayor Wheatley recapped the joint effort on a letter regarding property crime as well as a joint crime center with intent to continue those discussions further. She expressed appreciation for Council Member Padilla's suggestion on developing a letter on property crime, but wondered if sending the letter to the media would have an unintended consequence of crime within the community. Chief Pooley agreed and noted that when companies become aware of the governing body's support, it is more powerful. Council Member Bambi Johnson shared that nowadays some businesses may not have an issue prosecuting, but may have in the past because they may not have wanted the information in the paper. Council Member Cross added that behind a good police force, is a good judicial system. Prosecutors willing to prosecute and

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if the cities have the support, it gives the retailers reason to file a report/make a call.

With respect to a joint crime center, Chief Pooley added that this will be part of AJPD's strategic plan. Council Member Soller added that he likes the idea of a joint crime center to share resources. Chief Brice indicated that it is in the QCPD Strategic Plan, but that it is scalable, can be virtual to start, and could be initiated with a few laptops and radios. He added that funding issues need to be worked through and expressed his support and commitment to work together.

Mayor Wheatley reiterated her appreciation towards the Apache Junction City Council and the 2015 Resolution between the agencies, and the value of Queen Creek's partnership with Apache Junction. Both Mayor Wheatley and Mayor Wilson expressed their gratitude to the staff for their efforts this evening.

**7) Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 PM.

TOWN OF QUEEN CREEK

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Julia Wheatley, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Maria E. Gonzalez, MMC  
Town Clerk

I, Maria E. Gonzalez, do hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the foregoing Minutes are a true and correct copy of the Town Council & Apache Junction Council Joint Meeting Minutes of the October 23, 2023 Town Council & Apache Junction Council Joint Meeting of the Queen Creek Town Council. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and that a quorum was present.

Passed an approved on: \_\_\_\_\_