



**City of Eloy
Minutes
City Council Work Session Meeting
September 15, 2025 at 5:30 PM
City Council Chambers**

I. Call to Order

Mayor Sutton called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

II. Roll Call

Present: Andrew Sutton, Mayor
Michelle Tarango, Vice Mayor
Sara Curtis, Councilmember
JoAnne Galindo, Councilmember
Jose Garcia, Councilmember
Dan Snyder, Councilmember
Michael Vodrazka, Councilmember

Staff: David Malewitz, City Manager
Stephen Cooper, City Attorney
Celine Kidwell, City Clerk
Mackenzie Letcher, Assistant City Manager

III. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Unscheduled Public Appearances

There were no unscheduled public appearances.

V. Discussion Items

- A.** Discussion and Possible Direction Regarding Ordinance Amendments and Additional Fees Related to Abandoned Properties and Vacant Buildings
Mayor Sutton opened the Work Session for Council discussion, public comments, and possible direction to staff regarding the review of the abandoned properties and vacant buildings ordinance.

Council members discussed the challenge of speculative property ownership, noting that many owners are holding properties in the hope of significant appreciation rather than activating them. Past revitalization efforts were referenced, including downtown commission initiatives with sidewalk improvements, murals, and reimbursable loan programs that had limited participation due to upfront cost requirements. The council spoke about the need for strong enforcement of properties that have lacked basic

maintenance for decades, emphasizing that such conditions are unacceptable, and that owners must be held responsible.

Mayor Sutton focused on commercial district improvements, particularly requiring glass windows and interior lighting on Main Street to create the appearance of active businesses, noting the "vicious circle" where deteriorated conditions deter potential investors.

City Attorney Stephen Cooper explained the limitations of Arizona tax law, noting the inability to impose discriminatory taxes on abandoned properties. Presented alternative tools, including downtown improvement districts with tax increment financing capabilities, condemnation powers for public purpose acquisition, property tax lien purchases (16% interest rate on redemptions), and impact fee exemptions for existing building footprints.

Community Development Director Dan Symer provided technical clarification on condemnation levels and permitting requirements. Explained that properties requiring structural review need formal plans and cannot simply be "fixed with lipstick" once they reach certain deterioration levels.

City Attorney Stephen Cooper provided legal direction and presented various options to the Council for consideration. The final decision-making authority remained with the Council.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Don Combs: Addressed concerns about long-term vacant properties and their impact on the community, noting that many properties have been passed down as generational wealth and remain unused.
- Michelle Reed: Spoke about serious public safety issues associated with abandoned properties, including drug activity and prostitution occurring in vacant structures, including a school bus. [Audio quality made full comments difficult to capture]
- Chevelle: Spoke about her concerns as a parent of baby twins (present during the meeting — one in stroller, one in arms), hoping for a safe community environment. [Specific details of her comments were not clearly captured in the transcript.]
- Stacy Ortega (Realtor/Eloy Chamber Board Director): Discussed market dynamics affecting abandoned properties, explaining that reasonable pricing is determined by market conditions specific to Eloy. Cited examples of properties selling near land value (\$40,000 price point) and challenges property owners face with rehabilitation costs versus market returns, and noted communication difficulties with some property owners who are unwilling to sell.
- Maricela (Beauty School Owner): Reported issues with signage removal and structural problems caused by the adjacent abandoned building with no roof, which is causing wall damage to her business.
- Andrew Rodriguez (Eloy Chamber of Commerce): Provided background on specific vacant buildings, including the Taquería (vacant since 2007) and Circle K ownership clarification. Reported that the Chamber now requires business plans from the SBA before referring potential tenants to landlords.

Confirmed ongoing partnership availability with the City.

- Orlando Sherwood: Shared experience of a failed café business due to structural issues (roof leaks, shared walls with laundromat) and rent increases.
- Kylie Mammon: Suggested utilizing student volunteers from the National Junior Honor Society and student councils for community revitalization projects and business education opportunities.

Following discussion and public comment, the Council decided to:

- Strengthen current ordinances that apply to abandoned properties and vacant buildings
- Continue collaborative efforts with homeowners and business owners to address vacancy and abandonment issues through cooperative approaches.

No formal action was taken as this was a discussion item only.

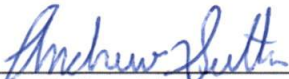
VI. Adjournment

Mayor Sutton adjourned the work session at 7:42 p.m.

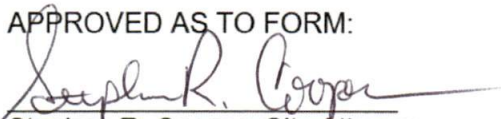
ATTEST:


Celine Kidwell, City Clerk

BY:


Andrew Sutton, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Stephen R. Cooper, City Attorney