

TOWN Of PARADISE VALLEY



STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor Stanton and Town Council Members

FROM: Andrew McGuire, Town Attorney

DATE: May 14, 2026

DEPARTMENT: Town Attorney's Office
Andrew McGuire, 602-257-7664

AGENDA TITLE:

Discussion and possible direction to staff regarding Resolution No. 2026-05, expressing support for citizen efforts to preserve the historic spire of the Ascension Lutheran Church; designating the Town Hall property as an appropriate location for installation of the spire; and approving all actions necessary to allow for such installation.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Resolution No. 2026-05.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The Ascension Lutheran Church, designed in 1963 by William Wesley Peters of Taliesin West Architects (the "Church"), had influences of the organic architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, including a prominent spire (the "Spire"). When the Church property was sold for private development, causing demolition of the Church, the Paradise Valley Historical Advisory Committee sought to preserve the Spire.

A group of citizens expressed interest in raising funds to move the Spire and to create a permanent location for its display. The group approached the Town about its preservation desires, and on June 13, 2024, the Town Council held a study session to discuss assisting the efforts to preserve the Spire. Thereafter, the Town Council adopted Resolution 2024-13, which (i) authorized (a) acceptance of ownership of the Spire, and (b) storage of the Spire on Town property for a period of time to allow for options to be evaluated, plans to be created, and fundraising to occur to allow for relocation and display of the Spire; and (ii) directed the Town Manager and the Town Attorney to (a) prepare and execute such documents as were necessary to transfer ownership of the Spire to the Town, (b) facilitate temporary storage on Town-owned property, and (c) provide assistance to the Paradise Valley Historical Advisory Committee and the citizen's group to locate a suitable display location for the Spire, which location may include Town-owned property.

Following approval of Resolution 2024-13, my office prepared, and the Town Manager executed, an Assignment and Bill of Sale, dated August 22, 2024, whereby the property owner delivered the Spire to the Town Hall property for safe-keeping, and the Town accepted ownership of the Spire. The Spire has been stored in the Town's public works yard since that time.

The Paradise Valley Historical Advisory Committee, in conjunction with local design professionals (the "Spire Design Team"), completed drawings and design concepts for locating the Spire on the Town Hall campus generally in the area known as the reflection garden (the "Conceptual Design"). The Spire Design Team presented the Conceptual Design to the Town Council at a study session on April 23, 2026, seeking Town Council approval of (i) the location for the Spire and (ii) further development of plans and drawings necessary to advance the Conceptual Design to a construction-ready project. The citizen's group desired the approval to provide certainty for fundraising efforts to generate sufficient funding to complete the design process and to construct a base to display the Spire on the Town Hall campus, as envisioned in the Conceptual Design.

The Town Hall property land-use designation is Special Use Permit. The Amended Special Use Permit for the Town Hall Complex, approved by the Town Council on April 23, 1992 (the "1992 SUP"), designated that development of the Town Hall property was to be as shown on the "Town of Paradise Valley Municipal Center Master Plan," which was referred to in the 1992 SUP as "Exhibit B" and determined to be an "integral element" of the 1992 SUP. Section 3 of the 1992 SUP designates that the "use of each structure on Exhibit B shall be those functions now or in the future determined to be appropriate by the Town without further amendment." The uses shown on Exhibit B for the area commonly referred to as the "reflection garden" do not reflect the uses currently in that area, and we have not been able to find any formal designation by the Town Council for any of the structures or installations within that area, other than for lighting on the Town Hall campus. Nonetheless, we believe formal Town Council action was contemplated by the 1992 SUP to establish what the Town Council deems appropriate for the site. Accordingly, Resolution 2026-05 is presented for your consideration as the authorization contemplated by the 1992 SUP.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

Undetermined. The resolution directs the Town Manager to ensure staff cooperation with the citizens' group, including utilizing staff time and minor expenditures up to the Town Manager's authority. Staff utilization will not have a direct budgetary impact. The FY 2026-27 Town budget does not include expenditures related to the Spire, and the Town Manager's authority is limited to less than \$25,000 for unbudgeted items.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Staff Report
- B. Resolution No. 2026-05