

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 26, 2002

The General Development Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on November 26, 2002 at 9:00 a.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Dennis Kavanaugh, Chairman
Kyle Jones
Claudia Walters

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson

1. Discuss and consider two redevelopment proposals to purchase and rehabilitate the Mitten House located at 238 West Second Street and direct staff to enter into a 90-day negotiation period with one of the proposers.

Chairman Kavanaugh welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that he would like the proposers to present their remarks first and said that staff would then discuss their recommendations and respond to any questions there may be from the members of the Committee.

John Giles, former Vice Mayor and one of the proposers seeking to purchase and rehabilitate the Mitten House, addressed the members of the Committee and referred to written materials that had already been distributed relative to his proposal. Mr. Giles noted that the property is zoned C-2 but stated that one of the suggested zoning uses is for a law office, which would be his intended use, subject to the issuance of a use permit. He said that the parcel abuts residential property and stated that his office would generate minimal traffic and impacts on the neighborhood.

Mr. Giles commented on the extensive work and investment that would be required to purchase and rehabilitate the Mitten House and bring the building into compliance with current City codes. He said that at his request, architect Ron Peters evaluated the project and provided an opinion as to whether the end product would justify the work and investment required. He reported that Mr. Peters stated that the work required would be considerable, particularly the work involving ADA (Americans With Disabilities) improvements and the relocation of interior walls in order to create office space. Mr. Giles also discussed his opinion that whatever work is undertaken, the finished project should complement, enhance and preserve the historic nature of the home. He informed the members of the Committee that from a financial standpoint, it would not be a good

idea to become involved in the purchase and renovation of the home and added that the reality of the situation is that it will cost more money to purchase and renovate the house than the house could be sold for once the work has been completed.

Mr. Giles said that despite all of the above, he is genuinely interested in renovating the home and using it as an additional law office. He said it would be his intention to renovate the home to a condition that would complement the entire area, and thanked the members of the Committee for considering his proposal.

In response to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh, Mr. Giles advised that the plan calls for the development of three offices, a secretarial area and a conference room. He added that a maximum of three attorneys would occupy the space.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked Mr. Giles for his presentation.

Cathy Worcester, representing Mesa Violin Studios, addressed the members of the Committee relative to that group's proposal to purchase and redevelop the home. Ms. Worcester said that she and her two colleagues, Patricia Cosand and William Magers, are currently renting studio space in Tempe and recently became aware of the availability of the Mitten House and the Pomeroy House and noted that they have responded to RFP's issued for both homes. She stated that the three of them are violin/viola teachers and would like to establish the Mesa Violin Studios in Mesa at the Mitten House and at the Pomeroy House as well. She discussed the fact that between the three teachers they have over 300 students and discussed landscape plans and their proposal to convert the house into rehearsal space and private lesson studios.

Ms. Worcester added that they are also proposing to develop a community outreach program, providing scholarships to children in the Robson Historic District and to provide groups to perform at City functions. Ms. Worcester briefly discussed proposed improvements they would make to the house and positive impacts of the Studios on the entire community. She commented on the appropriateness of the proposed arts used, particularly in view of the construction of the Mesa Arts & Entertainment Center. Ms. Worcester said that although a law office use is appropriate for the zoning, she has been advised that the ordinance could be amended to allow their use and requested that the members of the Committee consider and recommend approval of their proposal.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked Ms. Worcester and her colleagues for their presentation.

Redevelopment Director Greg Marek and Redevelopment Planner Tony Felice discussed the two proposals and stated that both represent high quality improvements to the entire area. Mr. Marek stated that staff recommends that the proposal submitted by John Giles be selected for the Mitten House and that staff be directed to enter into a 90-day negotiation period. He added that although the Mesa Violin Studios proposal was also an excellent plan, the property would have to be rezoned to TCB-1 and said that staff is opposed to the rezoning. Mr. Marek commented that the ordinance could be changed but noted that the process is a lengthy one.

Committeemember Walters stated the opinion that despite the decision made today, she believes that the ordinance should be changed to accommodate uses such as the Mesa Violin Studios and added that such a use would benefit the entire community.

In response to question from Committeemember Jones, Ms. Worcester said that if the group receives approval to proceed with only one of the two proposals submitted, they will still move forward with their plans to establish the Studios in Mesa.

It was moved by Committeemember Walters, seconded by Committeemember Jones, to recommend to the Council that the proposal submitted by John Giles for the Mitten House be selected and that staff be directed to enter into the 90-day negotiation process.

Discussion ensued relative to the importance of protecting the historic integrity of both homes, appraised values of the homes, and the fact that there will be two upcoming opportunities for the public to provide input regarding these issues at future Council meetings.

Carried unanimously.

2. Discuss and consider a redevelopment proposal for the Pomeroy House located at 213 North Morris Street and direct staff to enter into a 90-day negotiation period with the proposer.

Chairman Walters commented on the quality of the proposal submitted by Mesa Violin Studios and thanked the group for their hard work and interest.

It was moved by Committeemember Walters, seconded by Committeemember Jones, to recommend to the Council that the proposal submitted by the Mesa Violin Studios for the Pomeroy House be selected and that staff be directed to enter into the 90-day negotiation process.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that it would be permissible for Mesa Violin Studios to add onto the building in order to gain more space, and the fact that there are ways of increasing space while maintaining the historical integrity of the home.

Carried unanimously.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked everyone for their input at the meeting.

(NOTE: Detailed information relative to the two proposals/costs was included in the General Development Committee Report submitted by staff.)

3. Adjournment.

Without objection, the General Development Committee meeting adjourned at 9:21 a.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the meeting of the General Development Committee of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 26th day of November 2002. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK