

COUNCIL MINUTES

February 18, 1999

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on February 18, 1999 at 8:02 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Wayne Brown
Jim Davidson
John Giles
Keno Hawker
Bill Jaffa
Dennis Kavanaugh
Pat Pomeroy

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster
Shelly Allen
Wayne Balmer
Cindy Barris
Neal Beets
Denise Bleyle
Jamie Brennen
Jack Friedline
Joe Holmwood
Mike Hutchinson
Barbara Jones
Dorinda Larsen
Greg Marek
Patrick Murphy
Eric Norenberg
Ellen Pence
Bill Petrie
Bryan Raines

STAFF PRESENT (CONT.)

Andrea Rasizer
Tom Remes
Becky Richardson
Jenny Sheppard
Jan Strauss
Mindy White
Paul Wilson
Others

OTHERS PRESENT

Teresa Brice-Heames
Douglas Hancock
Robbie Sherwood
Claudia Walters
Dave Wier
Tom Verploegen
Others

1. Hear a presentation by Walker Parking Consultants regarding parking supply and demand in the Town Center redevelopment area.

Douglas Hancock, representing Walker Parking Consultants, advised that his firm was retained by the City to evaluate the current parking situation and determine the future parking needs for the downtown parking study area. Mr. Hancock presented an overview of the parking study, noting that redevelopment efforts underway will affect supply and demand. Mr. Hancock explained that the study was prepared on the basis of a shared parking model and that further analysis will be necessary as individual projects are developed.

Mr. Hancock displayed a map and advised that the study area was divided into four quadrants. Mr. Hancock identified surplus and deficit parking spaces for each district based on data supplied. Mr. Hancock stated that a Level of Service (LOS) perimeter was established for areas to accommodate parking within a reasonable distance from projects.

Mr. Hancock expressed the opinion that adequate parking can be critical to the success of a project. Mr. Hancock related projected parking requirements relative to the Mesa Verde Resort, commenting that the type (e.g., structure, surface, underground) and location of parking spaces for projects/events depends on the Level of Service (LOS) and convenience determined appropriate.

Discussion ensued regarding the feasibility of shuttle service versus additional parking spaces in various areas; the importance of parking convenience and the provision of shade, particularly given extreme weather conditions; and the selection of Level of Service (LOS) B (700 feet - surface lots; 600 feet - structures) as an appropriate walking distance for most activities in the downtown area.

Mayor Brown thanked Mr. Hancock for the presentation.

2. Discuss and consider revised Town Center redevelopment plan.

Mayor Brown, Vice Mayor Giles, and Councilmembers Hawker, Jaffa, and Pomeroy indicated that they had a potential conflict of interest in connection with the matter now under discussion which they wanted recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

In response to a question from Councilmember Hawker, City Attorney Neal Beets explained that because potential conflicts of interest affect more than four Councilmembers (a majority of the Council) and State law requires a Council-approved redevelopment plan for downtown before the City can proceed with additional redevelopment projects in the area, it is his recommendation and opinion that all Councilmembers can and should participate in discussion and voting on the proposed new redevelopment plan.

Councilmember Kavanaugh commended staff for their efforts and stated support for the revised redevelopment plan.

Councilmember Davidson noted that a recommendation from the General Development Committee relating to housing diversity has not yet been included in the plan. Redevelopment Director Greg Marek indicated that revisions will be incorporated into the plan following discussion with Council.

Mr. Marek displayed a map showing the current redevelopment area and the proposed expansion. Mr. Marek related the purpose in amending the boundaries (e.g., the current boundaries do not include both sides of the arterial streets [Mesa Drive, University Drive, Country Club Drive, and Broadway Road] although development on both sides of the streets impacts the redevelopment area). Mr. Marek advised that additional staff resources will be necessary should redevelopment efforts be expanded throughout the City.

Mr. Marek commented that the revised Town Center redevelopment plan is an economic tool and does not conflict with the preparation of the proposed concept plan for the Town Center area. Mr. Marek advised that as a result of public input received to date, residential conservation areas have been established to assist the City with the preservation and enhancement of existing residential areas. Mr. Marek reported that the Planning and Zoning Board and Downtown Development Committee (DDC) have indicated that the revised redevelopment plan conforms to the City's General Plan.

Mr. Marek related concerns expressed by members of the Planning and Zoning Board regarding the DDC's zoning and design review authority pertaining to new redevelopment areas and concerns pertaining to possibly ceding additional authority to the DDC. Mayor Brown suggested further review of the matter by Council (or initially by the General Development Committee).

Mr. Marek highlighted modifications contained in the revised redevelopment plan and stated that it is the recommendation of staff that the plan be included on the agenda for consideration at an upcoming Regular Council Meeting.

In response to questions from Vice Mayor Giles, Mr. Marek outlined the purpose and benefits of a redevelopment area. Discussion ensued concerning eminent domain and land assembly procedures.

It was moved by Councilmember Pomeroy, seconded by Councilmember Kavanaugh, that the redevelopment plan be included on the agenda for consideration at an upcoming Regular Council Meeting.

Councilmember Hawker stated that he does not favor expanding the redevelopment area beyond the existing Town Center mile, citing opportunities for abuse, inflated land value, and discouragement of private investment.

Mr. Marek responded to questions from Council pertaining to the redevelopment plan, including loan programs for structural renovation, eminent domain, and land assembly.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Brown-Davidson-Giles-Kavanaugh-Pomeroy
NAYS - Hawker-Jaffa

Mayor Brown declared the motion carried by majority vote.

Mr. Marek indicated that due to legal advertising requirements, the March 15, 1999 Regular Council Meeting is the earliest date the redevelopment plan can be scheduled for consideration by Council.

Councilmember Jaffa expressed the opinion that the redevelopment needs of the City extend beyond the downtown area. Councilmember Jaffa commented concerning the importance of property owners' interests and suggested that consideration be given to restricting the City's rights to exercise eminent domain in this redevelopment area.

Councilmembers recommended further discussion of this issue prior to Council action. Mayor Brown suggested that this matter be reviewed by the General Development Committee prior to the next Council Study Session and that a recommendation be presented for Council review prior to the March 15, 1999 Regular Council Meeting.

Mayor Brown expressed appreciation to Mr. Marek for the presentation.

3. Further discussion and consideration concerning code compliance in the Town Center.

Code Compliance Director Bill Petrie advised that in follow-up to Council's directive to increase code enforcement within the Town Center area, staff has compiled a list of three properties where the Town Center Corporation and Redevelopment Office have reported alleged zoning violations: 29 West Main Street (the old Merabank building), 18 West Main Street (Saba's), and 146 West Main Street (Crismon's Flowers). Mr. Petrie stated that the alleged violations represent criminal misdemeanors. Mr. Petrie requested direction pertaining to staff's proposed enforcement action (copy provided to Council), noting an intent to obtain voluntary compliance.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Giles, Community Development Manager Wayne Balmer provided additional information pertaining to the alleged zoning violations. Mr. Petrie explained the proposed enforcement plan and reiterated the objective to obtain voluntary compliance.

Councilmember Kavanaugh commented that the individuals involved are aware of the noncompliance. Councilmember Kavanaugh expressed the opinion that the approach is appropriate to allow resolution of the violations.

Councilmember Jaffa spoke regarding the importance of compliance in relation to signage and property use within the downtown area. Councilmember Jaffa stated support for staff's proposal.

Mr. Petrie, Mr. Balmer, and City Attorney Neal Beets responded to questions from Councilmember Hawker pertaining to the alleged violations and code requirements which allow storage only when clearly subordinate to a retail use. Councilmember Hawker expressed concern relative to the definition of retail activity (e.g., frequency of sales).

Councilmember Pomeroy reiterated Council's recent directive to staff to increase code enforcement within the Town Center area.

Following additional comments, Councilmember Hawker suggested that this matter be referred to an Executive Session for further discussion.

Mayor Brown stated that no action will be taken relative to this item at this time. Mayor Brown expressed appreciation to staff for their efforts.

4. Further discussion and consideration concerning a "signature" event.

Assistant to the City Manager Ellen Pence stated that input received by staff suggests that to be successful, events should be: a) unique (do not compete with other events), b) diverse (appeal to many people), c) marketed extensively, d) fun/exciting, and e) extremely well planned/managed. Ms. Pence stated that it is recommended that events be initiated on a small scale and expanded, building on successes.

Ms. Pence outlined a suggestion to expand the current Balloon Glow (previously referred to as the Boo Bash and typically held each year during the last weekend of October) as the City's "signature" event. Ms. Pence stated that it is recommended that the event span 2 or 2-1/2 days and be held at Hohokam, Fitch Park, and the Amphitheatre.

Discussion ensued pertaining to proposed activities and anticipated scheduling for either the weekend before or including Halloween.

Councilmember Jaffa spoke in favor of conducting an event in conjunction with a holiday (e.g., New Year's Eve).

Vice Mayor Giles concurred with the suggestion that the event be held in conjunction with a holiday but expressed concern regarding the selection of Halloween, noting that individuals may prefer to remain in their own neighborhoods at that time.

Councilmember Pomeroy spoke regarding the importance of community involvement and commented that the signature event should encourage citizens to gather downtown. Ms. Pence indicated that Town Center would likely be selected in the future but given extensive projects planned for the downtown area, Hohokam is considered an appropriate site at this time.

Ms. Pence requested direction from Council pertaining to the concept of a fall festival to allow staff to proceed with planning.

Councilmember Davidson and Vice Mayor Giles suggested the addition of a sporting event such as a bicycle ride or race.

Councilmember Hawker encouraged relocation to Town Center when projects such as the Main Street streetscape and the arts and entertainment facility are completed.

City Manager Charles Luster said that staff will continue to review this matter and present further recommendations at a future meeting.

5. Further discussion, consideration, and clarification concerning the adopted Ethics Code.

This item was not discussed at this time.

6. Hear reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

Vice Mayor Giles advised that he recently accompanied Councilmembers Hawker, Kavanaugh, and Davidson on a visit to the Guaymas Carnival held in Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico. Vice Mayor Giles spoke concerning a trade delegation associated with the visit, tours, and discussions concerning signature events.

7. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Charles Luster stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Thursday, February 25, 1999, 8 a.m. - Study Session (to be followed by an Executive Session)

Tuesday, May 4, 1999, through Monday, May 10, 1999 - Budget Sessions

8. Prescheduled public opinion appearances (maximum of three speakers for three minutes per speaker).

There were no prescheduled public opinion appearances.

9. Items from citizens present (maximum of three speakers for three minutes per speaker).

There were no items from citizens present at this time.

10. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 9:39 a.m.

WAYNE BROWN, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 18th day of February 1999. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 1999

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK