



COUNCIL MINUTES

October 23, 2008

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Joint Meeting with the Planning and Zoning Board in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on October 23, 2008 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT	PLANNING & ZONING (P&Z) BOARD PRESENT	OFFICERS PRESENT
Mayor Scott Smith Alex Finter Dina Higgins Kyle Jones Dennis Kavanaugh Dave Richins Scott Somers	Chairman Pat Esparza Randy Carter Beth Coons Frank Mizner Scott Perkinson Chell Roberts	Christopher Brady Debbie Spinner Linda Crocker
	P&Z BOARD ABSENT	
	Ken Salas	

(Councilmember Kavanaugh arrived at the meeting at 7:35 a.m.)

1. Convene a Joint Meeting of the Mesa City Council and the Planning and Zoning Board.

Mayor Smith welcomed Chairman Pat Esparza and the other Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Boardmembers to the meeting. He stated that Boardmember Coons was present in the audience, but would not participate in the discussion due to a potential conflict of interest.

2. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide direction on the Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan.

Mayor Smith noted that this item is a follow-up to the June 26, 2008 Joint Meeting with the Council and the P&Z Board, at which time a presentation was made regarding the Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan. He commented that since that time, staff and the consultants from HDR have worked diligently to take the Council and the P&Z Board's direction and "re-frame both the approach and the specifics" relative to the City moving forward with the Plan.

Planning Director John Wesley introduced Mark McLaren, Vice President of HDR, the consulting firm retained to prepare the Plan.

Mr. McLaren displayed a PowerPoint presentation (A copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and reported that the purpose of today's presentation is not only to provide an update of the Plan, but also to review a document entitled "The Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan Districts' Vision and Expectations."

Mr. McLaren explained that at the June 26th meeting, the Council and the P&Z Board offered direction and feedback concerning the Plan as follows: 1.) The Plan should provide greater flexibility; 2.) There is a need for broader areas and themes instead of land uses; 3.) The Plan is too prescriptive; and 4.) The element of sustainability should be addressed. He stated that in response to such input, the consultants revised the Plan's goals and objectives, identified Framework Districts, and drafted the "Districts' Vision and Expectations" document.

Mr. McLaren noted that the goals of the Plan consist of capitalizing on the expansion of the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, creating a regional employment center that attracts knowledge-based workers and corporate executives, establishing an intra and inter-connected, multi-modal transportation system, becoming a model of sustainable development practices, and designing a plan for implementation.

Discussion ensued relative to the rise of the airport city; the type of jobs that might be created in the Mesa Gateway area; current economic trends; changes in housing demand; transportation modeling in the Mesa Gateway area; and the development of a fiscal impact model.

Mr. McLaren further indicated that as the consultants have moved through this process, several key components emerged with reference to the Plan. He highlighted the elements as follows:

- It is essential to have a healthy balance of housing and jobs in the Mesa Gateway area.
- Mixed-use development in the area would result in fewer outside trips.
- Fewer outside trips would result in more dollars spent within the City.
- More dollars spent within the City would result in greater revenues for future improvements.

Mr. McLaren offered an extensive analysis of the four Framework Districts (Mixed-Use Community, Inner Loop, Airport/Campus, and Logistics and Commerce) that have been identified by the consultants within the study area. He also reviewed the themes for the respective districts. Mr. McLaren, in addition, highlighted the various sections of the "Districts' Vision and Expectations" document, which include Elements of Sustainability, Vision and Goals, Framework Districts, and Building Types. He added that the document further addresses District focus, form and character, provides illustrations of the type of architecture/urban design that the City and stakeholders would like to see as part of the development, and reviews lighting, landscaping and signage standards for the types of buildings in the districts.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the sustainability of the Mesa Gateway area via economic viability, response to context and location, and resource efficiency; and examples of sustainability (i.e., renewable energy, open space and multi-modal transportation networks).

Mr. Wesley indicated that pending Council approval of the Plan, staff would work to ensure that developers are made aware of the City's vision and goals for the Mesa Gateway area.

Mr. Wesley displayed a conceptual site plan that was submitted for a property in the Inner Loop District and provided an extensive overview of the process by which staff would evaluate the plan based on their analysis of the various guidelines (i.e., Elements of Sustainability, Vision and Goals, Building Types), contained in the "Districts' Vision and Expectations" document.

Councilmember Somers said that the Council recently approved with the Mesa Proving Grounds the idea of a site plan development potential statement. He questioned how the developer of the conceptual site plan could come forward with a portion of the property that is intended to be developed today and build out the remainder of the land at some time in the future utilizing a similar process.

Mr. Wesley responded that currently, the process could be accomplished through a conceptual site plan that accompanies the specific site plan and utilizes a Development Master Plan (DMP) approach, in which the developer would begin to put in place the development potential for the remainder of the property.

Councilmember Somers commented that one of the positive directions that came out of the DMB proposal was the site plan development potential and suggested that the City consider extending such a tool beyond DMB's property to the Mesa Gateway area.

Mayor Smith stated that at the Mesa Proving Grounds, site plan development potential makes sense because there is a single owner of a large piece of property. He commented, however, that for entities that own smaller pieces of property, the Plan is "a change in thinking" and said that rather than considering an individual piece of property "in a vacuum," it would appear by this new approach that no matter the size of the property, it would be put into the context of the overall district plan.

Further discussion ensued relative to the potential impact that the Plan would have on pending and future zoning cases.

Boardmember Mizner inquired whether the new form-based zoning would have an effect on already zoned properties in the Mesa Gateway area and if such properties would be subject to some type of new criteria even though they had already completed the City's regulatory process.

Mr. Wesley clarified that existing zoned property would present somewhat of a challenge to staff. He explained that if a property owner does not have an approved site plan, staff would be somewhat limited in their ability to address the goals and expectations outlined in the Plan. Mr. Wesley added that because the Plan offers property owners more options and creative ways in which to use their land, he is hopeful that they would take advantage of the opportunity.

Boardmember Mizner also commented that the Plan contains certain goals and philosophies that would impact Mesa's infrastructure-related departments including, for instance, the reuse of storm water, different types of street patterns, and an emphasis on green buildings. He questioned whether staff had considered implementing changes to the City's infrastructure standards and development criteria in order to reflect those goals.

Mr. Wesley responded that staff from various departments have been involved in the discussion process with regard to the drafting of the Plan and are aware of the possible changes to the

City's infrastructure standards. He added that as staff has worked on the DMB proposal, they have already encountered many of these challenges and are considering how the City might incorporate different methods of doing business.

Mr. Wesley continued with his analysis of the conceptual site plan in the Inner Loop and the manner in which staff would evaluate the proposal based on their analysis of the "Districts' Vision and Expectations" document. He also highlighted possible alternatives that staff might suggest to the developer so that the project would conform to the Plan.

Additional discussion ensued relative to options that staff might consider in order to incorporate the recommendations of the Plan into Mesa's General Plan; and that such options include, but are not limited to, a General Plan text amendment to change the definition of a major general plan amendment in the area, the City sponsoring a major plan amendment to apply new land use categories in the area, and a review of the Zoning Code in anticipation of drafting a form-based section in the document.

Councilmember Somers commented that the Logistics and Commerce District was designated as an industrial job center due to overflight activity associated with the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. He further stated that the Inner Loop District, which also has been demonstrated to have high noise levels because of overflight activity and takeoff and departure routes, contains a wide variety of uses to establish a "live-work-play" environment, including residential. Councilmember Somers inquired why residential uses were included in the area and added that the Urban Land Institute (ULI) recommended that the Loop District be designated for industrial uses.

Mr. Wesley responded that any residential uses in the Inner Loop District would be developed in a manner to address sound issues and aircraft overflights. He explained that in addition to overflight activities from standard takeoffs and landings, the Logistics and Commerce District also experiences noise from Boeing's helicopter flight paths. Mr. Wesley stated that as a result, the City made a commitment to expand the area beyond basic noise contours. He added that heavy industrial businesses already exist in the area and create their own noise impacts.

Mr. Wesley remarked that with regard to the Inner Loop District, there is existing residential to the north and planned residential to the east. He acknowledged that there are overflight issues that must be addressed, but assured the Council that the primary goal of the Plan is to protect the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. Mr. Wesley added that as airport operations evolve over time, there may be a possibility for residential uses to occur in the Inner Loop District.

Councilmember Somers suggested a series of revisions with regard to the language in the "Districts' Vision and Expectations" document as follows:

- Page 26, Inner Loop District, under Focus: "This district should provide a high quality **mixed-use environment** that is compatible with increasing overflight activities associated with Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport."
- Page 26, Inner Loop District, under Form: "They will include uses such as retail, offices, services, medium to high density residential and open spaces." **Clarify medium density residential.**
- Page 26, Inner Loop District, under Form: **Eliminate the sentence:** "While residential uses are not excluded from this area, any residential uses must demonstrate their ability to address the impacts of aircraft operations and not limit the continued development

and expansion of aircraft operations.” **Replace with: “If residential is approved in this district, such uses must demonstrate their ability to address the impact of aircraft operations and not limit the continued development and expansion of Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.”**

- Requested that staff provide greater clarity with regard to the type of appropriate residential projects in the Inner Loop District (i.e., Low-Rise Multifamily, High-Rise Multifamily above retail).

Mayor Smith commented that although he does not disagree with Councilmember Somers regarding the objectives of the Plan, he would caution that it is a self-regulating process and that the Plan’s primary goal is to maximize the potential of the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. He stated that he would be disappointed if the City chose any type of development, and specifically residential, that inhibits current airport operations or its ability to grow in the future.

Mayor Smith further remarked that the mention of residential uses in the Inner Loop District is “a deviation from what others previously had stated” and noted that in his opinion, “it is a mistake to draw lines and create a black and white issue.” He also stated that “the balance” staff and the consultants are trying to achieve is “a good approach” and reiterated that the process must ensure that airport operations are not negatively impacted.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Jones, Mr. Wesley clarified that the City has made a commitment relative to the fact that the area south of Williams Field Road to the east will be designated for Boeing’s helicopter flight path and said that the area would remain industrial/commercial and not include residential uses.

Boardmember Carter commented that in his opinion, it would seem unwise to completely restrict residential uses in the Inner Loop District and said there are many products available that can minimize acoustic problems throughout a building (i.e., acoustic glass, different types of insulation). He suggested the creation of a subchapter in the Plan that would address, for instance, minimum and maximum acoustic mitigation standards.

Mayor Smith acknowledged that many projects in the Mesa Gateway area will “live or die” as related to their positive or negative impact on airport operations. He also concurred with Boardmember Carter’s suggestion that it might be appropriate for staff and the consultants to develop substandards that include, but are not limited to, sound, aircraft flight paths and Boeing’s helicopter corridor.

Councilmember Higgins agreed with Councilmember Somers’ comments relative to the term “medium density residential” being clarified as it relates to the Inner Loop District (Page 26).

Councilmember Somers said that he would provide staff his suggested revisions to the “Districts’ Vision and Expectations” document.

Councilmember Finter requested additional information concerning the role that the light rail corridor might play in the future development of the Logistics and Commerce District.

Further discussion ensued relative to the process by which the Plan would be amended in the future.

Boardmember Perkinson stated that the Plan would serve as an excellent tool for developers and thanked staff and the consultants for their efforts in this regard.

Mr. McLaren briefly highlighted a timetable of events related to the Plan, including an upcoming public meeting and future presentations to the DRB, the P&Z Board and the Council.

Mayor Smith thanked Mr. McLaren and City staff for their efforts and hard work with regard to the development of the Plan. He also acknowledged the stakeholders for their input throughout the review process.

Mayor Smith further expressed appreciation to the members of the P&Z Board for participating in today's joint meeting.

3. Adjourn the Joint Meeting and Reconvene the Study Session.

It was moved by Councilmember Somers, seconded by Vice Mayor Jones, that the Joint Meeting of the City Council and Planning and Zoning Board be adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Carried unanimously.

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

Councilmember Kavanaugh:	Celebration at Mesa Arts Center for Banner Medical Center
Vice Mayor Jones:	Valley Forward event

5. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Thursday, October 23, 2008, 3:45 p.m. – Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for new Forensic Services Building

Saturday, October 25, 2008, 10:00 a.m. – City Hall at the Mall (Superstition Springs Mall)

6. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

7. Convene an Executive Session.

- a. Discussion or consultation for legal advice with the City Attorney. (A.R.S. Section 38-431.03A (3)) Discussion or consultation with the City Attorney in order to consider the City's position and instruct the City Attorney regarding the City's position regarding all contracts involving the development of the Mesa Proving Grounds that are the subject of negotiation, in pending or contemplated litigation or in settlement discussions conducted in order to avoid or resolve litigation. (A.R.S. Section 38-431.03A (4))

1. Mesa Proving Grounds, approximately 3,200 acres of the former General Motors Proving Grounds facility, located generally at the southeast corner of Elliot and Ellsworth Roads.

It was moved by Vice Mayor Jones, seconded by Councilmember Somers, that the Council enter into an Executive Session.

Carried unanimously.

8. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Joint Meeting of the Mesa City Council and the Planning and Zoning Board adjourned at 8:53 a.m.

SCOTT SMITH, MAYOR

ATTEST:

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Joint Meeting between the Mesa City Council and the Planning and Zoning Board held on the 23rd day of October 2008. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

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