



COUNCIL MINUTES

October 24, 2002

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 October 24, 2002 at 5:05 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker
Dennis Kavanaugh
Rex Griswold
Kyle Jones
Janie Thom
Claudia Walters
Mike Whalen

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Barbara Jones

1. Hear an update and consider the recommendations of the recent work of the Ad Hoc Land Development City Council Committee.

Mayor Hawker announced that Councilmembers Griswold, Jones and Walters were appointed to the Ad Hoc Land Development City Council Committee. Mayor Hawker pointed out that the Councilmembers were appointed to this Committee to review and expedite the permit process in an effort to create a friendly, positive experience for the development community. He stated this agenda item serves as the first quarterly report by the Committee regarding their goals and accomplishments.

Councilmember Griswold, as Chairman of the Committee, commented that the permit process is very crucial to business growth and therefore it is essential to conduct business in a prompt and efficient manner. Councilmember Griswold expressed his appreciation for the improvements that have already taken place.

Assistant Development Services Manager Kari Kent reported that she is serving as team leader of the Business Safety Management Team until the hiring of a new Building Safety Director. Ms. Kent introduced Interim Fire Chief and Team Member Bob DeLeon and informed the Council that Planning Director Frank Mizner, who was not able to be present, is also a Member.

Ms. Kent expressed her appreciation to Councilmembers Griswold, Walters and Jones for their significant efforts in attending the meetings and scheduled tours.

Ms. Kent reported that the accomplishments to date include the hiring of Orion Goff as Project Coordinator of the Building Safety Division and stated the opinion that Mr. Goff has been an enormous asset to the City as well as the development community in expediting the processes. Ms. Kent stated that the approved funding for computer software will automate the permit process including the processes involved with inspections. Ms. Kent informed the Council that in April of 2003 customers will be able to apply for permits and review the status of those permits on-line.

Ms. Kent outlined the Committee's initiatives, which included the development of Mesa's Rehabilitation Code, an initiative that would assist with the development and reconstruction of older structures in the City of Mesa. Ms. Kent said that Staff will also be addressing and enhancing customer outreach and feedback programs and commented that the Chamber of Commerce has agreed to serve as a partner in the development of a survey that will be distributed with each permit issuance.

Interim Chief Bob DeLeon stated that a review of the Fire Code will determine the impacts involved in the rehabilitation of older structures and a review of the Fire Code requirements.

Mr. DeLeon outlined the Building Safety/Fire Department Task Force and the three subcommittees, an Interpretation Team, an Inspector Qualification Sub Team and a Fire Inspection Procedure Team. Mr. DeLeon stated that the group involved in overseeing the subcommittees will meet this afternoon for the purpose of establishing procedures for inspection, developing training guidelines and establishing minimum requirements for the inspectors.

Ms. Kent mentioned on behalf of Planning Director Frank Mizner that an initiative also contained in the work plan is the development of an infill policy for the City. Ms. Kent stated that the Land Development Team comprised of employees from Building Safety, Planning, Redevelopment, Economic Development, Real Estate and Neighborhood Services will meet on a bi-weekly basis to discuss various land development issues, including a proposal for an infill policy.

In response to Mayor Hawker's question regarding performance measures, Ms. Kent reported that the surveys will serve as an instrument for future analysis of progress and the reduction of submittals including re-submittals along with the turnaround times will also serve as a gauge for performance.

Councilmember Walters discussed the positive progress that has already taken place regarding the permit process and relayed an incident where an individual advised her that he had completed the permit process in one day. Ms. Walters emphasized the importance of obtaining feedback from the community.

Councilmember Thom encouraged staff to continue their efforts and commented on the numerous complaints previously received associated with the permit process.

Councilmember Whalen emphasized the need improve interaction between the Fire Department and Building Inspections staff and stressed the importance of cohesive communication between these parties. Councilmember Whalen pointed out that there will be challenges associated with the current perception that the permit process in surrounding communities is less complicated.

Vice Mayor Kavanaugh expressed appreciation to the task force for their efforts and stated that he supports the Committee's recommendations.

Mayor Hawker thanked the Committee's representatives for their report.

2. Hear an update on various emergency preparedness issues.

City Manager Mike Hutchinson stated that the focus of this presentation involves issues relating to communication with the general public regarding the Emergency Management Preparedness Plan and the steps that business owners and residents should take to ensure they are prepared for a potential crisis.

Assistant Fire Chief Cliff Puckett introduced Marketing and Communications Director Jaime Brennen who is also involved in the Emergency Management Program for the City of Mesa.

Chief Puckett provided a brief synopsis of Mesa's past involvement on a national, state and regional level relative to emergency management and emphasized the importance of developing partnerships and unifying any planning efforts on a regional basis prior to an incident taking place.

Chief Puckett outlined efforts that were initiated to educate citizens and employees on crisis preparedness and discussed a Channel 11 video that provided information regarding the manner in which an anthrax incident should be managed. In addition, Chief Puckett advised that Channel 11 also displayed a Public Service Announcement that provided information to citizens outlining steps for evacuation of their homes. Chief Puckett announced other sources of information utilized to inform citizens, including the Open Line newsletter, presentations to civic organizations, information on the City's website and the establishment of a City Hotline number.

Chief Puckett outlined the current education process for City of Mesa employees which included the following; seminars, department briefings, and an Emergency Operations Plan exercise (practice workshop).

Chief Puckett discussed future endeavors that included an additional video on Channel 11 and the Mayor's hosting of a Weapons of Mass Destruction and Terrorism Preparedness Conference to be held on December 10th. Chief Puckett reported that through the public school sector, a component of the Risk Watch Program will encompass disaster preparedness.

Chief Puckett pointed out that a handout has been included in the Council's packet which was prepared by the Marketing and Communications Division and stated that the citizens' information thoroughly explains the necessary steps that should be taken to properly prepare for unexpected disasters.

Mayor Hawker thanked Assistant Chief Puckett for his presentation.

3. Hear an update on the City's current financial position.

Deputy City Manager Debra Dollar stated that a document has been distributed in Council's packet containing a detailed budget status report and budget information compiled from the first

quarter of the current fiscal year. Ms. Dollar commented that Budget Director Jamie Warner will discuss the report and pointed out that Finance Director Larry Woolf is present to respond to questions.

Mr. Warner indicated that the report reflects that as far as expenditures, the City's ending balance for FY2001-02 was higher than previously forecasted. Mr. Warner reported that although \$43.1 million had been projected, the actual ending balance figures reflect \$45.3 million, resulting in a difference of \$2.2 million.

Mr. Warner stated that based on AN analysis completed by Staff regarding the City's revenues, the report reflects that sales tax revenue (the City's 1% rate) will be less than projected for 2002/2003, approximately \$2.3 million. He also reported that the City's ½ cent Quality-of-Life sales tax revenue is \$2.3 million less than expected.

Mr. Warner discussed the fact that general government impact fees and building permits reflected a 22.5% decrease for the first quarter of FY 2002-03 and State shared income tax revenue will be \$600,000 less than budgeted.

Mr. Warner commented that the City Manager's Office has identified 100 positions in the City that were approved but will not be filled due to the hiring freeze, and noted that this will result in a savings of approximately \$3.7 million. Mr. Warner indicated that a savings of \$2.7 million is projected to be realized as a result of the refinancing of the City's General Obligation, Utility and Highway User bonds.

Mr. Warner discussed the delay in recovering from the September 11, 2001 incident and commented that he had received notification that a 16.4% reduction in State Income Tax revenues for next year could be expected. Mr. Warner reported on the financial impacts that will result from the expected increase in the City's contribution to both the State Retirement System and the Police/Fire Pension Retirement Systems for City of Mesa employees. Mr. Warner commented on the fact that health insurance costs are anticipated to increase significantly and commented on impact in the restoration of funding for worker's compensation and the City's self-insured liability fund.

Mr. Warner summarized the entire negative financial impact to the City in the amount of \$21 million for the 2003/2004 budget cycle.

Ms. Dollar informed Council that City departments have been required to reduce their operating budgets as much as possible without severely impacting service levels. Ms. Dollar indicated that for the biennial budget process, it is recommended that the Council's Finance Committee provide assistance in determining priorities regarding service level reductions. Ms. Dollar stated that input from various Advisory Boards and Commissions will also be sought. Ms. Dollar emphasized that similar to other cities, the City's budget situation is serious.

Mayor Hawker discussed the advantages that may be realized as a result of requesting a seven-year budget forecast from each City department. Mayor Hawker stated that the long-term budget will serve as a tool for Council in determining the appropriate steps that need to be taken to ultimately increase fund balances in the future.

Mayor Hawker thanked Mr. Warner and his staff for their efforts.

Councilmember Walters stated concern regarding the hiring freeze as it relates to support staff for the Police and Fire Departments and commented that a close review of the staffing requirements for those departments should be considered.

Mayor Hawker pointed out that the City of Mesa, similar to other cities, has been forced to utilize a portion of its reserved fund balances for budget shortfalls.

4. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of boards and committees.

a. Parks and Recreation Board meeting held October 10, 2002.

It was moved by Councilmember Walters, seconded by Councilmember Jones that receipt of the minutes of the October 10, 2002 Parks and Recreation Board Meeting be acknowledged.

Mayor Hawker declared the motion carried unanimously.

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

There were no reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

6. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Mike Hutchinson stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Thursday, October 31, 2002, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Monday, November 4, 2002, TBA – Study Session

Monday, November 4, 2002, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

Thursday, November 7, 2002, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

7. Prescheduled public opinion appearances.

There were no prescheduled public opinion appearances.

8. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

KENO HAWKER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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 24th day of October 2002. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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