

COUNCIL MINUTES

April 8, 2004

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 April 8, 2004 at 9:13 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

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

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Barbara Jones

1. Hear an update on the Land Development Work Plan.

Building Safety Director Terry Williams addressed the Council and stated that Planning Director John Wesley and Assistant Fire Chief Dan Stubbs were also present to assist in providing an update on the Land Development Work Plan.

Mr. Williams noted that a printed copy of the PowerPoint presentation is included in the Council packet (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office). He provided an update on initiatives that are presently underway:

- The Tidemark automation system base plan is close to completion, and the Information Services Division is installing an update to correct two fatal flaws that were identified.
- Consideration is being given to adding a planning module and expanding the use of Tidemark software in other City departments.
- The second part of the residential permit fee increases will be implemented on July 1, 2004, as approved by the Council last year.
- The method of calculating fees is being reviewed in order to simplify the process for staff, the public and the development community.
- The "Screening Team" reviewed 535 plans in the first quarter, of which almost 80 percent were accepted and 20 percent were returned to the applicant with a request for additional information. The process ensures that accepted projects are ready to proceed and eliminates delays in turnaround times relative to the issuing of permits.

- A “Three Year Strategic Plan” was implemented in January to address 52 objectives aligned to the City’s Key Results Areas (KRA’S) identified by Building Safety management and front line employees.
- July 1 is the anticipated date for presenting Code revisions for Council approval that would have an effective date of September 1, 2004. Internal staff meetings and public hearings have been held, and staff is ready to proceed to the General Development Committee relative to the Building Safety Code and to the Fire Committee with the Fire Code.
- The Building Safety website now includes drafts of ordinances and background information.
- A benchmarking study is being finalized by Arizona State University that compares the business practices of Mesa’s Building Safety Division to the practices of other communities.
- The Project Coordination Team established a year ago has been well received by builders and architects. Two team members resigned to accept higher positions with other organizations, and the department is making an effort to quickly fill the positions.
- The Customer Outreach program, operated in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, surveyed Building Safety customers served in the past year. Approximately ten percent of the customers (336) responded and provided the following information regarding Mesa in comparison to other Valley communities:
 - 94% rated overall service as good or better.
 - 95% rated staff courtesy as good or better.
 - 71% rated Mesa’s turnaround times as good or better.

Mr. Williams advised that the preliminary results of the benchmarking study indicate that in reality Mesa’s turnaround times are better than other Valley communities; that the Chamber of Commerce survey indicates that customers may perceive the turnaround times to be inadequate; that staff will continue to address turnaround times; and that staff and the Chamber will consider utilizing a different survey methodology in the future, such as contacting permit customers via telephone.

Mr. Wesley reviewed long-range planning areas and provided the following information:

- Staff is meeting with a working group of Lehi residents to develop the sub-area plan.
- The Infill Process and Policy is being prepared and will be presented to the General Development Committee (GDC) in the near future.
- The Plans Review area has implemented a “Pre-Core Information Conference” (PIC) to assist developers in the early stages of a project.
- Staff is researching statistical information in order to define an appropriate method to measure the success of customer outreach programs.
- Agendas for Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Board meetings and Design Review meetings are now available on the City’s website.
- The Council adopted the vehicle display platform ordinance and the vehicle sign ordinance.
- The Desert Uplands guidelines will be available for Council consideration in the near future.
- Staff continues to address the following issues: utilizing the Geographic Information System (GIS) system to update engineering “as built” data; reviewing the possibility of inputting construction plans into the system; and improving the methods of disseminating information to various City departments.

In response to a question from Councilmember Walters, Mr. Wesley explained that a completed project may differ somewhat from the original plans; that following inspection, the project is presented to Engineering for acceptance; and that the project information in the computer system should reflect the project "as built." He added that another approach is to input the pre-construction information and then modify the project with "as built" information at a later date.

Mr. Wesley advised that an additional area to be resolved relates to the fact that parcel information from Maricopa County differs somewhat from that of GIS information, and staff is making an effort to provide parcel data similar to that of Maricopa County through the Tidemark system.

Assistant Chief Stubbs reported on following three items:

- *Fire Code:* In the past Building Safety and the Fire Department developed the codes independently, but the two departments are now cooperating jointly relative to the adoption of the new codes. He explained that coordination between the two codes would benefit staff and the City's customers.
- *Business Inspections:* As part of the annual inspection process, a 13 point check list is now provided to each business so that these items can be incorporated into the workplace safety plan, which should reduce the amount of staff time required for on-site inspections in the future.
- *Gate Access Inspections:* An effort is being made to create a pro-active volunteer program to check for operational problems with gate access to businesses and residential communities. The process to check for problems requires minimal training, and the program will enable the Fire Department to respond more efficiently to emergency calls.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the Fire Department has optical devices to access gated communities and control traffic lights; that equipping the Police Department with optical devices to access gated communities will be investigated to ensure that public safety needs are addressed; that the fire alarm reporting form will be reviewed and compared to forms used by other jurisdictions; that the Fire Department is prioritizing the inspection process based on public safety issues and staff availability; that the Fire Department is responsible for inspecting institutional facilities, such as day care and residential care facilities; and that third parties conduct inspections of systems, such as alarm, sprinkler and hood systems, which are verified during a follow-up inspection by the Fire Department.

In response to a question from Councilmember Griswold, Mr. Williams summarized the mission of the Building Safety Department is to partner with the development community to accomplish "...the successful creation and the successful occupancy of the structure."

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that on-line surveys similar to the type utilized by the Chamber of Commerce are more effective than printed surveys; that the goal of the Preliminary Plans Review Team is to provide information to assist a customer in the decision-making process; that the project to microfilm plans has been delayed until a determination is made by the City relative to the type of media that will be utilized for long-term record retention; that public meetings are currently being held relative to the adoption of new Fire and Building Codes;

Councilmember Thom: Tour of East Valley Institute of Technology
Councilmember Walters: United We Ride Meeting with Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and the Governor's Office

4. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

Deputy City Manager Debra Dollar stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:
Tuesday, April 13, 2004, 6:30 p.m. – Joint Meeting with Apache Junction Council
Wednesday, April 14, 2004, 6:30 p.m. – Mesa 2025: Financing the Future
Thursday, April 15, 2004, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session & Joint Meeting
with the Downtown Development Committee
Monday, April 19, 2004, 3:00 p.m. – Finance Committee
Monday, April 19, 2004, TBA – Study Session
Monday, April 19, 2004, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting
Thursday, April 22, 2004, TBA – Joint Meeting with Downtown Development
Thursday, April 22, 2004, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session
Thursday, April 22, 2004, 9:30 a.m. – Utility Committee

5. Prescheduled public opinion appearances.

There were no prescheduled public opinion appearances.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 10:03 a.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 8th day of April 2004. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK