

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

April 21, 1999

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 April 21, 1999 at 3:32 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Jim Davidson, Chairman
Keno Hawker
Dennis Kavanaugh

COUNCIL PRESENT

Vice Mayor John Giles

STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster
Shelly Allen
Wayne Balmer
Cindy Barris
Gerry Gerber
Mike Hutchinson
Barbara Jones
Greg Marek
Patrick Murphy

OTHERS PRESENT

Kathye Brown
Don Hilderbrandt
Tom McGilloway
John McNamara
Mary Jo Whalen
Others

1. Hear and discuss a status report on the downtown concept plan.

John McNamara, representing BRW, introduced Don Hilderbrandt and Tom McGilloway, representatives from LDR International who are assisting in the development of the City's downtown concept plan.

Mr. McNamara referred to a "wall mapping" of approximately 200 issues identified by individuals during the initial charettes for consideration in relation to the downtown concept plan. Mr. McNamara advised that additional work has evolved during the last three days as a result of internal discussions and input from groups such as the Arts and Entertainment Center Architectural Selection and Design Committee.

Mr. Hilderbrandt reviewed two diagrams prepared to assist in the development of the downtown plan: a) pedestrian/open space framework and b) sector themes. Mr. Hilderbrandt noted the importance of pedestrian circulation and reviewed characteristics of a potential urban campus from the Amphitheatre/Sheraton Hotel south to the vicinity of the former East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) site. Mr. Hilderbrandt identified circles representing five-minute walking radii, citing use of the planning tool as a method to establish critical mass. Mr. Hilderbrandt spoke concerning opportunities to "energize" areas through land use and events, a suggestion to retain a portion of the Main Street improvements in abeyance until completion of the Arts and Entertainment Center, mid-block pedestrian connections, historic district environment/upgrades to stimulate private investment, and the potential for a large open space for recreation in the southern portion of the City.

Mr. Hilderbrandt noted opportunities to enhance the complexity of the downtown area with a focus on core development along Main Street. Mr. Hilderbrandt outlined options for downtown retail, office, and residential development and commented concerning destination attractions, density levels, streetscape improvements, linkages outside the downtown square mile, and project priorities.

Mr. McNamara identified three populations to be considered in the downtown area: public employment base, private sector employment base (e.g., subregional office development), and residential population (consisting of all income levels). Mr. McNamara encouraged the City to consider redevelopment opportunities and to address issues of vacant land/absentee landlords.

Mr. McNamara expressed the opinion that the City currently possesses critical elements for a successful downtown. Mr. McNamara urged continued development and prioritization of several projects over the next 10 years.

Mr. McNamara reported that as a result of discussions to date, three concepts (Concepts A, B, and C) have evolved for the downtown area. Mr. McNamara referred to maps and identified components included in each (e.g., residential, office, retail, commercial, religious, parks/open space, arts/entertainment, public/semi-public, business park, transit, and parking). Mr. McNamara reported that a downtown shuttle bus system has not been identified in any of the plans but could be justified in the future. Mr. McNamara reviewed Concept A and spoke concerning potential land uses, densities, infill, signage, landscaping, transportation/light rail alignment alternatives, mixed-use projects, corridors, rehabilitation/revitalization, and blight abatement.

Mr. McGilloway highlighted Concepts B and C and noted differences when compared to Concept A. Mr. McGilloway related options in the event projects such as the Mesa Verde Resort do not occur (e.g., alternate hotel locations) and commented regarding transitioning opportunities along the borders of the downtown area, open space features in the southern portion of the City, office development, light rail alignment alternatives, and parking (including shared functions).

Mr. McNamara reported that further refinement of the downtown concept plan will occur during the next two weeks and that preferred components will be identified.

Mr. McNamara, Mr. Hilderbrandt, and Mr. McGilloway responded to questions from the Committee pertaining to light rail, traffic flow, strategies to encourage development, landscape options in relation to the Arts and Entertainment Center and special events, mid-block crossings, and the City's proposed aquatics center. Mr. Hilderbrandt commented concerning the value of a downtown concept plan for the City.

2. Adjournment.

Chairman Davidson expressed appreciation to Mr. McNamara, Mr. Hilderbrandt, and Mr. McGilloway for the update. Chairman Davidson advised that the next meeting of the General Development Committee will be held on Tuesday, May 4, 1999, at 3:30 p.m.

It was moved by Committeemember Kavanaugh, seconded by Committeemember Hawker, that the meeting of the General Development Committee adjourn at 4:58 p.m.

Carried unanimously.

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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 21st day of April 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