

COUNCIL MINUTES

December 9, 1997

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Policy Session in Palo Verde Rooms 1 and 2 of the Centennial Conference Center, 201 North Center Street, on December 9, 1997 at 4:04 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Wayne Brown
Pat Gilbert
John Giles
Dennis Kavanaugh
Joan Payne
Wayne Pomeroy
Claudia Walters

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster
Wayne Balmer
Cindy Barris
Neal Beets
Denise Bleyle
Jennifer Brooks
Dennis Compton
Fred Conway
Luigi Digirolamo
John Geier
John Gendron
Joe Holmwood
Mike Hutchinson
Janice Jackson
Lars Jarvie
Barbara Jones
Richard Kasper
Harry Kent
Peter Knudson
Wayne Korinek
Ron Krosting
Dorinda Larsen
Greg Marek
Frank Mizner
Keith Nath
Ruth Anne Norris
Ellen Pence
Bryan Raines
Andrea Rasizer

STAFF PRESENT

Jackie Redpath
Tom Remes
Becky Richardson
Dave Spaur
Jamie Warner
Mike Whalen

OTHERS PRESENT

Robert Brinton
Charles Deaton
Joe Farnsworth
Greg Gilstrap
Beverly Hart
Keno Hawker
Bill Jaffa
Pat Langdon
Clancy Mullen
Dave Muth
Jerry Petrie
Ralph Pew
Joe Shipley
Marilynn Wennerstrom
Doug Young
Chris Zaharis
Others

Mayor Brown excused Councilmember Payne from the beginning of the meeting. Councilmember Payne arrived at 5:05 p.m.

1. Discussion of items related to the "tourism strategy for Mesa."

Robert Brinton, Executive Director of the Mesa Convention and Visitor's Bureau, introduced Dave Muth, Bureau President. Mr. Brinton advised that the Visitor's Bureau recently contracted with Young, Nichols, Gilstrap, Inc. to evaluate tourism within Mesa and develop a strategy for future planning. Mr. Brinton introduced Greg Gilstrap and Doug Young of Young, Nichols, Gilstrap, Inc., consultants for the project.

Mr. Gilstrap briefly presented background information concerning his firm and provided an overview of the study conducted for the Visitor's Bureau, noting that an assessment was conducted considering Mesa as a community, as a segment of the Valley, and as a division of Arizona. Mr. Gilstrap utilized overhead slides and displayed statistics/data pertaining to visitor base, visitor capacity, hotel capacity, seasonality, bed tax, and RV/motor home visitors. Mr. Gilstrap highlighted popular tourism attractions throughout the State, noting the lack of emphasis on Mesa in travel/guide books as a destination community. Mr. Gilstrap spoke regarding escalating competition, difficulties facing Mesa relative to recruitment efforts, and the City's limited retail sales ranking.

Mr. Young commented concerning the importance of strategic development. Mr. Young stated that following an analysis of existing strengths and market opportunities, a focus on recreation/sports is recommended for Mesa. Mr. Young expressed the opinion that such a niche will create a positive image for the City, will provide an opportunity for economic development, and will be appropriate with or without a National Sports Center. Mr. Young outlined an implementation plan and strategies, including corporate sponsorships and packaging opportunities.

Mr. Gilstrap and Mr. Young responded to questions from Council pertaining to facilities/amenities, the role of the private sector, opportunities to create incentives, and event packaging including tie-ins with Mesa lodging.

Members of Council noted the importance of tourism as a critical component of Mesa's overall economic development. Councilmember Giles suggested that consideration be given to identifying a staff person whose responsibilities would focus on the development of sports packages.

Mayor Brown thanked Mr. Gilstrap and Mr. Young for the presentation.

2. Discuss and consider issues relating to the proposed development fee adjustments.

Assistant to the City Manager Bryan Raines advised that a consultant was hired recently to review and make recommendations concerning the City's fee structure. Mr. Raines introduced Clancy Mullen of James Duncan and Associates.

Mr. Raines noted that A.R.S. §9-463 authorizes development fees for certain amenities provided a relationship is demonstrated between the cost of the fees and the amenities. Mr. Raines stated that the City established water and wastewater fees several years ago and currently imposes a residential development tax.

Mr. Raines reported that an initial proposal concerning development fees was prepared by the consultant but has since been revised in response to public input. Mr. Raines outlined differences between the original report and the revised recommendations. Mr. Raines stated that it is presently suggested that the City retain water and wastewater fees and add an impact fee (which can be utilized for new capital construction but not ongoing maintenance) for arterial streets, parks, libraries, cultural facilities, and fire and police facilities. Mr. Raines provided detailed information pertaining to the calculation of the arterial streets impact fee.

Mr. Raines said that an ordinance reflecting the new proposal may be scheduled for introduction at the first meeting in January 1998, with adoption scheduled for the second meeting in January. Mr. Raines noted that the fee cannot be implemented until 90 days following adoption. Mr. Raines suggested that the fee be reviewed on an annual basis to determine whether any adjustments are necessary.

Mr. Raines responded to questions from Council concerning the development community's preference for an impact fee, accounting functions/methodology pertaining to either the impact fee or development taxes, the importance of flexibility in relation to revenue sources, the effect of the proposed fee on businesses locating within Mesa, the projected net impact on the general fund, and the City's current outstanding indebtedness.

Following additional brief discussion, Council suggested that additional time be allotted for further study and review of this matter.

Mayor Brown thanked Mr. Raines for the information.

3. Discuss residential development guidelines.

Planning Director Frank Mizner introduced members of the Planning and Zoning Board present at the meeting.

Mr. Mizner advised that the issue of residential development guidelines was discussed at the November 6, 1997 Policy Session, at which time Council directed staff to prepare alternatives for consideration. Mr. Mizner briefly provided background information pertaining to the initial development of draft development guidelines by the Planning and Zoning Board.

Mr. Mizner stated that following the tabling of the draft guidelines by the Board in March 1997, (followed by Council concurrence in April 1997), subsequent discussion has occurred pertaining to product quality versus density. Mr. Mizner acknowledged the existence of various high-quality products on small lots but noted that certain impacts (trends) of small-lot development, such as increased demand on public services, limited diversity, and decreased home values, have generated concern among members of the Planning and Zoning Board and staff.

Mr. Mizner indicated that a copy of the draft guidelines as well as guidelines implemented in surrounding communities have been provided to Council, along with pertinent newspaper articles, statistics of residential permits issued from 1980 to 1996, and an age comparison of Mesa housing units.

Mr. Mizner utilized overhead slides and presented examples throughout Mesa of entry treatments to residential subdivisions, perimeter walls, pedestrian connections, recreational amenities/open space, and residential diversity/building elevations.

Mr. Mizner outlined options available for Council consideration at this time relative to the residential development guidelines: a) adopt the guidelines, including the 20 percent limit on smaller lots, b) amend the guidelines (e.g., include applicability to properties of less than 20 acres, revise the 20 percent limit on smaller lots, and/or delete subjective criteria relating to design and home elevations), and c) table the guidelines. Mr. Mizner advised that this matter may be considered at the December 18, 1997 Planning and Zoning Board meeting.

Brief discussion ensued concerning product quality and differences of opinion expressed by members of the Planning and Zoning Board regarding the content of the guidelines. Community Development Manager Wayne Balmer commented that while the overall product quality in Mesa has improved during the past five years, the quality of subdivisions in surrounding communities remains superior.

Councilmember Kavanaugh spoke in favor of proceeding with this issue and receiving additional input from the Planning and Zoning Board.

Councilmember Giles indicated support for the guidelines, particularly in reference to density. Councilmember Giles suggested reconsideration by the Planning and Zoning Board.

Vice Mayor Gilbert recommended consideration of incentives for infill development.

Councilmember Walters spoke in favor of eliminating the 20-acre minimum requirement. In response to a question from Councilmember Walters, Mr. Mizner stated that language has been included in the draft guidelines to provide flexibility based on unique characteristics of a project.

Mr. Mizner indicated that staff will work with the Planning and Zoning Board and bring the matter back for Council consideration, possibly in January 1998.

4. Discussion of items related to the development of the FY1998-99 budget.

Mayor Brown stated that this issue will be considered at a future meeting.

5. Discuss and consider "no-point" citations for photo radar speed violations.

Mayor Brown stated that this issue will be considered at a future meeting.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Policy Session adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

WAYNE BROWN, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Policy Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 9th day of December 1997. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 7th day of January 1998

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK