



COUNCIL MINUTES

June 18, 2009

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 June 18, 2009 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Alex Finter
Dina Higgins
Kyle Jones
Dennis Kavanaugh
Dave Richins
Scott Somers

COUNCIL ABSENT

Mayor Scott Smith

OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Debbie Spinner

Vice Mayor Jones excused Mayor Smith from the entire meeting.

1. Review items on the agenda for the June 22, 2009 Regular Council meeting.

All of the items on the agenda were reviewed among Council and staff and the following was noted:

Conflicts of interest: None

Items removed from the consent agenda: 12d

Items deleted from the consent agenda: None

2. Discuss and provide direction on the proposed Audit Plan for FY 2009/10.

City Auditor Gary Ray addressed the Council and introduced Senior Internal Auditor Jennifer Ruttman.

Mr. Ray reported that on May 28, 2009, staff presented the proposed Audit Plan for FY 2009/10 to the Audit & Finance Committee for their input and review. He explained that at that time, the Committee recommended to the Council that the Audit Plan be approved.

Councilmember Somers, who serves as Chairman of the Audit & Finance Committee, stated that the Committee conducted a thorough review of the Audit Plan and were comfortable with staff's recommendations. He noted that the audits would focus not only on fiscal matters, but also on improvements to various processes so that the City can save time and money.

Councilmember Somers added that staff also intends to verify that the City is properly accounting for stimulus funds from all sources.

Vice Mayor Jones stated that it was the consensus of the Council that the proposed Audit Plan for FY 2009/10 be approved.

3. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide direction on the site selection for the West Mesa Park and Ride lot.

Transportation Department Director Dan Cleavenger and Deputy Transportation Director Mike James addressed the Council relative to this agenda item.

Mr. Cleavenger displayed a PowerPoint presentation (A copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and reported that staff originally evaluated eight sites for the West Mesa Park-and-Ride lot. He explained that the locations have been narrowed down to Site 5 (Mesa Drive and Baseline Road) and Site 6 (Country Club Drive and Juanita). He added that both sites would meet the expected regional demand of 257 parking stalls.

Mr. Cleavenger commented that during the evaluation period, the City of Mesa was awarded \$9.4 million in Federal stimulus funding (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) for the project.

Mr. Cleavenger commented that it is staff's intent with regard to the Park-and-Ride lots to provide access to transit throughout the community. He advised that Mesa currently has two existing Park-and-Ride lots (Superstition Springs Mall area; Main/Sycamore), two lots in the design phase (Gilbert/McDowell near the Loop 202 Freeway; Power Road and the Loop 202 Freeway) and future locations in the Gateway area. Mr. Cleavenger also said that any unspent ARRA funds and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding (\$3.8 million) from this project could be redirected to cover the construction costs of the two Park-and-Ride lots currently in design.

In response to a question from Councilmember Richins, Mr. James explained that if Mesa acquired the selected site with Federal stimulus dollars, constructed the Park-and-Ride lot, and in the future determined it was underutilized and elected to sell the property, it would be necessary for the City to reimburse the Federal government for the original investment amount plus interest.

Councilmember Somers requested that staff research the length of time that Mesa would be required to utilize the Park-and-Ride lot so that the City would not be obligated to reimburse the Federal stimulus funding.

Mr. Cleavenger further reported that in order to be eligible to receive the Federal stimulus funding, the City must receive environmental clearance for the selected site by mid-September 2009, complete design by January 2010 and begin construction by March 2010. He also displayed aerial photographs of Site 5 and Site 6 and provided a brief overview of the respective locations. (See Attachments 1 and 2).

Mr. James continued with the presentation and offered a comparative analysis of the key attributes of each site as follows:

Site 5 (Mesa Drive/Baseline Road)

- The land area is 7.91 acres.
- The land cost is \$3,620,000 (\$10.50 per square foot) and an additional \$63,926 to remove two billboards currently onsite.
- The site has received its Phase 1 environmental clearance.
- The location provides an opportunity for the City to infill a difficult site.
- The retail/commercial corner acreage could be removed from the land purchase.
- The lot is irregularly shaped and would require grade changes.

Site 6 (Country Club Drive and Juanita)

- The land area is 7.08 acres.
- The land cost is \$3,084,048 (\$10.00 per square foot).
- The site has received its Phase 1 environmental clearance.
- The site is likely to be developed because of the various commercial, retail and employment activities in the area.
- There are no significant site issues.

Mr. Cleavenger further commented that regarding Site 5, the Old Mesa Drive alignment is impacted by various encroachments into the City's right-of-way (i.e., SRP power poles, irrigation ditches) and stated that the City is anxious to clean up the area. He noted that such efforts could not be accomplished within the scope of this Park-and-Ride project, but said he would anticipate perhaps a "Phase 2 cleanup" at some point in the future.

Mr. James reviewed a cost comparison of Site 5 and Site 6 for the construction of the proposed Park-and-Ride lot. (See Attachment 3) He noted that the "Facility Cost Estimates" reference the costs per staff's Design Concept Report and include the costs to develop the entire site.

City Manager Christopher Brady indicated that staff is seeking Council direction with regard to which site they prefer so that staff can initiate a contract to acquire the property. He noted that the contract would be placed on the July 1, 2009 Regular Council meeting agenda for approval. Mr. Brady explained that staff has spent a significant period of time examining both sites and commented that Site 6 would be the preferred location as it relates to ease of construction, the timing of the project, less risk to develop, and no known environmental issues. Mr. Brady added that it is also more likely that Site 6 could be developed beyond the City's efforts to construct the Park-and-Ride lot.

Mr. Brady further remarked that with regard to Site 5 and the Old Mesa Drive alignment, the property owner proposed that the right-of-way be included as part of the overall Park-and-Ride development and also to include additional parking spaces on the right-of-way. He stated that staff determined that it would not be appropriate to move forward with that option due to the encroachments from the property owners who have built in the right-of-way and the various SRP structures. Mr. Brady noted, however, that if the Council selected Site 5, the City would not submit that portion moving forward through the various approval processes with the Arizona

Department of Transportation (ADOT), but would create that as a separate project that the City would do outside of the Federal stimulus funding.

Mr. Brady addressed additional considerations regarding Site 5 including, but not limited to, the following: the site has two existing billboards, which the City would be required to remove; that there have been environmental issues related to the property that were mitigated in the past; that constructability of the site is more challenging due to its irregular shape; that the Park-and-Ride development may be the best option so that the City can “clean up” the area; and that if the Council preferred Site 5, he would recommend that the City “carve out” the corner piece at Mesa Drive and Baseline Road (approximately two acres) so that in the future, the property could be developed for a better use than a Park-and-Ride lot.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact the design concept for Site 5 includes 600 parking spaces and 357 spaces for Site 6; that there have been historical environmental issues with regard to groundwater contamination at Site 5; and that if the Council preferred Site 5, any additional environmental issues could impact Mesa’s ability to receive the Federal stimulus funding.

In response to a question from Councilmember Finter, Mr. Brady stated that if the Council selected Site 6, he would recommend that the City purchase the entire 7.08 acres. He noted that if the Council prefers Site 5, he would request direction that the City move forward without purchasing the two acres on the corner of Mesa Drive and Baseline Road.

In response to a question from Councilmember Kavanaugh, Mr. James clarified that both sites would serve Express buses traveling on Baseline Road or the US 60. He explained that Site 5 would serve local buses northbound only on Mesa Drive. Mr. James also stated that Site 6 would serve local buses northbound and southbound on Country Club Drive, as well as the Arizona Avenue/Country Club LINK service, which is scheduled to begin in July 2010. He added that regional commuters from Gilbert, Chandler and Mesa would be able to park at Site 6 and commute to the Mesa light rail station via LINK service.

Further discussion ensued relative to the process undertaken by staff to establish the cost comparisons for the two sites.

Councilmember Higgins stated that because she was given a briefing with regard to Site 5, but not Site 6, she is uncomfortable in making a recommendation at this time.

Bryan Jungwirth, Chief of Staff for Valley Metro Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA), commented that from a regional transit perspective, Site 6 is the preferred location for the Park-and-Ride lot. He reiterated Mr. James’ comments that the facility would serve Local Bus Route 112, the Express buses and also the LINK service. Mr. Jungwirth also noted that the RPTA designed the LINK service around Site 6 and will not divert such service to Mesa Drive (Site 5).

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact that the Express buses will bring passengers into the Park-and-Ride lot, but the LINK and local buses will let passengers out on the street; and the various requirements/clearances that must be met in order to obtain Federal stimulus funding.

Vice Mayor Jones expressed concern that the selection of Site 6 for the Park-and-Ride lot would create additional traffic on Country Club Drive.

Mr. Cleavenger responded that the Maricopa Association of Governments' (MAG) projected traffic counts for Mesa Drive and Country Club Drive are "virtually identical."

It was moved by Councilmember Somers, seconded by Councilmember Kavanaugh, that the City move forward with the acquisition of land at Country Club Drive and Juanita (Site 6) for the purpose of constructing the West Mesa Park-and-Ride lot.

In response to a question from Councilmember Richins, Mr. Brady explained that if the City does not proceed with the construction of the West Mesa Park-and-Ride lot, it would be necessary for Mesa to return the \$9.4 million in Federal stimulus funding. He said that Mesa would also be unable to construct the two Park-and-Ride lots currently in design.

Vice Mayor Jones commented that after careful review of this item, Site 6 appears to be the preferred location. He inquired if it was necessary for the Council to take formal action on this matter since there appears to be Council consensus in support of that location.

City Attorney Debbie Spinner responded that legally, it was not necessary for the Council to make a motion. She noted, however, that since a motion and second have already been made, unless they are withdrawn, she would advise the Council to proceed with the vote.

Vice Mayor Jones called for the vote.

Vice Mayor Jones declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

Vice Mayor Jones thanked staff for the presentation.

4. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of various boards and committees.

- a. Parks and Recreation Board meeting held on March 11, 2009
- b. Transportation Advisory Board meeting held on March 17, 2009
- c. Economic Development Advisory Board meeting held on May 5, 2009
- d. General & Economic Development Committee meeting held on May 12, 2009
- e. Public Safety Committee meeting held on May 18, 2009
- f. Audit & Finance Committee meeting held on May 28, 2009

It was moved by Councilmember Somers, seconded by Councilmember Finter, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Vice Mayor Jones declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

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

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| Councilmember Somers: | National League of Cities' Finance, Administration & Intergovernmental Relations Committee meeting |
| Councilmember Kavanaugh: | National League of Cities' Information, Technology and Communications Committee meeting |

Councilmember Higgins: Mission of Mercy Free Clinic event; Arizona League of Cities and Towns' orientation for newly elected officials
Vice Mayor Jones: Town of Gilbert's Swearing in Ceremony for new Mayor and Councilmembers

6. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

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

Monday, June 22, 2009, TBA – Study Session

Monday, June 22, 2009, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

Thursday, June 25, 2009, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Wednesday, July 1, 2009, TBA – Study Session

Wednesday, July 1, 2009, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

Wednesday, July 8, 2009, TBA – Study Session

Wednesday, July 8, 2009, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

7. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

8. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 8:40 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 Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 18th day of June, 2009. 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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(attachments – 3)