

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 4, 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 May 4, 1999 at 3:36 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Jim Davidson, Chairman
Keno Hawker
Dennis Kavanaugh

STAFF PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT (CONT.)

Patrick Murphy
Keith Nath
Kim West

OTHERS PRESENT

Tom Verploegen
Celeste Werner
Mary Jo Whalen
Others

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

Redevelopment Director Greg Marek introduced Celeste Werner, a representative from BRW who is assisting in the development of the City's downtown concept plan.

Ms. Werner referred to two diagrams designed to assist in the preparation of the downtown plan: a) sector themes and b) pedestrian/open space framework. Ms. Werner provided an overview of each of the diagrams and advised that the two approaches are based on four populations - residential, office-public, office-private, and arts/entertainment - all of which are supported by retail services.

Ms. Werner recommended that any additional housing in the downtown area consist of high-density units. Ms. Werner suggested a focus on middle/upper income to enhance the image of downtown and recommended a target of 15-20 percent affordable housing dispersed throughout the area.

Ms. Werner responded to questions from the Committee pertaining to residential development, location of municipal facilities, mix of retail services, restaurant capacity to support projects such as the new Arts and Entertainment Center, and structural rehabilitation (retaining historical architecture).

Ms. Werner reviewed characteristics of a potential urban campus from Broadway north to University Drive and spoke concerning mid-block pathways, gateways into Town Center, the corridor between 1st Street and 1st Avenue, and residential development along the periphery of the downtown area.

Ms. Werner displayed a map illustrating four light rail alignment alternatives. Ms. Werner recommended that the alignment along the existing rail line be reserved for commuter rail rather than light rail, noting the increased cost, minimal population served, and lack of economic enhancement to the downtown area.

Ms. Werner reported that as a result of discussions to date, three land use alternatives (Concepts A, B, and C) have evolved for the downtown area. Ms. Werner stated that the preferred plan for the downtown area will consist of elements from each of the concepts.

Ms. Werner referred to maps and reviewed components of each of the concepts (e.g., residential, office, retail, commercial, parks/open space, arts/entertainment, public/semi-public, business park, transit, and parking). Ms. Werner noted similarities/differences among the plans and identified recommended features/locations. Ms. Werner commented regarding the importance of public/private partnerships and spoke concerning densities, signature projects at entries into the downtown area, buffers, mixed-use projects, options in the event proposals such as the Mesa Verde Resort do not occur (e.g., alternate hotel locations), and transit/light rail.

Ms. Werner said that a two-way light-rail alignment is recommended along the center median or the north side of Main Street (to avoid interference with entry into the performing arts center). In response to a question from Committeemember Kavanaugh, Ms. Werner indicated that such an alignment would reduce costs, promote economic development, and minimize confusion about transit routes. Ms. Werner noted the potential for a circulatory shuttle around Town Center.

Ms. Werner stated support for intersection improvements but said that street widening beyond intersections is not recommended in an effort to minimize traffic speed in the downtown area.

Ms. Werner reviewed a matrix of criteria utilized by BRW to evaluate Concepts A, B, and C. Ms. Werner noted that the evaluation is preliminary and subjective and that the criteria have not yet been weighted.

Discussion ensued regarding historical buildings/themes, retail services at ground level to promote pedestrian activity at gateways, the recommended light-rail alignment, potential locations for the transit center/stations, and opportunities for downtown land acquisition/assembly.

Committeemember Hawker requested input from BRW pertaining to potential siting of an aquatics center. Mr. Marek noted that this issue will be reviewed with Council in conjunction with an update concerning the Mesa Verde Resort.

Ms. Werner advised that a preferred land use plan will be developed during the next few weeks and implementation strategies/priorities defined to provide a legal basis to support the downtown plan.

Chairman Davidson recommended that information be provided delineating potential areas of conflict between existing zoning and proposals contained in the downtown concept plan.

2. Adjournment.

Chairman Davidson related a suggestion from Committeemember Hawker that joint (rather than separate) meetings of the Downtown Development Committee and the General Development Committee be scheduled whenever appropriate in the future.

Chairman Davidson expressed appreciation to Ms. Werner for the update.

It was moved by Committeemember Kavanaugh, seconded by Committeemember Hawker, that the meeting of the General Development Committee adjourn at 4:35 p.m.

General Development Committee

May 4, 1999

Page 3

Carried unanimously.

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 4th day of May 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