

**CITY OF MESA  
MINUTES OF THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MEETING**

**DATE:** January 16, 2003 **TIME:** 7:30 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dave Wier, Chair  
Art Jordan, Vice-Chair  
Theresa Carmichael  
Vince DiBella  
Robert Fletcher  
Wayne Pomeroy  
Mark Reeb  
Chuck Riekena

**STAFF PRESENT**

Katrina Bradshaw  
Tony Felice  
Greg Marek  
Amy Morales  
Patrick Murphy  
Dan Stubbs

**OTHERS PRESENT**

John Newcomb  
Lori Osiecki

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Terry Smith

**1. Call to Order**

The January 16, 2003 meeting of the Downtown Development Committee was called to order at 7:30 a.m. in the City Council Chambers located at 57 E. First Street by Chair Wier.

**2. Items from Citizens Present**

There were no items from citizens present.

**3. Approval of Minutes of December 19, 2002 Study Session**

It was moved by Wayne Pomeroy, seconded by Art Jordan to approve the minutes.

Vote: 8 in favor; 0 opposed

**Approval of Minutes of December 19, 2002 Regular Meeting**

It was moved by Chuck Riekena, seconded by Vince DiBella to approve the minutes.

Vote: 8 in favor; 0 opposed

**4. Discuss and consider Special Use Permit Case No. ZA03-002TC for a Comprehensive Sign Plan at 305 E. Main Street.**

**Applicant:** John Newcomb, Pearson Signs  
**Staff Contact:** Katrina Bradshaw, Redevelopment Associate

**e-mail address:   katrina.bradshaw@cityofmesa.org**

**Recommendation: Approval**

Chair Wier declared a conflict of interest and abstained from discussion and voting on this agenda item.

Ms. Bradshaw explained that recent streetscape improvements on Main Street have reduced the visibility of existing signage at Wells Fargo Bank and have prompted the changes which are being requested in this Comprehensive Sign Plan.

Ms. Bradshaw provided an overview of the new and existing signage for each elevation. She explained that there are three factors which invoke the need for the Wells Fargo Bank to obtain a Comprehensive Sign Plan:

1. The new monument sign is eight feet high and will exceed the permitted height of 5 feet.
2. An additional wall sign is proposed on the south elevation, which will exceed the maximum number of signs allowed per the Sign Code.
3. Signage that is placed on upper level stories of buildings exceeding two stories in height are subject to the approval of a Comprehensive Sign Plan.

Ms. Bradshaw explained that even though this sign plan exceeds the number of signs that are allowed, the overall square footage will not exceed that which is allowed by code for that building.

Ms. Bradshaw said staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit for a Comprehensive Sign Plan for the Wells Fargo Bank building subject to the stipulation that all walls that have signage removed will be patched, repaired, and matched to the existing paint on the building.

Mr. DiBella said overall this sign plan is well done, integrated signage.

**It was moved by Wayne Pomeroy, seconded by Theresa Carmichael, to approve Special Use Permit Case No. ZA03-002TC for a Comprehensive Sign Plan at 305 E. Main Street subject to the following stipulation:**

1. **All walls that have signage removed will be patched, repaired, and matched to the existing paint on the building.**

**Vote:   7 in favor;  
          0 opposed;  
          1 abstained (Dave Wier)**

**5. Discuss the new policy regarding fire sprinklers.**

Mr. Marek said the new citywide policy regarding fire sprinklers was included in the DDC packet that was provided to each Board member. This policy took effect in December 2002. Mr. Marek said Dan Stubbs, the Fire Marshall, is available today to answer questions from the Board.

Mr. Marek said this new policy will solve many of the problems that exist when dealing with rehabilitations and existing buildings. It will also provide for more flexibility for buildings that have expansions or a change of use.

Mr. Marek thanked the Fire Department for looking at this issue and for being very accommodating while, at the same time, maintaining safety.

Mr. Jordan asked for some background information on how these changes came about, including the process for reviewing the policy, who was on the committee, and the evolution for writing the amendments.

Mr. Stubbs said the committee consisted of the Fire Prevention staff, the Redevelopment Office, Chief DeLeon, and people from the Building Department. He explained that about six months ago, during the process of adopting a Rehabilitation Code, staff saw a need to revise the Fire Code because it was written in such a way that there was no parity amongst buildings. As a result, the smaller buildings were more restricted in what could be added or changed on the building, without invoking the requirement for fire sprinklers. Mr. Stubbs explained that even though fire sprinklers are a valuable tool to help save lives and property, it can also create a hardship when trying to rehabilitate some buildings.

Mr. Stubbs said staff polled other cities and found that there was a wide variety of criteria that they used to determine when fire sprinklers would be required. Staff feels that the formula that they have come up with allows businesses to make additions to their building, without impacting the fire load to the community. He said it seems to be a win-win policy for both the City and the business owner.

Mr. Jordan asked how the revised policy compares to other cities in the Valley in terms of its conservativeness or leniency.

Mr. Stubbs says he thinks it puts the City of Mesa in the forefront. He explained that some of the formulas that surrounding cities use to determine if fire sprinkling is necessary are so confusing that it is difficult to understand how they are figured. On the whole he feels that the City is ahead, but there are still parts of it that are probably more restrictive than other communities.

Mr. Jordan asked if this topic is being discussed nationally and, if so, can staff tap in to that dialogue and understand what other cities are doing to address this.

Mr. Stubbs said it is a significant issue nationwide, however, the City of Mesa is probably more progressive than most of the country. He said he typically gets at least one request a week to respond to other cities on how we address the sprinkling of buildings. Mr. Stubbs felt that Mesa is watched by other communities, and what it does, other communities follow.

Mr. DiBella asked if the Code allows a one-time increase.

Mr. Stubbs said it is an accumulative one-time increase. The amount of the increase in square footage is limited. He added that you could not do a 1,000 s.f. increase one year, and then the next year add another 1,000 s.f.

Mr. Reeb said that since these changes do not apply to new construction, what are the exclusions or exceptions with new construction with respect to installation of fire sprinklers.

Mr. Stubbs said some of the exceptions could be such things as gazebos, storage sheds etc. Generally speaking, the main structure of any new construction is what is required to have fire sprinklers.

Mr. Marek said the Building Department has completed the draft copy of the Rehabilitation Code which goes hand-in-hand with how the City's dealing with the fire sprinkler issues and existing buildings. The Building Department is preparing to hold meetings with external stakeholders as the next step in the approval process. The Rehabilitation Code is based on the North Carolina Code, which uses International Building codes. The outstanding issue that is still being discussed is whether or not to adopt the International Building Codes, which would require additional time to implement in order for it to conform to existing codes, or to continue to use the 1994 UBC Codes, allowing the City to adopt the new Rehabilitation Code a lot sooner. In addition, the City Council will have to decide if it wants to adopt the International Building Codes or the NFPA Codes. The City would like to adopt the new Rehabilitation Code as soon as possible, but these issues will need to be addressed before that can happen. The Downtown Development Committee will hear a presentation on the status of the Rehabilitation Code in the next couple of months.

**6. Discuss and consider revising the list of permitted uses allowed in a Level 1 Historic Structure with a Special Use Permit (continued from the December 2002 meeting).**

Mr. Marek explained that the Downtown Development Committee raised the issue regarding the uses permitted in a Level I Historic Structure during the Mitten and Pomeroy House discussions. The Historic Preservation Committee discussed this at the January 9, 2003 meeting and recommended not to make any changes to the current Ordinance regarding this issue. Mr. Marek explained that Lori Osiecki, from the Historic Preservation Committee, has agreed to provide some background on the origination of this section of the Ordinance.

Ms. Osiecki passed out a map showing the locations of the ten structures that are listed as Level I Historic Structures in the 1984 Historic Survey. She explained that back in 1994 the neighbors in the West Second Street Historic District were concerned about the property at 163 W. Second Street because it was purchased and being used for office space rather than residential, creating quite a bit of activity in the neighborhood. The neighbors decided to see what they could do to change that situation and came upon Section 11-8-3(D), which at that time, clearly stated that Level I Historic Structures could be used for professional office space. The neighborhood felt threatened by this section, particularly because of what was going on at 163 W. Second Street, and went before the City Council with their concerns. At the City Council meeting, it was determined that only the ten homes mentioned in the 1984 Historic Survey as Level I Historic Structures, would be allowed to apply for the Special Use Permit for office use. At that time, with the clarification that it would only be allowed for those 10 houses, the neighbors felt there should be some guidelines that would protect the neighborhood and also give the property owners of those 10 homes clarification on how to proceed with what they wanted to do within the buildings. A list of guidelines was developed and approved by the City Council.

Ms. Osiecki pointed out that the neighborhood took an active role and worked very hard in coming up with guidelines that were agreed upon by the owners of the 10 properties, as well as neighborhood. Ms. Osiecki said she has had conversations with residents in the Wilbur District and the West Second Street District and they have said that they do not want to see this ordinance changed. She pointed out that in order to expand the uses allowed in a Level I Historic Structure, discussions would have to be opened up to the residents in all of the historic districts.

Mr. Marek suggested that the Robson Historic District may want to look at converting a portion of the neighborhood to a specialty retail area. This may entail a rezoning process, such as a Planned Area Development (PAD), as well as a neighborhood plan developed through neighborhood and property owner involvement. Mr. Marek felt that a comprehensive approach would be better than changing the uses allowed in a Level I Historic Structure.

**It was moved by Mark Reeb, seconded by Art Jordan, to maintain the existing ordinance as written as it pertains to Level I Historic Structures.**

**Vote: 8 in favor; 0 opposed**

## **7. Director's Report, Greg Marek**

**Streetscape Phase IV and V** – Construction for the chilled water line will begin within the next few weeks on First Avenue. The fourth phase of the streetscape project (Center Street, First Avenue to Main Street and Main Street from Center Street to Sistine) will take place April through November of this year. Center Street will be closed this Summer during the construction. The last phase of the streetscape project is on Macdonald Street, Main Street to First Street, will be

constructed in conjunction with the Bank One Building. This will also complete the streetscape in front of the Southwest Museum.

Chair Wier asked for an update on the Aquatics Center.

Mr. Marek this is still one of the top priorities for City Council. They are working on fundraising activities to make up for the shortfall in the budget. The Board asked if there is still consideration for moving the Aquatics Center to Site 17 and a discussion ensued about the additional costs if that is decided. Mr. Marek said Redevelopment's position is that it would be a mistake to move it since it would create a lot of synergy for downtown if it is left at the original location, and Hunter Interests has identified developers interested in developing Site 17 according to Hunter's scenario.

**Request for Qualifications** – Two projects that will have a Request for Qualifications in the next six months is Site 17, to look for a master developer, and Site 7, at Main Street and Hibbert, both based on the Hunter report. The City needs about 40,000 s.f. of office space in the next two years, which the City could lease if they can find a developer to come and build a 125,000 s.f. class A building on Site 7.

Mr. Reeb asked if the City would consider leasing space in the Bank One building.

Mr. Marek said the City feels it is more important that the Bank One building be leased to the private sector in order to increase the private employment base in downtown.

**8. Report from Mesa Town Center, Tom Verploegen – Executive Director**

There was no report from MTCC.

**9. Board Member Comments**

None.

**10. Adjournment**

With there being no further business, this meeting of the Downtown Development Committee was adjourned at 8:04 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Mr. Gregory J. Marek, Director of Redevelopment  
Minutes prepared by Katrina Bradshaw