

# COUNCIL MINUTES

November 18, 1998

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session (Half Day Session) in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1 st Street, on November 18, 1998 at 7:32 a.m.

## COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Wayne Brown  
Jim Davidson  
John Giles  
Keno Hawker  
Bill Jaffa  
Dennis Kavanaugh  
Pat Pomeroy

## COUNCIL ABSENT

None

## STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster  
Wayne Balmer  
Linda Crocker  
Denise Bleyle  
Harold Decker  
Laurie Goggin  
Mike Hutchinson  
Barbara Jones  
Harry Kent  
Greg Marek  
Tom Mattingly  
Frank Mizner  
Ellen Pence  
Bill Petrie  
Bryan Raines  
Andrea Rasizer  
Tom Remes  
Becky Richardson  
Kathleen Savagian  
Jenny Sheppard

## STAFF PRESENT (CONT.)

Dave Spaur  
Lois Underdah  
Jamie Wemer  
Mindy White  
Debbie Yukolis  
Others

## OTHERS PRESENT

Carolyn Baecker  
Teresa Brice-Heames  
Theresa Carmichael  
Charlie Deaton  
Vince DiBella  
Debra Duvall  
Pat Langdon  
Art Thomason  
Tom Verploegen  
Claudia Walters  
Dave Wier  
Chris Zaharis  
Others

## 1. Introduction - Wayne Balmer.

Community Development Manager Wayne Balmer briefly highlighted the contents of the proposed agenda and introduced staff present at the meeting. Mr. Balmer stated that the focus of the presentation is a status report and said that staff will be seeking Council direction relative to the various issues that will be discussed during the meeting.

## 2. Town Center Redevelopment Program.

\* Overview by Claudia Walters and Vince DiBella

Vince DiBella, President of the Mesa Town Center Corporation (MTCC) and a member of the Downtown Development Committee (DDC) and former Councilmember/fellow DDC member Claudia Walters addressed the Council relative to this agenda item. Mr. DiBella informed the Council that the purpose of their presentation is to provide an overview of issues and concepts that relate to the Town Center and to identify future goals and direction.

Discussion ensued relative to the operations of the MTCC, the fact that public-private partnerships are an essential tool for downtown development, the importance of creating policy regarding the concept of 'highest and best use,' the fact that downtown development is a slow process that requires the active participation of a broad range of participants, and the fact that certain critical components, such as zoning codes, sign codes and enforcement, are currently in place to assist with development/redevelopment efforts.

Mayor Brown stated the opinion that the MTCC and the DDC should develop positive approach recommendations regarding the buildings on Main Street which are currently involved in non-conforming uses. Mayor Brown added that the underutilized buildings constitute a major problem for the downtown area and encouraged both the MTCC and the DDC to initiate steps in the near future address this important issue.

Councilmember Kavanaugh expressed the opinion that the City should enforce the laws equally throughout the City and require buildings with non-conforming uses to comply with existing regulations. Councilmember Kavanaugh added that the City should have the foresight to acquire properties in the Town Center area as they become available in order to ensure that the buildings' uses will be compatible with the surrounding area.

Mayor Brown expressed concern regarding the possibility of having thirteen empty buildings in the Town Center area as a result of enforcing the non-conforming use codes.

Additional discussion ensued relative to enforcement policies and timetables, signage issues and the importance of obtaining a more diverse retail culture in the downtown area.

In response to Council direction relative to enforcing current regulations and requiring buildings with nonconforming uses to comply, Mr. Balmer stated that staff will prepare information on this process for presentation to the Council at a future meeting.

Ms. Walters provided a brief synopsis of the activities of the DDC and stated that efforts are continuing to develop a downtown area that will be family orientated and will contain a variety of unique one of a kind facilities. Ms. Walters added that the ultimate goal is to combine cultural, entertainment, retail, government and dining facilities in one area for the enjoyment of Mesa citizens and visitors to the City. Ms. Walters commented that the Redevelopment Office is currently in the process of preparing a proposal that will encourage private businesses in the Town Center area to improve their facades. Ms. Walters said that Redevelopment staff will present this proposal to the DDC at either their December or January meeting.

Redevelopment Director Greg Marek provided the Council with an overview of redevelopment efforts in Town Center area and said that efforts continue to implement a majority of the recommendations that were the result of the Vision Plan that was developed in 1994.

Discussion ensued relative to the importance of developing a pathway system that will connect all of the major activity centers in the downtown area, sales tax generated in the downtown area, pending grant applications and Redevelopment staff's efforts, in cooperation with the City's Information Services Department, to develop a three-dimensional map containing every building in the downtown area.

Ms. Walters recommended that a task force be created, comprised of the Mayor, one or two members of the Council, a member of the DDC, a representative from the Town Center Corporation, a member of the Historic Preservation Committee and the Transportation Committee, City Manager Charles Luster and/or Assistant City Manager Mike Hutchinson. Ms. Walters stated that the purpose of the task force will be to review all proposed development in the Town Center area and analyze long and short term impacts of same, create a criteria for development to ensure compatibility with the surrounding businesses, and develop prequalification criteria for projects submitted for development/redevelopment in the area.

Councilmember Davidson stressed the importance of ensuring that a representative of affordable housing serve on the proposed task force.

Additional discussion ensued relative to engaging the services of an urban planner and coordinating all efforts in the downtown area, the importance of ensuring that the Architect Selection Committee is aware of the Council's desires in this area, the fact that the Vision Plan, which was adopted in 1994, requires revision, the importance of adding a component for an urban design person to work with the performing arts center and the proposed task force, tax increment financing, and overall redevelopment efforts in the Town Center area.

Community Development Manager Wayne Balmer summarized the Council's direction and indicated that the following points will be pursued by staff:

- \* Pursue the enforcement of City Codes in the downtown area, including the non-conforming use of buildings in this area.
- \* Pursue the addition of an urban design component to the arts and entertainment complex. Coordinate the arts and entertainment center and the aquatics center with the development of a concept plan for the surrounding area. Advise the Architect Selection Committee of the Council's direction in this regard.
- \* Pursue the development of a task force as outlined above by Claudia Walters.
- \* Pursue the possibility of purchasing the downtown educational center and present findings to the Council at a later date.
- \* Proceed with the development of a City block and develop a redevelopment plan that will meet the future needs of the City.
- \* Develop a beautification plan for the downtown area, including the creation of green space areas.
- \* Pursue the creation of a plan that will define the type of development that is appropriate at the main entrance corners' of the Town Center area.

Mayor Brown thanked staff for their presentation.

(At 9:08 a.m. the Mayor declared a recess and the meeting reconvened at 9:26 a.m.)

### 3. Planning and Zoning Program.

Planning Director Frank Mizner addressed the Council relative to this agenda item.

Mr. Mizner referred to planning maps distributed to the Council and presented data relative to the City's planning area, annexation areas, Mesa's corporate limits, population increases and freeway construction. Mr. Mizner reported that the City is essentially landlocked and added that theoretically the City could annex in the south eastern area and expand into Pinal County.

Mr. Mizner commented on a map that contains large residential and retirement developments throughout the City and discussed growth statistics from 1878 to the present.

Discussion ensued relative to residential building permits issued and anticipated growth in Mesa and surrounding communities.

Mr. Mizner highlighted the following five (5) major planning and development challenges that will face staff, the Planning and Zoning Board and the City Council over the next decade: 1) increased citizen involvement in all zoning cases; 2) expending efforts to achieve a balance between residential and non-residential land uses; 3) expending efforts to accommodate the growth that will occur in sensitive areas including citrus groves, desert uplands areas and infill sites; 4) analyzing and expending efforts to improve the City's development standards, including landscaping, signage, design review and parking requirements; and 5) a review and analysis of the City's annexation efforts and future goals.

Councilmember Davidson expressed the opinion that wide, straight streets located between major intersections, represent avenues of problems for residential neighborhoods.

Discussion ensued relative to design standards, cluster developments, the possibility of trust land trades, 'growing smarter' legislation, the importance of Council participation in urban land institute seminars, the importance of updating/creating standards dealing with native plant protection issues in the remaining issues of the community that are subject to development; analyzing what other communities have initiated in regard to protect wildlife corridors through the use of plant protection; interest in exploring the possibility of annexing outside of the City's planning area into Pinal County, concern among the Council regarding residential encroachment in industrial areas, the possibility of creating an 'east valley county,' competing interest in high density residential development, increasing home costs, the importance of revising the City's General Plan, traffic calming devices, the importance of pursuing transportation options, such as a light rail system, in the future, and impact fees.

Community Development Manager Wayne Balmer summarized Council direction and indicated that the following items will be pursued by staff:

- \* An update to the General Plan should be given priority status; (Update current General Plan rather than developing a new plan) and work with a citizen group (less than 35 members) on the update.
- \* Staff will pursue updating the Desert Uplands Area guidelines; creating an ordinance and focusing on wild life preservation. Research guidelines/policies adopted by surrounding communities.
- \* As part of the General Plan update, staff will pursue methods to encourage development in the older areas of the City.
- \* Regarding Williams Gateway Airport, a meeting should be scheduled to allow the Council an opportunity to review and discuss several airport related issues. Eventually expand discussion to include General Motors Corporation and general aviation issues surrounding both of those areas.

- \* Review Public Works standards for street designs and widths and pursue the issue of cut-through traffic on 'straight' streets.
- \* Explore the possibility of expanding into Pinal County through annexation.
- \* Explore alternative transportation options.

Mayor Brown thanked Mr. Mizner for his input.

#### 4. MEGACORP Economic Development Program.

Economic Development Director Dave Spaur addressed the Council relative to this agenda item. Mr. Spaur advised that over the last two years, staff has developed a strategic five-year plan. Mr. Spaur added that a sites directory has also been compiled and said that a draft economic impact analysis has also been recently developed.

Discussion ensued regarding the four pillar industries located in Mesa, marketing efforts and participation in GPEC marketing programs/trade missions, 'hard zoned' land issues, negotiated impact fees in other communities, infrastructure incentives, the fact that rezoning can occur in a minimal amount of time, negative impacts of mini-storage facilities, the importance of bringing economic development and planning and zoning together to work in a cooperative manner, and the importance of developing an incentive package and establishing a land use policy.

Mr. Spaur informed the Council that the City of Mesa has approximately 338.58 acres of industrial parcels and 62 acres of office sites available for immediate development. Mr. Spaur said that infrastructure is in place on this land and fully improved with 'hard zoning.' Mr. Spaur added that out of the City's total 539.58 industrial acres, only 135.58 acres are competitive in pricing in comparison to other metro Phoenix communities. Mr. Spaur noted that a majority of the parcels are less than one acre in size and added that the largest parcels are approximately ten non-contiguous acres. Mr. Spaur emphasized that to date, the City of Mesa does not have a 100 acre plus parcel that includes hard zoning with infrastructure in-place, available to develop for a major manufacturer.

Discussion ensued relative to the importance of focusing efforts to take advantage of economic development around the Williams Gateway Airport site, the possible expansion of the foreign free trade zone, and the positive benefits the City receives from its association with GPEC.

Carolyn Baecker, a member of the City's Economic Development Advisory Board and one of Mesa's representatives to GPEC, provided the Council with data provided by GPEC relative to the number of businesses that have been established in Mesa as a result of their efforts. Ms. Baecker emphasized the importance of the City's association with GPEC and discussed difficulties the City has been experiencing in competing with other cities for business relocations. Ms. Baecker stressed the importance of ensuring that a significant amount of infrastructure is in place to enable the City to succeed in the area of economic development. Ms. Baecker also commented on the importance of maintaining existing businesses in the City.

Community Development Manager Wayne Balmer recommended that discussion of this agenda item be continued to the Friday, November 20, 1998 Study Session (Extended).

#### 6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session (Extended) adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

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WAYNE BROWN, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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BARBARA JONES CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session (Extended) of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 18th day of November 1998. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1998

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK