

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 1, 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 March 1, 1999 at 3:05 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Jim Davidson, Chairman
Keno Hawker
Dennis Kavanaugh

COUNCIL PRESENT

Vice Mayor John Giles

STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster
Shelly Allen
Wayne Balmer
Linda Crocker
Gerry Gerber
Mike Hutchinson
Barbara Jones
Greg Marek
Frank Mizner
Patrick Murphy

OTHERS PRESENT

Vince DiBella
Robbie Sherwood
Tom Verploegen
Claudia Walters
Dave Wier
Others

1. Further discussion and consideration regarding the revised Town Center Redevelopment Plan.

Redevelopment Director Greg Marek addressed the members of the Committee regarding the revised Town Center Redevelopment Plan. Mr. Marek advised that at a recent Council Study Session, Councilmember Jaffa discussed the possibility of preparing overlays based on the fact that a need exists for development outside of the existing boundaries. Mr. Marek explained the differences between the current process and a zoning overlay but stressed the importance of addressing the location of new redevelopment areas in the future. Mr. Marek also addressed Councilmember Jaffa's remarks regarding the possibility of limiting the use of eminent domain within the redevelopment area and advised that he has clarified for Councilmember Jaffa the fact that Council approval is required prior to the initiation of any eminent domain proceedings by the Redevelopment Office. Mr. Marek recommended the existing eminent domain policy, requiring Council approval of all proposed eminent domain proceedings, remain unchanged.

Mr. Marek referred to a map displayed in the Council Chambers containing the existing boundaries of the Town Center as well as future proposed redevelopment expansion in the area.

It was moved by Committeemember Kavanaugh, seconded by Chairman Davidson, to recommend to the Council that the proposed revisions to the Town Center Redevelopment Plan be approved.

Committeemember Hawker commented that he would not support the motion and stated the opinion that staff's efforts should continue to focus on the existing square mile area. Committeemember Hawker expressed dissatisfaction with the manner in which land for a number of previous redevelopment projects was assembled. Committeemember Hawker also stated concern regarding the fact that the City of Mesa appears to be the only entity buying and selling land and setting values in the Town Center area and expressed the opinion that the private sector, rather than government, should be involved in redevelopment projects.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Kavanaugh-Davidson
NAYS - Hawker

Chairman Davidson declared the motion carried by majority vote.

2. Discuss and consider consultant selection for the Concept Plan.

Redevelopment Director Greg Marek briefly discussed staff's proposed schedule for the consultant selection and noted that a total of 33 Requests for Qualifications (RFQ's) were distributed. Mr. Marek added that eighty-five letters of interest were mailed to a list of consultants that was compiled from the American Planning Association International Downtown Association directory in addition to other miscellaneous recommendations. Mr. Marek reported that February 19, 1999 was the deadline for submittals and advised that four responses were received as a result of the RFQ. Mr. Marek informed the members of the Committee that all four responses are from qualified firms possessing experience in the preparation of downtown plans and noted that the respondents include: 1) BRW, Inc., 2) Urban Design Studio, 3) Todd & Associates, and 4) Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. Mr. Marek commented that staff had anticipated receiving responses from four to six consultants but expressed the opinion that the abbreviated nine-week schedule limited a number of responses. Mr. Marek explained that an aggressive schedule has been developed in order to ensure that the Concept Plan is in place when the discussions are underway regarding the Arts & Entertainment Center.

Mr. Marek stated that an in-house review team, consisting of Chairman Davidson, Community Development Manager Wayne Balmer, Planning Director Frank Mizner, Senior Redevelopment Specialist Patrick Murphy, and Mr. Marek thoroughly reviewed the submittals. Mr. Marek added that Executive Director of the Mesa Town Center Corporation Tom Verploegen and Downtown Development Committeemember Claudia Walters also served as members of the review team and Chairman Davidson received the proposals.

Mr. Marek commented that based on the review team's analysis of the various submittals, the top two proposals are BRW, Inc. and the Urban Design Studio. Mr. Marek distributed comments that the members of the review team made on the various proposals and stated the opinion that Todd & Associates' proposal appeared to be more geared toward projects rather than a planning process for a downtown area. Mr. Marek also stated the opinion that Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc., ranked lowest based on the fact that their submittal reflected a seven-month rather than nine-week process as outlined in the RFQ. Mr. Marek recommended that the BRW, Inc. and the Urban Design Studio be requested to make an oral presentation to the General Development Committee at an upcoming meeting.

Discussion ensued relative to the strengths and weaknesses of the various consulting firms and the fact that funding for the project would come out of contingency funds.

Committeemember Kavanaugh stated that he was impressed with the top two submittals and concurred with the review team's selection. Committeemember Kavanaugh also spoke in support of scheduling an oral presentation as recommended by Mr. Marek.

In response to comments from Chairman Davidson regarding the depth of Todd & Associates' submittal, Mr. Marek expressed the opinion that the firm's experience in downtown concept plans is limited.

Mr. Marek emphasized that transit is an important component of the plan and stated the opinion that BRW possesses the strongest expertise in this area.

Additional discussion ensued regarding the importance of identifying projects that will be located in close proximity to the Arts & Entertainment Center, the fact that developers are already indicating an interest in this

area, the importance of overall development in Town Center, the fact that internationally renowned urban designer Alan Jacobs has confirmed his visit to Mesa on April 8 and 9, 1999, and will make a presentation on his observations of the downtown area to the City Council on April 15, 1999, and a recommendation that a representative from LDR be involved in the BRW presentation.

Mr. Verploegen expressed the opinion that the nine-week schedule is limiting and stated the opinion that the firm Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc., would lend a significant amount of creativity to the process.

Mr. Marek emphasized the importance of community outreach and commented that the selected firm will have to expend strong effort in this area to ensure that a broad range of citizen involvement occurs. Mr. Marek added that the selected consultant will utilize extensive marketing tools, including City resources, to gain the most benefit and exposure for the process.

It was moved by Councilmember Kavanaugh, seconded by Councilmember Hawker that staff's recommendation that the top two consulting firms, BRW., Inc., and the Urban Design Studio, be requested to make an oral presentation to the General Development Committee at the March 15, 1999 General Development Committee meeting.

Carried unanimously.

Chairman Davidson commended Mr. Verploegen on the success of the recent International Downtown Association Conference, which was co-hosted by the Mesa Town Center Corporation and the City of Mesa.

City Manager Charles Luster advised that the March 15, 1999 General Development Committee meeting will be scheduled for 3:00 p.m.

3. Adjournment.

It was moved by Committeemember Kavanaugh, seconded by Committeemember Hawker, that the meeting of the General Development Committee adjourn at 3:41 p.m.

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 1st day of March 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