

COUNCIL MINUTES

May 9, 2002

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 May 9, 2002 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Hawker
Jim Davidson
Bill Jaffa
Pat Pomeroy
Claudia Walters
Mike Whalen

COUNCIL ABSENT

Dennis Kavanaugh

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Debbie Spinner
Barbara Jones

Mayor Hawker excused Councilmember Kavanaugh from the meeting.

1. Hear, discuss and consider an update on the progress towards the development of the San Tan Regional Park Master Plan.

Assistant to the City Manager Jim Huling and Grants Coordinator Jerry Dillehay addressed the Council relative to this agenda item.

Mr. Dillehay provided a brief historical overview and explained that he, along with three representatives from Maricopa County and one representative each from Queen Creek, Chandler and Gilbert, comprise the Joint Planning Committee (JPC), which has been charged with overseeing the development of the San Tan Regional Park Master Plan. Mr. Dillehay explained that since November 15, 2001 (when the Council approved \$40,000 to fund a portion of the estimated \$295,000 cost for the development of the Master Plan) and February 20, 2002 (when the Council authorized the City Manager to execute an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to affirm Mesa's participation in the project), the JPC has developed a project timeline, established a schedule of meetings, and agreed on a process to select the master planning consultant.

Mr. Dillehay displayed a map of the San Tan Regional Park and stated that the 10,000 acre land base lies within the boundaries of Pinal County; that ten years ago, Maricopa County completed a master plan on the Park which has become obsolete due to the surrounding development; that at the JPC's second meeting, an impasse was reached regarding the detailed scope of services and whether the Master Plan study should include an area known as "the fingers;" that in the opinion of the County Parks Department, "the fingers" represent too many challenges for

management, that it should be declared surplus property and not included as part of the study; that it was the consensus of the surrounding municipalities that the area be included in the study due to its proximity to the communities' citizens, and that the resulting vote of the Committee was 4 to 3 in support of including "the fingers" as part of the Master Plan study.

In response to a question from Councilmember Jaffa regarding the potential of any portion of "the fingers" being sold by the County to developers, Mr. Dillehay assured the Council that the area would remain protected during the period of time that the JPC conducts its Master Plan study. He added that four public workshops will be held during the process to solicit input/suggestions from citizens.

Councilmember Jaffa thanked staff for their presentation and requested that Mr. Dillehay provide the Council with periodic updates regarding the progress of the Master Plan.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Davidson regarding the deletion of "the fingers" from the map presented to the Councilmembers, Mr. Dillehay clarified that the document was prepared prior to the JPC's vote to include the area as part of the Master Plan study.

Vice Mayor Davidson urged staff to make the necessary revisions to the map as soon as possible to avoid any misinterpretations by the members of the viewing public.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that all development in the San Tan Regional Park has stopped pending completion of the Master Plan in June 2003, although there may be limited usage, including the horse staging area; the fact that a Park Ranger is now stationed at the facility on a full-time basis, and the fact that Pinal County Supervisor Sandie Smith has spearheaded several citizen groups to conduct cleanup operations in an effort to protect the park.

Vice Mayor Davidson announced that June 1 has been designated as National Trails Day and encouraged staff to utilize the event as a means by which to draw attention to the San Tan Regional Park. He also commended staff for their efforts and hard work relative to this matter.

Mayor Hawker expressed appreciation to Supervisor Smith for her willingness to participate in the master planning process.

2. Hear a status report on water supply issues.

Utilities Director Dave Plumb and Water Resources Coordinator Kathy Sorensen addressed the Council relative to this agenda item.

Mr. Plumb displayed graphics in the Council Chambers and provided an overview of the Salt River Project's (SRP) current water system and its impact on Mesa's water supply. He stated that SRP is currently experiencing the driest four years on record; that despite the current low reservoir levels, SRP has not reduced water allocations to cities, but has increased the ratio of groundwater to surface water in its water allocation; that if the current drought conditions exist beyond 2002, SRP may be required to reduce the amount of deliveries that municipalities receive; that Mesa has the right to access water from the Salt and Verde Rivers through SRP and that this water can only be used within member lands of the Salt River Valley Water Users'

Association, and that these lands are called "On Project" land due to proximity within the Salt River Project.

Mr. Plumb informed the Council that Mesa's "On Project" water is sufficient to meet City demands, and that during most years, Mesa is entitled to approximately 76,000 acre feet per year (AFY) of surface water, as well as 20,000 AFY of groundwater capability through SRP. He added that the City also maintains substantial water supply infrastructure "On Project" including the capacity to treat surface water at the Val Vista Water Treatment Plant and also to service groundwater "On Project" when surface water is in short supply.

Mr. Plumb commented that despite the substantial and unprecedented dry period in Arizona, Mesa maintains adequate well capacity to serve groundwater "On Project" when surface water supplies are limited, can transport Central Arizona Project (CAP) water from "Off Project" to "On Project," and has accumulated sufficient long-term storage credits to offset increased groundwater pumping.

Mr. Plumb concluded his remarks by saying that the City has a diverse water resources portfolio with the necessary infrastructure to ensure reliability. He emphasized that although it is not necessary at the current time to impose severe water restrictions on Mesa residents, it is crucial that everyone continues to use water wisely.

Discussion ensued relative to the potential role of the Northwest Water Reclamation Plant if severe drought conditions were to occur, the City's surface water and groundwater supplies, and Mesa's water table levels.

In response to a question from Councilmember Pomeroy, City Manager Mike Hutchinson explained that the Northwest Water Treatment plant will be completed by June 2002. He added, however, that the facility's landscaping project has been postponed pending a final determination regarding the multipurpose facility to ensure compatible landscaping at both sites.

Councilmember Whalen requested that staff provide the Council with current hydrological studies regarding the City's water tables.

Councilmember Walters spoke in appreciation of the foresight of the organizers of the Salt River Project as well as past City leaders who had the vision to accumulate Mesa's vast water portfolio. She also cautioned that while Mesa does not face a water shortage at the present time, it does not negate the fact that Arizona is in the midst of a drought and that everyone should use water wisely.

In response to a series of questions from Councilmember Walters, Mr. Plumb advised that the level of arsenic in the City's wells is generally in the lower range, with only a few wells exceeding the new arsenic standard. He stated that staff continues to explore a variety of ways in which to resolve this issue.

Further discussion ensued relative to the success of the CAP.

Mayor Hawker thanked staff for their presentation.

3. Hear an update on the 2001-2002 City Council Work Plan.

City Manager Mike Hutchinson addressed the Council relative to this agenda item and reported that it is the intent of staff to provide the Council with periodic updates regarding the status of the various projects which the Council identified in its September 2001 planning session. He explained that although staff is attempting to respond to Council's priorities, the City's current budget constraints have somewhat limited their efforts in that regard.

In response to a question from Mayor Hawker, Deputy City Manager Debbie Dollar explained that long-range forecasting will be presented to the Council during the upcoming Budget Review Session.

4. Hear an update on Mesa's participation in the Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit Project.

Mr. Hutchinson provided the Council with a brief update of this agenda item and reported that staff is continuing to finalize governance documents with Phoenix and Tempe and potentially other Valley communities with regard to the Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit Project. He explained that it is the intent of staff to present the Council with the document for its review in the upcoming weeks. Mr. Hutchinson stated that staff will also present the financial plan for the first 1.1 miles of the light rail system during the upcoming Budget Review Session.

Mayor Hawker informed the Council that he will be attending a meeting today of the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) in which one of the topics of discussion will include the purchase and/or design of the light rail transit vehicles. He advised that in the past, he has voted in opposition to such items and will continue to do so until the Council has the opportunity to consider the financial plan and also to consider whether it wishes to proceed forward with the 1.1 miles of the light rail system.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whalen, Mr. Hutchinson explained that the light rail project will not succeed unless Federal funding is made available to the local communities. He added that it is imperative that local officials remain vigilant in their pursuit of the area's Congressional delegation to impress upon them the need for a light rail system in the Phoenix metropolitan region.

Vice Mayor Davidson stated the opinion that local elected officials should take a strong leadership role with regard to this matter and not wait for the Federal government to take the lead.

Councilmember Jaffa voiced a variety of concerns relative to successfully linking the light rail system with the bus system to accommodate the travel needs of Mesa citizens.

In response to Councilmember Jaffa's concerns, Vice Mayor Davidson commented that staff has worked diligently to develop an overall, comprehensive transportation plan to ensure that the City has a coordinated, multi-modal approach to moving individuals throughout the region.

5. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of boards and committees.

- a. Downtown Development Committee meeting held April 18, 2002.

It was moved by Vice Mayor Davidson, seconded by Councilmember Walters, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Mayor Hawker declared the motion carried unanimously by those present voting.

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

There were no reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

7. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Mike Hutchinson stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Monday, May 13, 2002, 4:30 p.m. – Transportation Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 15, 2002, 6:00 p.m. – Joint Dinner with Chandler City Council

Thursday, May 16, 2002, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Thursday, May 16, 2002, 9:30 a.m. – Police Committee Meeting

Monday, May 20, 2002, 9:30 a.m. – Groundbreaking on the Mesa Arts Center

Monday, May 20, 2002, TBA – Study Session

Monday, May 20, 2002, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

Thursday, May 23, 2002, 7:30 a.m. – Budget Review Session

Thursday, May 23, 2002, 6:00 p.m. – Farewell Reception for Outgoing Councilmembers

8. Prescheduled public opinion appearances.

There were no prescheduled public opinion appearances.

9. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

10. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 8:25 a.m.

KENO HAWKER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BARBARA JONES, 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 9th day of May 2002. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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