



COUNCIL MINUTES

February 10, 2010

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Joint Meeting with the Dobson Ranch Homeowners' Association Board of Directors at the La Casita Community Center on February 10, 2010 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Scott Smith
Alex Finter
Dina Higgins
Kyle Jones
Dennis Kavanaugh
Scott Somers

STAFF PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Shelly Allen
Scott Butler
Dan Cleavenger
Linda Crocker
Miranda Culver
Jack Friedline
Beth Huning
Lenny Hulme
Kari Kent
Natalie Lewis
Kathy MacDonald
Charlotte McDermott
John Meza
Vicki Myers
Jerry Quarles
Bryan Raines
Patricia Sorensen
Debbie Spinner
Chad Townley
Mark Wesselman
Christine Zielonka

DOBSON RANCH BOARD PRESENT

Sandra Murray
Ted Disbrow
Joanne Smith
Lynda Bailey
Glenn Kirk
Frank Mizner
Mike Wall
Guy Wolf

DOBSON RANCH STAFF PRESENT

Michele Ray-Brethower-E.D.
Faye Bristow
Donna Chapman
Roger Singleton
Kimi Towery

CANDIDATES FOR THE BOARD

Chuck Fletcher
James Palmer

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Executive Director Michele Ray-Brethower introduced Mayor Scott Smith to the attendees and welcomed him and members of the Mesa staff to the meeting. Everyone in attendance at the meeting introduced themselves.

2. Update on Economic Development Activities.

- Economic Development Activities/New Businesses
- Fiesta District
- ASU Urban Planning

Mayor Smith stated that Dobson Ranch is a leader and has “raised the bar” as far as quality communities. He said that it has been in existence for 36 years and continues to provide an excellent quality of life for its residents. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to once again meet with the members of the Dobson Association Board of Directors and noted the excellent partnership that exists between that entity and the City of Mesa.

Assistant Economic Development Director Shelly Allen addressed the group and noted that good things are happening – the former Motorola building (Broadway/101 area) is being actively marketed and a business has moved in with 150 members. She reported that large investments are being made in the Fiesta District. She advised that staff maintains a listing of available inventory in the area for marketing purposes and added that tomorrow the City Council will consider part of the Fiesta District Guidelines, which will enable staff to prioritize and strategize. She discussed branding, signage, pedestrian nodes and connecting Mesa Community College to Banner Hospital and the Fiesta District.

Community Development and Sustainability Director Christine Zielonka advised that one of the opportunities they have had was to work with ASU and said that they have developed a partnership with the Urban Development Group at ASU. She discussed the planning proposal that was undertaken from Dobson to the Fiesta Mall and reported that the Mayor had challenged them to see what they could do along Southern Avenue.

Mayor Smith informed the attendees that he has talked to many people about the Fiesta District and even went to the Conference of Mayors and presented the area to the whole team. He said that he received more implementable ideas from the ASU students than he received at the conference.

Ms. Zielonka noted that they took really small areas and had some very specific ideas. She added that along the north side of Southern she believes there will be some great ideas to change the use (from retail). She advised that staff is in the process of updating the Zoning Code to provide more flexibility and allow more mixed use. She emphasized that from a regulatory point of view they want to make it more flexible

Director Frank Mizner reported that the bike paths along the canals (southern edge of western canal), which serves as a backdoor to Mesa, needs improvements – fences are down, people are dumping garbage, etc. He said that they need to take a look at the homes in that area. He further stated that sign enforcement needs improvement; some of the major intersections need attention (Baseline/Dobson, etc.) and noted that there are many illegal signs in place.

Mayor Smith commented that self-enforcement worked for a long time but someone “always messes up.” He also discussed the issue of flag signs.

Discussion ensued regarding an upcoming partnership with the City to clean up that area (a proposal is expected to come forth in the near future).

Vice President Ted Disbrow asked whether the City considered placing the new Cubs stadium in the Dobson area and Mayor Smith advised that the challenge is finding a piece of land that is big enough to accommodate the stadium.

Ms. Ray-Brethower brought up the subject of Alma School and Southern area and the Mayor stated that the area is a huge frustration to everyone. He said that he, City Manager Chris Brady and Councilmember Kavanaugh have talked with the owners of the property and explained that it is family owned and they have been extremely unresponsive. He pointed out that the current economic situation does not present much incentive for anyone to take the steps they can and should take. He stated that the City is looking into providing some motivation to get it going and added that the City has been busy with the Cubs over the last two weeks and now it is time to focus back on that important area.

Councilmember Kavanaugh interjected that ASU did four different site plans for that area and advised that he spoke with representatives of the Grace Company and they said they are looking at a development plan now.

Mayor Smith emphasized the importance of getting new owners in there and generating new thinking, different visions. He said that retail is not necessarily the “end all.” He stated that ASU was told to make Southern Avenue something unique and special.

3. Police Department Update.

- Crime Statistics
- Dobson Substation
- Police Chief Recruitment

Police Commander, Dobson Branch, Mark Wesselman, said that the past year has been a great one and they have realized a decrease in Part 1 Crimes (9%). He noted that a majority of the calls received are for disturbance. He provided additional statistics to the group and said that Dobson Ranch has a dedicated group of officers working in the area who take their jobs very seriously.

Discussion ensued relative to vandalism incidents and the fact that when officers find that a certain problem exists in a particular area, they go out into the field where the activity is occurring, do briefings, are extremely visual in the area and then are sent to other areas as well to expand their visibility in the community; the graffiti program; the fact that one of the vandals was caught this year; the fact that the Dobson Ranch Advisory Board is going to select a day and distribute crime prevention information door-to-door after first announcing that this will take place; Chief Meyers' comment that vandalism is a City-wide problem, particularly with the current vacant home situation and the importance of crime prevention; on-going efforts to identify an appropriate location for a substation centrally located in the Fiesta District and Mr. Brady's hope that within the next thirty days they will have a better idea of their options; difficulties associated with finding motivated sellers and the fact that Fiesta Mall and Mesa Community College would both like to have a police presence in that area.

Mayor Smith stated that it would be easy to find a utilitarian site but they want to maximize the investment and provide/meet utilitarian and community needs. He commented on the fact that land owners don't want to sell at this point in time, particularly the Grace family.

In response to a question relative to why the current sub-station became over-crowded, Chief Meyers stated that the City is much more proactive now rather than reactive. She noted that the building was originally designed as a credit union or bank, a place where officers could park and write up their reports. She encouraged the attendees to visit the current station and see for themselves exactly what the situation is.

Mr. Brady discussed the Police Chief recruitment and stated that they have gone through an extensive process and have narrowed the list down to three finalists, Assistant Chief John Meza and two candidates from Phoenix. He said that he will be interviewing the three candidates this week and will make a recommendation to the City Council in the very near future.

4. Transportation Update.

- Dobson Road/Guadalupe Intersection
- Dobson & Baseline Bus Pull Out
- Street Landscaping

Transportation Director Dan Cleavenger, Deputy Transportation Director Lenny Hulme and City Engineer Beth Huning addressed the attendees relative to this agenda item.

Mr. Cleavenger advised that the Guadalupe & Dobson Road project was funded by Proposition 400 up to 70% and the City now has money for additional left-turn lanes, bus pullouts, etc. He reported that the current cost is \$1.7 million and said that this is an excellent price.

Ms. Huning stated that construction will start in the near future and discussed the proposed schedule. She encouraged everyone to call her directly if they have any questions and expressed appreciation to everyone who supported the bond project.

Mr. Cleavenger said that he will make sure that Dobson Ranch is okay as far as the wall.

Discussion ensued relative to the southbound bus pull out shelter, Dobson & Baseline, and noted that work will begin around March 1st and will take about 30 days to construct; Mr. Hulme discussed street landscaping, weed control efforts that are underway, irrigation and the fact that the community's systems are 30 years old, the fact that no plan is in place for landscaping replacement – it is "fix as you go," and the fact that no watering takes place during the winter months.

Mr. Hulme expressed the opinion that maintenance of the Los Lagos Vista area should be the responsibility of the property owners. He agreed that the issue has to be addressed and said that he would work with the Association to see if they can come up with some solution.

Additional discussion took place at this time regarding graffiti and the City's goal of responding to complaints within two days of receiving calls and the fact that they receive over 4,000 calls quarterly.

5. Parks & Recreation Update.

- Lake Park Village Moat
- Dobson Ranch Park Irrigation System Upgrades

It was announced that next week the City's new Parks & Recreation Director will assume his duties.

Discussion took place regarding the fact that the original lining at the Lake Park Village Moat that runs around a condominium complex has eroded the landscape buffer between the golf course and the waterline and the Lakeside Park HOA has been contacted and asked to provide the City with their plan of attack regarding this issue; the fact that at the Library and park area, irrigation schedules have been increased and because of water pressure limitations the water is running 24 hours a day in the summer in order to maintain the turf; the importance of looking at how they are using potable water and the fact that the park land will be able to be used more.

Boardmember Mizner asked if any thought had been given to taking out some of the turf that is not being used for picnicking or recreational activities and was advised that that is typically done and staff will look into the issue.

Mayor Smith commented that it costs a lot of money to transform from grass to granite and added that sufficient money is not available to do what they need to do. He said that he hopes that in the next year or two they can do something with the parks, from pools to upgrades, so they can be more efficient and save money. He encouraged those present to provide any input they may have.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact that reverse irrigation saves a significant amount of water and that 65,000 gallons a day are being used for the eight lakes.

6. Update on Projects.

- Waveyard
- Gaylord
- Chicago Cubs
- MCC Athletic Complex

Assistant to the City Manager Natalie Lewis informed the attendees that the Waveyard developers are very passionate about the project and want to move forward. She explained that they were moving forward when the economy took a dive and noted that project financing is a difficult task right now. She reported that one major thing they were required to do was purchase the land from the City (120 acres) by January 6th of this year and they requested an extension. She advised that the City Council and the City Manager extended the agreement and now the purchase must be made by July 2011. She said that they have been asked to provide quarterly updates to the City Manager's office and the community at large beginning in March. She stressed the importance of remaining whole and not having the park or golf course touched until they can prove to the City that they can do the job right.

Mayor Smith discussed the Gaylord project and noted that the economy rules at this point in time. He added that it is still listed on the books as a project and they will just have to wait and see. He reported that the cancellations of conventions have leveled off and added that that is a very good sign but it has

to get a lot better before they can move forward on this project. He said that they should begin by the start of 2011 and there will probably be talks about an extension.

Mayor Smith also discussed the Chicago Cubs and advised that they recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) giving Mesa the exclusive negotiation rights for spring training. He added that next they need to have the Legislature pass enabling legislation through tourism mechanisms. He reported that Mesa's total new cost to build is approximately \$84 million (the City is capped at that amount). He said that it will cost approximately \$28 million to develop a dual-use park and added that there are certain people who have come out in opposition to legislation – they want the money. He stated that it is going to be a "dog fight" and some people would rather kill the Cubs' plan than not get what they want. He urged everyone present to let their legislators know what it is they want. He advised that he does not agree with the Diamondbacks' position and noted that they are upset that they could not get anyone to build them a stadium other than the Indian community. He reported that the Cubs generate significant dollars a year and have tens of thousands of fans.

Mayor Smith said that Mesa's number one priority is to keep the Cubs in Arizona – it is a Cactus League issue – 22% of the tickets. He noted that one-third of the economic activity is generated by the Cubs and added that if the Cubs go to Florida the fans will go there too. He advised that approximately 70% of the Cubs' fans at HoHoKam are from out-of-state.

City Manager Christopher Brady commented on the MCC Athletic Complex and stated that the City has been approached by MCC and MPS about building an events center on the MCC campus. He advised that the issue is at a very preliminary stage – some concept plans are going to be developed to see how it would lay out. He stated the opinion that it is an interesting concept but they also have to see how the financing will play out. He told the attendees that he would keep them updated on this issue.

Mayor Smith advised that the proposed complex would have 5,000 to 7,000 seats and would be used almost 200 nights a year, but how to pay for it is the question that needs to be addressed.

Mayor Smith thanked everyone for their attendance, their valuable input and their consistent support and willingness to work with the City, which benefits the entire community.

7. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Joint Meeting with the Dobson Ranch Homeowners' Association Board of Directors adjourned at 9:23 a.m.

SCOTT SMITH, MAYOR

ATTEST:

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Joint Meeting with the Dobson Ranch Homeowners' Association Board of Directors held on the 10TH day of February, 2010. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2010

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK