



## AD HOC REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

August 10, 2004

The Ad Hoc Redevelopment Advisory Committee met in the Mesa City Plaza Building, 20 E. Main Street, Room 170, on August 10, 2004 at 5:35 p.m.

### COMMITTEE PRESENT

Rex Griswold, Chairman  
Steve Adams  
Alex Finter  
Art Jordan  
Dave Richins  
Chuck Riekena  
Joe Shipley

### COMMITTEE ABSENT

Louise Daggs  
Alan Rash  
Jordan Rose  
Bev Tittle-Baker

### STAFF PRESENT

Paul Wenbert  
Shelly Allen  
Lisha Garcia  
Pat Granillo  
Kit Kelly  
Kari Kent  
Patrick Murphy  
Gordon Sheffield  
Terry Williams

### OTHERS PRESENT

Karen LaFrance

1. Approve minutes of June 22, 2004 meeting.

It was moved by Committeemember Jordan, seconded by Committeemember Richins, that the June 22, 2004 minutes be approved.

Carried unanimously.

Committeemember Adams advised that Committeemember Rose requested that the minutes be amended to include the following language on Page 4, Paragraph 2: "Committeemember Rose added that while she does not agree with the eminent domain aspect of redevelopment, in her opinion, the Redevelopment Office **staff**, with **their** emphasis on economic development, is a great asset to the City of Mesa."

Committeemember Jordan amended his motion that the minutes of the June 22, 2004 meeting be approved as amended.

Committeemember Adams seconded the amended motion.

Carried unanimously.

2. Hear a presentation about proposed infill development policy.

Building Safety Director Terry Williams and Senior Planner Gordon Sheffield addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Mr. Sheffield referred the Committeemembers to a report entitled "Infill Working Committee Final Report" and highlighted the process undertaken by the Infill Working Committee (IWC) which resulted in four key areas of recommendation relative to infill related projects in the City of Mesa. He reported that the group, composed of individuals currently serving on various land-development related boards, met on a monthly basis for approximately one year. He advised that during that process, the IWC concluded, among other things, that the west and central portions of Mesa are largely developed, with some notable exceptions; that the areas in northeast and southeast Mesa are rapidly developing; that large residential DMP sites (outside of the GM site) are no longer available; and that with the City's incurring build-out, development will once again focus on the center of the City as opposed to its outer edges.

Mr. Sheffield outlined examples of present and future development opportunities which have and will occur as a result of build-out including the commercial/retail area of Stapley Drive and US 60 corridor; West Main Street - Light Rail Line, Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Dobson Road/Main Street intersection; Town Center Area; Riverview/Hurley Farm Site; and the connection of large land uses located along the Fiesta Mall/Southern Avenue corridor. He also discussed various perceived barriers associated with infill development.

In response to a question from Committeemember Adams regarding the definition of "infill development," Mr. Sheffield clarified that in speaking with individuals from other municipalities, he has received various definitions relative to land uses. He cited, by way of example, that Chandler defines infill as owner-occupied housing, whereas Peoria considers such development as commercial uses exclusively. Mr. Sheffield stated that Mesa, on the other hand, is not trying to segregate any particular land use and has defined the term as anything that involves a bypass property or economic redevelopment.

Mr. Sheffield briefly highlighted the IWC's four recommendations and alternatives for each recommendation as follows:

1. **Use existing planning and engineering related programs and processes** including: A.) Increasing awareness and use of Bonus Intensity Zone (BIZ) and Planned Area Development (PAD) Overlay Districts, and the use of Council Use Permits (CUPs) authorizing land use projects; B.) Increasing awareness and use of the Development Incentive Permit (DIP) and Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit (SCIP) review processes; and C.) Providing better awareness of existing appeal processes (including both zoning and non-zoning related appeals.)

Discussion ensued relative to approved DIP and SCIP cases at various locations throughout the City.

2. **Develop modifications to existing zoning ordinance requirements** including: A.) Develop “proportional” modifications to existing development standards in an effort to permit economically competitive development for smaller land parcels; B.) Modify the list of permitted uses in zoning districts to create opportunities for “by right” mixed land use zoning districts; i.e., permit multiple residential uses in commercial districts or possibly permit small service or office uses such as barber shops and beauty salons in residential districts through the approval of Special Use Permits. Part of this discussion should also be focused on the development of a TOD ordinance to take advantage of opportunities for land use changes along the forthcoming light rail line on West Main Street.
3. **Public Hearing Process Improvements**, in particular: A) The use of a zoning hearing officer for minor rezoning and site plan related hearing requirements; and B.) Concurrent review of zoning and design review cases for “consent” type proposals. To a certain extent, this particular suggestion already takes place.

Mr. Sheffield commented that the purpose of this recommendation is to reduce the time necessary for an applicant to proceed through the hearing process and obtain final decisions by advisory boards or the City Council. He explained that the current timetable for cases to be heard is as follows: Planning & Zoning Board, four to six months; Design Review Board, two to six months; and Board of Adjustment, five to seven months.

Chairman Griswold noted that in the past, he has received complaints from developers concerning difficulties they encountered in trying to meet with staff to determine whether a particular project would be viable prior to expending large sums of money on the project. He stated that in the past two years, such complaints have decreased considerably and he credits staff for the implementation of various processes to assist the developers in that regard (i.e., pre-submittal process and preliminary investigations).

Committeemember Jordan commented that although there is a process in place whereby an inexperienced person can ask staff general questions and obtain feedback regarding the development of a proposed project, he questioned the quality of such a project without the assistance of, for example, a registered architect and landscape designer. He stated that he is aware of instances wherein an individual has purchased vacant land in the City, obtained the necessary funding for a project and considered himself a developer, despite the fact that he had little or no experience in the field. Committeemember Jordan noted that such a scenario is insulting to professional architects and engineers who have made their living in the business and have years’ of experience.

Further discussion ensued relative to the City’s current plan review process; and the fact that the Building Safety Division currently utilizes outsource companies as a “relief valve” to assist staff in plan reviews, depending on the volume of staff’s workload.

Deputy City Manager Paul Wenbert explained that a new service, Coordinating Development Projects, was created approximately two years ago to help developers through the City’s development processes. He commented that along with this new service, four staff positions, Development Project Coordinators, were also created to focus solely on assisting developers and/or persons with development related issues.

**4. Pre-plan Neighborhood/Transportation Corridors and the creation of Special Districts:**

- A) Specific Plans are a tool used to implement general plans, but are designed to address the specific land uses and development standards of a specific geographic area. This enabling statute permits a city to address any land use or site related development issues with requirements unique to the area governed by that plan.
- B) Infill Development Incentive Districts (IDIDs) are similar to a Specific Plan, but take the concept one step further by also allowing a City Council to permit some waivers of development-related fees, such as development impact fees or building permits.
- C) Develop, consider and adopt studies (i.e., Specific Plans and IDIDs) that focus on transportation-related corridors. The IWC identified the West Main Street light rail line, West Broadway Road, West University Drive and all of Country Club Drive. Other corridors that may warrant study may be identified later, but these four were brought up initially by the IWC as worthy of study, empirically different from one another, as well as different from other areas of Mesa.
- D) As part of the implementation of this recommendation, it is also recommended that a Planning Specialist be hired. This position would be filled by a person with specific knowledge of the development of infill-related policies, IDIDs, specific plans and the application of these policies on infill-related sites. This person would have the capacity to understand the difficulties inherent in the development of infill sites and provide suggestions to facilitate the development of the project.

Additional discussion ensued relative to actions undertaken by staff with regard to infill development in Mesa including the adoption of the Rehabilitation Code and I-Codes; developed standardized review methods for non-standard engineering appeals; modified criteria for undergrounding electric lines; standardized concurrent review of Design Review and Zoning/Site Plan modification cases; and the utilization of DIP and SCIP processes.

Mr. Sheffield concluded his remarks by highlighting additional actions necessary to implement the IWC's recommendations including, but not limited to, presenting the recommendations to the City Council; hiring an Infill Specialist; considering zoning ordinance modifications and the zoning hearing officer process; and obtaining City Council authorization to determine priorities for a neighborhood study, Specific Plan and IDID methodology, target incentives and the possible enactment of TOD districts.

Discussion ensued among the Committeemembers relative to the functions of the Planning Division and the Town Center Development Office; the fact that both entities were previously under the supervision of the Community Development Department, but became separate areas of responsibility due to an organizational restructuring; that while both departments offer similar services, the Town Center Development Office, whose primary focus is the downtown area, provides planning and redevelopment functions; the proactive roles of the Town Center Development Office and Economic Development Office in recruiting redevelopment and development opportunities; and the challenges faced by Mesa and other communities in encouraging developers to build quality and visually appealing projects.

Further discussion ensued among the Committeemembers relative to the level of customer service provided by the Town Center Development Office and the Planning Department. Mr. Sheffield explained that the Planning Department provides services relating to planning issues

and planning processes, but does not coordinate other development related processes or issues.

Town Center Development Administrator Shelly Allen clarified that the Town Center Development Office provides planning, economic development and project coordinator functions and also serves as a single point of contact for a developer or a property owner working on a project within the redevelopment area. She added that the Town Center Development Office also provides a proactive type of service by coordinating between various City departments relating to development issues.

3. Hear a presentation about neighborhood development corporations.

Karen LaFrance, Executive Director of Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO), addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item. She referred to a Power Point presentation and highlighted various aspects of Community Development Corporations (CDCs). Ms. LaFrance explained that a CDC is generally defined as a tool, methodology or process to engage both private and public sector in revitalization activities and investment. She also provided a brief historical overview of CDCs and the manner in which they are evaluated by the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED).

Ms. LaFrance further advised that CDCs are defined as nonprofit tax-exempt corporations that are geographically focused or focused on a particular disadvantaged population group. She commented that CDCs have community-based Boards of Directors and that the mission of a CDC is to achieve community economic and social betterment by empowering citizens and/or areas which are not in the mainstream. She added that CDCs are strategic and comprehensive entities and focus on difficult initiatives that can change communities in fundamental ways.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that CDCs are located in low or moderate income communities or populations (urban, rural or both); that they seek and attract private and public sector partnerships to effect community change; that the majority of CDCs' Boards of Directors are residents and/or businesses in the specific geographic area or persons representative of the background/status of the particular disadvantaged population; and the methods by which CDCs engage in strategic planning.

Ms. LaFrance outlined the following advantages of a CDC:

- Directly accountable to community and/or population of focus or area served.
- Tax exempt, existing formally for a legally recognized charitable purpose.
- Can do everything private for-profit developer corporations can do with the exception of distributing profits.
- Not politically aligned.
- Works on a collaborative model of behavior.
- Is an accepted "best practice" model in the community development field and has access to financial resources that other sectors do not.

Ms. LaFrance highlighted the following disadvantages of a CDC:

- Sometimes evaluated by constituents regarding unrealistic deliverables and impossible timetables.
- Is necessarily process-oriented to do its work with full community commitment.
- Perceived as a competing entity to government and established social service and economic development organizations.
- Often under-funded like small businesses are under-capitalized.

Further discussion ensued relative to community and external funding sources for CDCs; the fact that CDCs can often receive direct funding streams unavailable to government, other nonprofits and for-profits entities; examples of various CDC models (Mon Valley Initiative, Multi-County CDCs in Rural America, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, and Local Initiatives Support Corporation); and the Community Reinvestment Act.

In response to a question from Chairman Griswold, Ms. LaFrance clarified that if private stakeholders in a neighborhood wished to establish a CDC, local public sector facilitators could assist in that endeavor in a variety of ways including assisting with the writing of bylaws, networking, and conducting research.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the manner in which Mesa nonprofit corporations vie for Federal funding, which is ultimately approved by the City Council on a yearly basis; the potential benefits to Mesa neighborhoods in creating a CDC in order to achieve community, economic and social betterment by empowering the residents in the area; and the possible role of the City to assist neighborhoods in attaining such goals.

Neighborhood Services Manager Lisha Garcia explained that some of the neighborhoods in Mesa are so well organized that they could conceivably create their own CDC. She commented that these neighborhoods recognize their stakeholders, have a geographically targeted area, identify their specific issues, and can go forward and are willing to raise money to resolve their specific issues. Ms. Garcia also stated that one of the down sides to CDCs is that sometimes they are so busy chasing dollars that they lose focus of the coordination efforts it takes to resolve their issues. She indicated that the City's role in these areas is to help bridge gaps. Ms. Garcia added that neither the cities nor the CDCs can be all things to all people; however, the ideal relationship between cities and CDCs is a partnership.

#### 4. Other items.

Chairman Griswold advised that at the August 24, 2004 meeting, he looks forward to the Committee discussing its preliminary recommendations, which will ultimately be forwarded on to the City Council; the format for the Committee's final report; and any suggestions regarding additional research that may be necessary in order to finalize the report. He encouraged the members to e-mail himself or City staff regarding any potential recommendations, ideas or input they wish to discuss with their fellow Committeemembers at the upcoming meeting.

Committeemember Richins stressed that he would not want the Committeemembers to make recommendations to the Council without having specific implementation components for such recommendations.

Mr. Wenbert reviewed the following schedule for future agendas:

- August 24 – Impact of Proposition 105 on use of eminent domain for land acquisition for redevelopment and Institute of Justice’s perspective on redevelopment
- September 14 – Public input
- September 28 – Committee recommendation

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Ad Hoc Redevelopment Advisory Committee adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Ad Hoc Redevelopment Advisory Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of August 2004. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK