

COUNCIL MINUTES

April 29, 2004

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 April 29, 2004 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker
Rex Griswold
Kyle Jones
Dennis Kavanaugh
Janie Thom
Claudia Walters
Mike Whalen

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Debbie Spinner
Barbara Jones

Mayor Hawker excused Councilmember Whalen from the beginning of the meeting. He arrived at 7:33 a.m.

1. Review items on the agenda for the May 3, 2004 Regular Council meeting.

All of the items on the agenda were reviewed among Council and staff and the following was noted:

Conflicts of interest declared: 4i (Hawker)

Items removed from the consent agenda: 6b (Thom)

2. Discuss and consider a proposal for a free admission day at the Mesa Southwest Museum and the Arizona Museum for Youth.

Interim Cultural Director Gerry Dillehay recognized the efforts of Southwest Museum Administrator Tom Wilson and Youth Museum Administrator Barbara Meyerson for their leadership, which contributed to the record attendance at the Southwest Museum and the expansion of the Museum for Youth.

Mr. Dillehay reported that over 59 percent of the 10,000 museums in the country participate in a "free day" program. He stated that the "free day" would be a gift to the community and would provide an opportunity for everyone to participate in the museum experience. Mr. Dillehay recommended that the "free museum day" be scheduled on the second Sunday of every month

for a six-month trial period, July through December. He advised that at the end of the trial period, the data would be evaluated to determine the number of new visitors attracted to the museums and the number of economically challenged families attending on the free admission days. Mr. Dillehay noted that increased gift shop sales could offset the loss of gate revenue.

Vice Mayor Kavanaugh expressed support for the proposal, and added that the "free day" program is an excellent marketing tool.

It was moved by Vice Mayor Kavanaugh, seconded by Councilmember Walters, that the recommendation of staff be approved.

Councilmember Griswold also expressed support for the proposal.

In response to Councilmember Thom's question relative to the cost of data analysis, Mr. Dillehay stated that several evaluators utilized by Community Services have provided cost estimates of \$3,000 to \$6,000, depending on the amount of survey work completed by staff and volunteers. He noted that the Cultural Advisory Board stressed the importance of utilizing an independent evaluator in order to obtain unbiased information. Mr. Dillehay added that if the Council approves the proposal, staff plans to seek grants and partnerships from various community organizations in order to offset the expenses.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the subject proposal targets economically disadvantaged families; that Sunday provides the best opportunity for the target population to enjoy the museum; that late afternoon weekday museum programs have experienced poor attendance due to the fact that typically both parents are employed and unable to provide transportation; that school field trips account for 50 to 60 percent of weekday attendance at the Museum for Youth and that attendance is lower in the afternoons; and that during the Southwest Museum's "T-Rex" exhibit, attendance increased approximately 2.5 times over the same period in the prior year.

Mayor Hawker called for the vote.

Carried unanimously.

Mayor Hawker thanked staff for the presentation.

3. Further discussion and consideration of freeway landmark monument signs.

City Manager Mike Hutchinson stated that the introduction of the ordinance that establishes the Special Use Permit process is planned for the May 3rd Council meeting followed by Council consideration of adoption on May 17th. He advised that the guidelines included in the Council's packet would also be scheduled for adoption by resolution at the May 17th Council meeting. Mr. Hutchinson added that staff was seeking Council direction relative to any changes or additions to the ordinance or guidelines.

Mayor Hawker stated that citizens contacting his office expressed concern relative to the fact that the proposal should address the issues of sight line and signage visibility that does not obstruct the view corridor.

In response to Councilmember Walters' question regarding the maximum allowable sign height, Zoning/Civil Hearing Administrator John Gendron stated that a maximum height limit has been omitted in order to provide the Council with decision-making flexibility. He advised that the subject proposal is similar to the procedures adopted by other Valley communities, by which large signs are considered individually and approved utilizing a development agreement or a Planned Area Development (PAD).

Mr. Gendron advised that staff's original proposal provided for a Special Use Permit processed through the Board of Adjustment that included an ordinance with signage parameters relative to the amount of separation between signs and the height of signs. He stated that staff was directed by Council to prepare a process that addressed freeway landmark monument signs utilizing a Council Use Permit and policy guidelines. Mr. Gendron explained that an ordinance is very rigid, but guidelines provide flexibility, and he outlined the parameters of the guidelines requested by the Council. He reported that the DMB sign is proposed to be 750 square feet in area at a height of 90 feet.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Whalen, Mr. Gendron advised that the *City Code* has prohibited off-site signs since 1986. He stated that the Council could amend the ordinance, but he cautioned that such action could also result in unintended consequences relative to billboards and other types of signs.

Councilmember Griswold expressed the opinion that the subject proposal is a good first step, and that changes could be implemented in the future if necessary.

Mayor Hawker stated that a possible unintended consequence of permitting freeway signage is that existing businesses would be encouraged to relocate to sites adjacent to a freeway. He expressed concern that competition with other communities would result in a proliferation of signs.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the Board of Adjustment and staff will follow the normal approval process when considering the sign for DMB's Auto Center at Superstition Springs; and that the Board of Adjustment understands that their decision relative to the DMB Auto Center sign will impact future decisions related to this issue.

Assistant City Attorney Monica Michelizzi stated that the Board of Adjustment operates in accordance with Council policies.

Councilmember Walters expressed the opinion that the Board of Adjustment is fully aware of the fact that decisions made relative to the DMB sign will impact future signage decisions, and she added that car dealerships would relocate to the freeways regardless of the signage. She noted that the architectural design elements and the masonry structure required for freeway landmark signs would reassure neighbors and residents regarding future signs.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact only two locations on the Red Mountain freeway presently qualify for freeway landmark monument signs, the parcel where Dobson Road intersects with the 202 and a parcel at Higley Road presently owned by Sunshine Acres.

Mr. Gendron asked if the Council had any recommendations for changes to the guidelines, and he clarified that the subject proposal would utilize a Council Use Permit. He explained that the DMB sign presently before the Board of Adjustment is being considered under the existing process.

Mayor Hawker thanked Mr. Gendron for providing the information.

4. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of boards and committees.

- a. Design Review Board meeting held April 7, 2004.
- b. Historic Preservation Committee meeting held March 11 and retreat held March 6, 2004.
- c. Utility Committee meeting held April 22, 2004.

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

Carried unanimously.

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

Vice Mayor Kavanaugh:	Park Place Neighborhood Pathway Dedication
Councilmember Griswold:	Cell Tower Meeting Chamber of Commerce Leadership Luncheon 50 th Anniversary of Multi-Generational Center Financing the Future Committee Meeting
Councilmember Walters:	Park Place Neighborhood Meeting
Councilmember Whalen:	Cops & Robbers Golf Tournament Banner Health Foundation Meeting
Councilmember Jones	Financing the Future Committee Tour of the Utilities Department

6. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

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

Monday, May 3, 2004, TBA – Study Session

Monday, May 3, 2004, 5:45 p.m. – Regular City Council Meeting

Wednesday, May 5, 2004, 7:00 a.m. – Public Safety Foundation Breakfast

Thursday, May 6, 2004, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Thursday, May 6, 2004, 9:30 a.m. – General Development Committee

Monday, May 10, 2004, 7:30 a.m. – Budget Hearing

Tuesday, May 11, 2004, 7:30 a.m. – Budget Hearing

Thursday, May 13, 2004, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Thursday, May 13, 2004, 8:00 a.m. – Budget Hearing

7. Prescheduled public opinion appearances.

There were no prescheduled public opinion appearances.

8. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

9. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 9:30 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 29th day of April 2004. 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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