

COUNCIL MINUTES

December 10, 1998

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 December 10, 1998 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Wayne Brown
Jim Davidson
John Giles
Keno Hawker
Bill Jaffa
Dennis Kavanaugh
Pat Pomeroy

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster
Wayne Balmer
Neal Beets
Denise Bleyle
Jamie Brennen
Dennis Compton
Linda Crocker
Jerry Dillehay
Gerry Gerber
Joe Holmwood
Mike Hutchinson
Barbara Jones
Harry Kent
Wayne Korinek
Ron Krosting
Dorinda Larsen
Greg Marek
Jeff Martin
Frank Mizner
Keith Nath
Ellen Pence
Bryan Raines
Andrea Rasizer
Tom Remes
Jenny Sheppard

STAFF PRESENT (CONT.)

Jan Strauss
Ursula Strephans
Doug Tessendorf
Mindy White

OTHERS PRESENT

Florence Adams
Lynda Bailey
Teresa Brice-Heames
Theresa Carmichael
Vince DeBella
Lindy Funkhauser
Alan Heslop
Pat Langdon
Tray C. Mead
Robbie Sherwood
Claudia Walters
Marilyn Wennerstrom
Tom Verploegen
Others

1. Hear a preliminary report on Council districting.

Council District Commission Chairman Pat Langdon, Commission Members Lynda Bailey, and Teresa Brice-Heames, and the consultants from National Demographics, Inc., Florence Adams and Alan Heslop addressed the Council relative to this agenda item.

Dr. Heslop commented on the preparation and distribution of citizens kits and the fact that extensive citizen input was solicited at numerous public hearings held throughout the City. Dr. Heslop reported that as of the December 1, 1998 deadline to submit proposed plans, the City had received 35 proposals in addition to 30 other plans which were submitted by high school students.

Dr. Heslop reported that each of the plans were logged in by City staff, faxed to National Demographics Corporation and then returned to the person submitting the proposal. Dr. Heslop added that citizens who submitted a plan received comments from he and Dr. Adams as well as an analysis of their proposed plan broken down by district.

Dr. Adams informed the Council that a recommended district plan and two alternatives have been forwarded to them for their review and consideration. Dr. Adams briefly reviewed the concept plans, commented that the plans represent what has emerged as a result of the citizen input process and said that revisions are likely to occur. Dr. Adams added that an additional five public hearings have been scheduled and encouraged the members of the Council to provide input and participate in the process.

The members of the Council commended Dr. Adams, Dr. Heslop, the District Commission members and staff on their efforts to date.

2. Consider a proposal to select an urban design consultant for Town Center.

Redevelopment Director Greg Marek addressed the Council regarding this agenda item. Mayor Brown requested that Downtown Development Committeemembers Claudia Walters and Vince DiBella join Mr. Marek and stated that the concept he wants to discuss may involve them as well.

Mayor Brown commented on a recommendation that was previously offered by Committeemember Walters regarding the development of a task force. Mayor Brown commented on the fact that a General Development Committee, (GDC) made up of members of the Council, (Chairman Davidson, Keno Hawker and Dennis Kavanaugh), has experienced minimal activity. Mayor Brown recommended that the Council consider reactivating the GDC by having the three Councilmembers who currently serve remain on the Committee and adding two (or more) additional members, namely the Chairman of the DDC and Vince DiBella, representing the Town Center Corporation.

Mayor Brown questioned the manner in which efforts to procure the expertise of an urban planner should proceed.

Mr. Marek expressed the opinion that the hiring of an urban planner is an excellent proposal and said that the proposed schedule is aggressive and will require a tremendous amount of work.

Councilmember Kavanaugh stated the opinion that the proposal represents an appropriate beginning for downtown redevelopment and indicated that he preferred that a design consultant be hired concurrently with an urban planner. Councilmember Kavanaugh added the opinion that the General Development Committee would be an appropriate vehicle to work with the architect who is selected.

Mr. DiBella commented on the fact that architects and urban planners possess different levels of background and training but stressed the importance of them working together to achieve a common goal.

Vice Mayor Giles stressed the importance of pursuing the acquisition of the educational property in the downtown area.

Mayor Brown also suggested that the member of the General Development Committee meet with the members of the DDC to discuss the proposal that was discussed this date.

2.1 Hear and consider a proposal for a County Justice Court Complex on Redevelopment Site 7 (northwest corner of Pomeroy and First Avenue).

Redevelopment Director Greg Marek and Lindy Funkhauser, Special Assistant to the County Manager, addressed the Council relative to this agenda item. Mr. Marek reported that the County has proposed the development of a minimum 70,000 square foot building that would locate four justice courts on a parcel of land located south of the Pomeroy garage on First Avenue and Mesa Drive. Mr. Marek commented that discussions on this matter have been ongoing and said that staff has been pursuing this matter in response to previous Council direction.

Mr. Funkhauser highlighted a brief presentation on the project noted that the County would construct at a minimum a 70,000 square foot building on this site that will house approximately 250 employees. Mr. Funkhauser added that the County, as part of the proposal, will invest over \$8 million to add enhancements and ensure the viability of the project. Mr. Funkhauser added that in return, the City would convey the parcels to the County with a clause in the deed which would ensure that the City would get the land back should the County select an alternative site for the project. Mr. Funkhauser stated that the City would then lease the basement level and parking garage to the County and would waive all development and building permit fees.

Discussion ensued relative to leasing periods, the fact that the County would vacate their existing adult probation offices located adjacent to the Sheraton Hotel, the fact that the building would accommodate four justice courts, a superior court, a commissioner and adult probation offices, the fact that the County would provide all on-going maintenance operations for the building including the basement area and the parking garage, the County's willingness to specify that there will not be any overnight housing of prisoners, and specific enhancements including the placement of Department of Motor Vehicle windows for drivers license services at the site, and preliminary conceptual site drawings.

Mayor Brown clarified that the purpose of the meeting this date is to provide the Council with information relative to the concept of developing the proposed building.

Councilmember Kavanaugh indicated that he supports the concept and spoke in favor of locating a variety of governmental offices at one site for the convenience of citizens.

In response to a question from Councilmember Hawker, Mr. Marek indicated that to the best of his knowledge, signs have not been placed on the property under discussion indicating that the parcel is for sale. Mr. Marek added that adjacent property owners have not been contacted. Mr. Marek stated that Redevelopment Office staff contacted the City's Real Estate Services Department regarding this matter.

Councilmember Hawker stressed the importance of reviewing overall development and determining the most appropriate uses for the land. Councilmember Hawker cautioned staff to review all options and to move cautiously on this matter.

Mr. Marek informed the Council that the redevelopment site, containing three redevelopment pads, has been vacant for ten years. Mr. Marek stated the opinion that the proposed project would assist in creating a management/governmental center in the downtown area and added that the proposed number of employees would also benefit the City.

Discussion ensued among the members of the Council and Mayor Brown indicated that the Council will discuss and consider the proposal and respond to the County in the future.

3. Further discussion and consideration concerning the Town Center Improvement District (SID 228) services and alternatives.

Assistant to the City Manager Bryan Raines expressed appreciation to Mesa Town Center Executive Director Tom Verploegen for information he provided on this issue. Mr. Raines referred to a report submitted to the Council and requested input and questions.

Mayor Brown commented on the level of inactivity in the downtown area.

Councilmember Kavanaugh indicated that he supports the continuation of the Improvement District but added that focus is needed to provide leadership, staff, and funding to work on promotional activities. Councilmember Kavanaugh stressed the importance of identifying and promoting an annual signature event for the City.

Vice Mayor Giles concurred with Councilmember Kavanaugh's comments regarding a signature event and suggested that the Council consider hiring a full time staff person for this purpose. Vice Mayor Giles also recommended that the services of an outside consultant be engaged to objectively critique the operations of the Town Center Corporation and provide recommendations for improvement.

It was moved by Councilmember Kavanaugh, seconded by Councilmember Pomeroy, that staff be directed to prepare a resolution regarding the continuation Town Center Improvement District (SID 228) for consideration at the December 21, 1998 Regular Council Meeting and that staff provide the Council with a preliminary budget reflecting costs associated with hiring a full time staff person to pursue the establishment of a signature event.

Discussion ensued among the members of the Council relative to revising the approval timeframe on the Improvement District from every five years to every three years.

Councilmember Kavanaugh amended his motion to indicate that review will occur every three rather than five years. Councilmember Pomeroy amended his second to the motion to also reflect that change.

Carried unanimously.

4. Review of the City's PLUS Program and consider recommendations.

Management Assistant I Denise Bleyle presented the Council with a brief overview of the City's PLUS Program, which provides financial assistance to Mesa residents who are unable to pay their utility bills. Ms. Bleyle recommended that staff be directed to negotiate an arrangement with Arizona Republic Charities and the City of Mesa, similar to programs established in other Valley communities, in which the Arizona Republic Charities would provide matching funds for PLUS contributions. Ms. Bleyle added that in addition to the collection of matching funds, staff recommends that the City significantly increase marketing for the PLUS Program and increase the outreach to utility bill customers who use the direct bill payment of Surepay.

Discussion ensued relative to programs and marketing efforts in surrounding cities, and additional options which include: 1) allowing the current method to remain unchanged; 2) converting to a \$1 contribution that would be pre-printed on each utility bill; and 3) convert to a 'round up' type program in which the customer's subtotal amount is 'rounded up' to the nearest dollar amount.

It was moved by Councilmember Kavanaugh, seconded by Vice Mayor Giles, that staff's alternative option number 2 be approved (Convert to a \$1 contribution that would be pre-printed on each utility bill. This could include a blank grand total field or a pre-printed field with the PLUS amount already calculated in the grand total.)

Councilmember Hawker commented that he was involved in this issue in 1988 and stated the concept of the program was based on voluntary contributions from citizens. Councilmember Hawker stated opposition to pre-printing contributions on the utility bill and stated that the program should remain voluntary. Councilmember Hawker added that citizens should indicate an amount they want to contribute on their own should they wish to do so.

Ms. Bleyle pointed out that the words 'this is voluntary' would be printed on the material and added that although the City of Scottsdale received minor complains when the program was first implemented, since that time the opposition has dwindled and the City reports very minimal (2, 3 a year) calls in opposition or complaints.

Mayor Brown recommended that Councilmember Kavanaugh amend his motion to include renaming the program.

Councilmember Kavanaugh amended his motion to include direction to staff to pursue a revised name for the program. Vice Mayor Giles seconded his motion to the amendment.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Brown-Davidson-Giles-Jaffa-Kavanaugh-Pomeroy
NAYS -Hawker

Mayor Brown declared the motion carried by majority vote.

5. Discuss and consider adopting guidelines for the Heritage Wall on the south side of the Mesa City Plaza Building.

Mayor Brown advised that discussion of this agenda item will be continued to a future meeting of the Council.

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

Mayor Brown advised that there were no reports on meetings and/or conferences attended to report on at this time.

7. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

Mr. Luster stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Utility Committee Meeting – Monday, December 14, 1998, 7:30 a.m.

Tuesday, December 15, 1998, 4:00 p.m. – General Development Committee.

January 4, 1999 Study Session and Regular Council Session has been rescheduled to January 5, 1999.

8. Prescheduled public opinion appearances (maximum of three speakers for three minutes per speaker).

Mayor Brown advised that there were no prescheduled public opinion appearances.

9. Items from citizens present (maximum of three speakers for three minutes per speaker).

Mayor Brown advised that there were no items from citizens present at this time.

10. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

WAYNE BROWN, 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 10th day of December 1998. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 1998

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK