



COUNCIL MINUTES

January 29, 2002

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a joint meeting with the Dobson Ranch Homeowners' Association Board of Directors at the Neighbors Garden Cafe, 2740 S. Alma School Rd., Suite 13, on January 29, 2002 at 7:00 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker
Jim Davidson
Dennis Kavanaugh
Claudia Walters
Mike Whalen

COUNCIL ABSENT

Bill Jaffa
Pat Pomeroy

STAFF PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Lisa Blyler
Jack Friedline
Barbara Jones
Wayne Korinek
Ron Krosting
Jeff Martin
Frank Mizner
Ellen Pence
Tom Remes
Julie Rice

DOBSON RANCH DIRECTORS & STAFF PRESENT

Phillip Lowry, Board President
Ben Fernandez, Board Treasurer
Amanda Sihler, Board Secretary
Kathy Henderson, Boardmember
Wendee Murrietta, Boardmember
Laurie Nichols, Boardmember
Lynda Bailey, Community Liaison
Faye Bristow, Office Manager
Donna Chapman, Roundup Editor
Bob Dowel, Business Manager
Roger Weber, Executive Director

BOARD CANDIDATES PRESENT

Gerald Johnson, Board Candidate
John Meyer, Board Candidate
Cindy Mizner, Board Candidate

Dobson Board President Phillip Lowry welcomed everyone to the meeting and commented on the importance of conducting these types of meetings, and he stated appreciation for the opportunity to exchange ideas and coordinate efforts for a common goal.

Councilmember Kavanaugh said that at the request of the Mayor, he would be conducting the meeting on behalf of the City since he represents the Dobson Ranch area as District 3 Councilmember. Councilmember Kavanaugh expressed the City's appreciation for the hosting of this event by the Dobson Ranch Board of Directors and emphasized the benefits derived from these annual discussions.

On behalf of the City of Mesa, Councilmember Kavanaugh presented to Board President Lowry and Executive Director Weber the original (1973) master plan for Dobson Ranch which had previously been displayed at City Hall and has been restored for the Association.

Councilmember Kavanaugh spoke of the uniqueness of the Dobson Ranch area with its mix of housing stock, retail, office and recreational amenities and stated the opinion that the area is one of the most desirable locations to reside in the City of Mesa.

1. Update on Police Department Programs in Dobson Ranch.

Police Chief Jan Strauss reported that statistics indicate that significant criminal activity does not occur within the Dobson Ranch area and emphasized the fact that Dobson Ranch is a well-developed, pleasant neighborhood in which to reside. Chief Strauss noted that although Dobson Ranch is a safe neighborhood, a recent increase in vehicle burglaries and auto thefts in the Dobson Ranch area has been detected. Chief Strauss distributed a handout that illustrated the areas where the burglaries and thefts occurred. Chief Strauss stated that the Community Action Team and the City's Bicycle Officers are aware of the criminal activities and consequently are performing surveillance of the targeted areas.

Chief Strauss outlined various preventive measures that residents of Dobson Ranch can initiate to deter these types of criminal activities. Chief Strauss suggested that a Crime Prevention presentation to Dobson Ranch residents to discuss the vehicle burglaries and thefts would prove to be beneficial.

Chief Strauss announced that a school resource officer has now been assigned to every high school and every junior high school in Mesa. Chief Strauss informed those present that the Federal government and the Mesa City Council fund this valuable program and reported on the positive results that have been achieved which includes a reduction in crime and accidents on campuses.

Chief Strauss discussed additional training and non-lethal weapons that have recently been provided to officers to better enable them to provide assistance to mentally challenged individuals. Chief Strauss commented on the importance of notifying the Police Department when homes for the mentally challenged are located in any given area.

Chief Strauss reported that approximately two years ago, the City of Mesa received a Federal grant to fund the hiring of a full-time position in conjunction with the Attorney General's Office to provide training to Mesa Police Officers in the handling of issues regarding the elderly and the referral of resources that may be available to them.

Chief Strauss pointed out that two positions have also been allocated by the Mesa City Council to establish a cyber crime unit that would combat identity theft.

In closing, Chief Strauss reassured the Association that Dobson Ranch is a safe neighborhood and reiterated that the crime analysis for the Ranch supports this affirmation.

2. Discuss US 60 widening project.

- a. Timing for Interchange Improvements at Dobson Road, Mesa Drive and Alma School Road
- b. Questions about Project

Transportation Director Ron Krosting pointed out the fact that the interchange project at the US 60 freeway and Country Club Drive has been completed and stated that the project has proven to be a major improvement. Mr. Krosting said that the flow of vehicular traffic has improved significantly, especially during peak times, and stated that in addition, traffic accidents have decreased.

Mr. Krosting stated that the project at US 60 and Dobson that is currently under construction is projected to be completed next month with one more freeway closure occurring this weekend.

Mr. Krosting reported that the interchange improvements at Alma School Road will commence next month with a proposed completion date of mid-July of this year.

Mr. Krosting stated that the improvements at Mesa Drive is the last project scheduled in this area and commented that the design work has been completed and the project is ready for the bidding process. Mr. Krosting reported that construction will commence in June and the project's proposed completion date is the end of this year. Mr. Krosting stated that this project is a major reconstruction of the interchange and involves the addition of one thru lane in each direction and left-turn lanes.

Mr. Krosting pointed out that these types of projects often result in freeway closures because of Arizona Department of Transportation's (ADOT) decision to prohibit contractors from working over the freeway when traffic is flowing. Mr. Krosting stated that based on ADOT's directives, contractors work on weekends and evenings. Mr. Krosting reported that these projects cost approximately three-to-four million dollars per interchange and said the City of Mesa has been successful in obtaining Federal aid for these projects.

Assistant Development Services Manager Jeff Martin reported that for the past 1½ years, the City of Mesa has been working diligently with ADOT on the landscaping and artwork proposed for the US 60 project. Mr. Martin indicated that during the design phase of the project, ADOT eliminated many of the proposed retaining walls and explained that in lieu of the retaining walls, ADOT will extensively upgrade the landscaping. In addition, Mr. Martin reported that a bidding process will soon be initiated to determine the feasibility of placing artwork that simulates the City's logo on selected US 60 freeway overpasses.

Mr. Martin stated that the City of Mesa is researching the possibility of placing an aesthetic art object/monument at the various entrances to the City and reported that other artifacts will also be considered for placement at additional significant locations throughout the City. Mr. Martin informed those present that a team of City employees, an in-house artist and an art coordinator have been recruited to review and provide recommendations relative to these cultural projects.

Mr. Martin discussed the proposed freeway interchange improvements for Stapley Drive, Gilbert Road and Val Vista Drive and indicated that those improvements will commence in June 2003 and will simulate the interchange projects that have been completed to the west, including Mesa Drive, Country Club Drive and Alma School Road.

Mr. Martin pointed out that ADOT and MAG are currently programming the widening of the US 60 east of Val Vista Drive for fiscal year 2007/2008 at a projected cost of \$100 million from Val Vista Drive to Power Road and an additional \$150 million for the interchange between the San Tan, Red Mountain and the US 60 freeway.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Kavanaugh relative to the acceleration of the Red Mountain and San Tan freeways, Mr. Martin announced that the freeway's construction timetables were accelerated by approximately six years.

In response to a question posed by Board Treasurer Ben Fernandez relative to the litter scattered on freeways, Mr. Martin responded that it is ADOT's responsibility to maintain the appearance of the freeways. Mr. Martin also pointed out that based on the State's current budget, the Legislature will likely decrease ADOT's budget.

3. Median Improvements.

Councilmember Kavanaugh discussed the long history that exists between the City of Mesa and Dobson Ranch relative to work on medians located in and around the Dobson Ranch area, such as the improvements along Baseline Road that have been underway for the past several years. Councilmember Kavanaugh stated that during the improvement process, Dobson Ranch residents provided input and selected landscaping that was installed by the City of Mesa. Councilmember Kavanaugh stated that the City is aware that these issues are of great importance to Dobson Ranch and requested that Assistant Development Services Manager Jeff Martin comment on this agenda item.

Mr. Martin advised those in attendance that the relationship between Dobson Ranch and the City of Mesa has been formalized to enable the Ranch to provide input regarding various projects that affect the Dobson Ranch area. Mr. Martin stated, for example, that the area on Dobson Road between Baseline and Lindner required an enormous amount of landscaping work and commented that Dobson Ranch has provided input relative to the type of vegetation best suited for that area.

Mr. Martin discussed the budget restraints the City of Mesa will be facing over the next two years and stated the opinion that the City will be challenged to meet and maintain its current level of services. Mr. Martin commented that the City is compelled to examine proposals that will generate additional resources.

4. General Plan Update.

Planning Director Frank Mizner indicated that approximately 15-18 months of work has been spent on updating the General Plan. Mr. Mizner pointed out that three items have been distributed regarding the General Plan: 1) a 3-page summary of the General Plan; 2) a copy of the Land Use Plan Map, and 3) a schedule for this project (outlines the process regarding the General Plan over the next several months).

Mr. Mizner explained that the General Plan serves as a long-range blueprint for the City and outlines the future structure of the City relative to land use, economic development, parks and recreation, streets and revitalization issues. Mr. Mizner reported that in addition to the update to the General Plan, staff is working diligently to update the Transportation Plan, Parks and Recreation Plan and the Economic Development Plan. Mr. Mizner outlined various obstacles that surfaced during the ambitious scheduling of these updates. Mr. Mizner commented on issues involving the General Motors Proving Grounds and pointed out the fact that the 5,000 acres is located in the County. Mr. Mizner stated concern relative to General Motors' ability to seek zoning through the County if they are not in acceptance of the City's recommended zoning for that area.

Mr. Mizner reported that a series of workshops have been scheduled for the near future and stated that the General Plan adoption will be voted on by the City of Mesa electorate at the November 2002 General Election. Mr. Mizner pointed out that Arizona is the only state that requires an election for the adoption of a General Plan.

Discussion ensued relative to undeveloped areas in the Dobson Ranch area, specific reuses for properties surrounding Dobson Ranch, the March 2002 Primary Election which includes open Council seats for Districts 4, 5 and 6 and a ballot issue, Proposition 300, which is the rezoning for the development of a Wal-Mart supercenter.

5. Dobson Golf Course Improvements

Community Services Manager Wayne Korinek reported that recently the Mesa City Council authorized a contract for approximately \$1,000,000.00 to proceed with improvements to the Golf Course Clubhouse. Mr. Korinek informed those present that construction will commence the week of February 11th and will be completed in about five or six months. Mr. Korinek pointed out that there are four components to the improvements: restrooms; merchandising area; storage, and the meeting/office space.

In response to a question relative to the restaurant, Mr. Korinek stated that the City owns the building but contracts the use to a private entity. Mr. Korinek commented that the current contracts ends this year and consequently, the City of Mesa will be initiating bids for another provider. Mr. Korinek stated that the language in the request for proposals will be modified to stipulate requirements for improvements to the facility.

In response to an inquiry regarding the golf course fencing improvements, Mr. Korinek responded that the seventh phase of a ten-year project has been completed. Mr. Korinek commented that the eighth phase was scheduled to be initiated this year, but due to budget restraints, the project has been delayed. Mr. Korinek advised that the project will require reevaluation during next year's budget review.

6. Transportation Issues

Mayor Hawker pointed out that the Master Plan Update contains a transportation plan component that studies Mesa's future transportation needs at the time of build-out. Mayor Hawker stated the opinion that the City will need to consider a bond election or sales tax increase in the near future to meet Mesa's transportation needs.

Mayor Hawker outlined the Southeast Regional Transportation Study and commented that the Study is a cooperative effort between MAG, Central Arizona Association of Governments (CAAG), and ADOT, Mesa, Apache Junction, Queen Creek, Florence and Casa Grande to identify the impact of future growth (additional housing units) on existing and future freeway infrastructure.

Mayor Hawker commented on the controversial issues associated with providing transportation systems and spoke of the difficulties associated with determining whether transportation needs should be met on a regional basis or supported locally by each Valley city for their respective residents.

Mayor Hawker emphasized the importance of responsible planning which may require setting land aside for the future and stated the opinion that analyzing and forecasting citizens' transportation needs as far out as 40 years in the future is reasonable and prudent.

In addition, Mayor Hawker indicated that the County ½ cent sales tax increase expires on December 2005 and emphasized that a plan should be implemented by the November 2004 election to obtain voter authorization for an extension of that tax to incorporate transportation projects that are in the best interest of the entire region.

Mayor Hawker discussed a Commuter Rail Study and stated the opinion that consideration should be given relative to the possibility of aligning the commuter rail system with the railroad system.

(At the close of the meeting, President Lowry thanked everyone for their attendance and stated the Association's appreciation to the City staff for addressing issues of great importance to the Ranch).

7. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Joint Meeting with the Dobson Association Board of Directors adjourned at 8:27 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 Joint Meeting with the Dobson Ranch Homeowners' Association Board of Directors held on the 29th day of January 2002. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2002

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK