



COUNCIL MINUTES

July 8, 1999

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 July 8, 1999 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
Neal Beets
Denise Bleyle
Candace Cannistraro
Dennis Compton
Linda Crocker
Jack Friedline
Gerry Gerber
Joe Holmwood
Mike Hutchinson
Barbara Jones
Wayne Korinek
Dorinda Larsen
Greg Marek
Jeff Martin
Frank Mizner
Patrick Murphy
Keith Nath
Joe Padilla
Ellen Pence
Bryan Raines
Andrea Rasizer
Tom Remes
Becky Richardson

STAFF PRESENT (CONT.)

Kathleen Savagian
Jenny Sheppard
Jan Strauss
Doug Tessendorf
Kim West
Mindy White
Others

OTHERS PRESENT

Teresa Brice-Heames
Teresa Carmichael
Joanie Flatt
Jeremy Jones
Kent Layton
Tom Pene
Rick Pfannenstiel
Tom Verploegen
Claudia Walters
Celeste Werner
Mary Jo Whalen
Robbie Sherwood
Others

(Items were discussed out of order but for purposes of clarity will remain as listed on the agenda.)

Mayor Brown excused Councilmembers Giles, Jaffa and Pomeroy from the beginning of the meeting. Councilmembers Giles and Pomeroy joined the meeting at 7:32 a.m. and Councilmember Jaffa joined the meeting at 7:35 a.m.

1. Discuss and consider the Downtown Concept Plan and Implementation Framework prepared by BRW.

Redevelopment Director Greg Marek addressed the Council relative to this agenda item and introduced Celeste Werner, Planning Director for BRW. Mr. Marek referred to a copy of a proposed Implementation Framework proposal for the Downtown Concept Plan, and noted that the document was prepared in response to previous Council direction. Mr. Marek emphasized that the Downtown Concept Plan has been tailored to the City of Mesa and stated the opinion that Mesa's town center area will be unique and take the form of an urban village rather than a typical downtown area.

Ms. Werner noted that the Implementation Framework has been divided into six categories: 1) identity and infrastructure; 2) arts/culture and entertainment; 3) residential and neighborhoods; 4) public sector employment; 5) private sector employment, and 6) public policy and regulations. Ms. Werner noted that specific projects and pertinent data are listed in spreadsheet form in the report, including the name of the entity responsible for the lead responsibility, the timeframe in years, the resources needed and additional information listed in the notes columns that specifies details regarding the various projects.

Ms. Werner emphasized that the Implementation Framework proposal has been designed to assist the City of Mesa and the Office of Redevelopment in revitalizing the redevelopment area. Ms. Werner added that the Office of Redevelopment will utilize the final approved Implementation Framework to develop a strategic plan and work program. Ms. Werner briefly highlighted the contents of the proposal and requested input and Council direction.

Discussion ensued relative to the five top projects selected for possible implementation, staff's intention to draft a strategic plan and present it to Council for their review, the fact that the proposal provides direction and identifies priorities, a recommendation from Councilmember Davidson that staff prepare an existing redevelopment area zoning map and a concept/land use plan map so that both current and future projects can be clearly identified, the urban village concept, Councilmember Hawker's suggestion that staff continue to develop a 5-year budget plan for the City and incorporate this proposal into the Capital Improvement Program, and Councilmember Jaffa's comment that high rise/density residential development is crucial for the downtown area.

Mr. Marek informed the Council that a majority of the downtown area will consist of high density residential development but added that at this point, staff has not determined whether high rise or mid rise will be developed. Mr. Marek added that Council input will be solicited relative to this issue.

Additional discussion ensued relative to residential development guidelines, affordable housing and the importance of a diverse mix in that area, the fact that a number of existing buildings require extensive work, the facade program and guidelines, and the possibility of offering incentives to businesses which partner with the City to improve the buildings.

Councilmember Jaffa stated the opinion that the corner of Main Street and Country Club Drive is an important entrance to the downtown area and expressed concern regarding the proposed development of an Ace Hardware store at that location. Councilmember Jaffa also commented on the amount of resources that will be expended in the downtown area and urged the Council and staff to review other areas throughout the City for possible improvement and enhancement.

Councilmember Davidson expressed the opinion that the hardware store is an appropriate entry business and stressed the importance of establishing a business mix rather than a mall atmosphere at that location.

In response to concerns expressed by Vice Mayor Giles relative to the fact that Mesa does not have a site where quality downtown events may be held, Ms. Werner advised that the proposal contains plans for the development of such an area north of the Arts and Entertainment Center.

Discussion ensued relative to the contents of the report, the importance of attracting and retaining retail businesses in the downtown area, Councilmember Pomeroy's concerns regarding the lack of green areas in the downtown center, the fact that park areas may be added in the future, light rail sitings, and the fact that insufficient time exists in which to thoroughly review this issue at this time.

Mayor Brown recommended that this issue be placed on the agenda of a future Council meeting for additional discussion and consideration. Mayor Brown added that all interested parties, including citizens, should be invited to attend the meeting and provide input on this issue.

Councilmember Jaffa requested additional information relative to financing, the proposed revitalization program, and the incentive program discussed earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Marek informed the Council that staff will provide additional information at the next meeting to discuss this matter and stressed the importance of identifying the type of businesses the City wants to attract to the town center area. Mr. Marek noted that the urban village atmosphere will be family oriented.

Mayor Brown requested that staff also present an update on the status of the Voit/Mesa Verde project at that meeting and thanked Mr. Marek and Ms. Werner for their input.

2. Discuss and consider recommendations pertaining to the Arts and Entertainment Center.

Mary Jo Whalen, Chairman of the Mesa Arts and Entertainment Center Design Committee, introduced other members of the Committee present at the meeting, including Keith Nath, Joanie Flatt, and Geri Gerber to the members of the Council.

Ms. Whalen noted that the recommendations that are being presented to the Council represent a unanimous vote of the Committee and a consensus of the citizens who were involved in the process.

Committeemember Gerber introduced Tom Pene, Architect/Project Manager with BOORA Architects, Portland, Oregon, Rick Pfannenstiel, Project Manager for Kitchell Corporation and Jeremy Jones, representing DWL Architects, and noted that the proposed report and recommendations are the culmination of many years of work. Committeemember Gerber stated that the proposed arts and entertainment facility will have the capability of hosting national shows and will bring a renewed vitality to the downtown area. Committeemember Gerber added that the facility will provide an abundance of opportunities and advantages for the youths of the City and will serve as a cornerstone for future development.

Mr. Pene addressed the Council and presented a brief overview of the Committee's recommendations.

Discussion ensued relative to the size and seating capabilities of the four proposed theatres, space for dressing rooms and administrative offices, the fact that the galleria will encompass 7,000 square feet, the inclusion of a gift shop and community space, including a small lecture hall, the proposed cultural plaza for outdoor performances, sculpture gardens, and proposed parking.

Mr. Pfannenstiel stated the opinion that the proposal constitutes a comprehensive program and estimated the total cost at approximately \$89.9 million. Mr. Pfannenstiel presented a brief overview of the financing/costs associated with the project and discussed the ½ ¢ sales tax that was approved by the voters.

Committeemember/City Engineer Keith Nath provided information relative to proposed architectural project design and construction administration fees and stated that staff has reviewed the proposed fee structure and determined that the charges are reasonable for a project of this size. Mr. Nath also reviewed a project

schedule of the five project phases (planning, design, bid/award, construction and occupancy) and noted that the project will be design bid/build.

Committeemember Flatt also expanded upon the merits of the proposal and discussed square footage costs and the fact that the budget for the project was cut considerably as a result of community input.

In response to a request from Mayor Brown, Kent Layton, a member of the City's Museum and Cultural Advisory Board, advised that he has been involved in the project for a significant number of years. Dr. Layton spoke in strong support of the project and expressed the opinion that the proposal will be a tremendous success.

Discussion ensued relative to architectural fees, the importance of developing a high-quality project, the fact that the project reflects a significant increase in costs over the original estimates, scheduling, the fact that the project costs include design contingency funds but not construction contingency funds, and the fact that the architect has verified total costs and believes that the project will remain on target.

Mr. Pfannensteil informed the Council that his company possesses extensive experience in this area and has a reputation for successfully completing similar projects on time and on budget.

Councilmember Jaffa indicated that his support for the project will be based on allowing the project to remain top quality and not be downscaled in order to reduce costs. Councilmember Jaffa also stated the opinion that sales tax revenues were under-estimated and that this figure may increase in the future.

Additional discussion ensued relative to project cost adjustments, indirect costs associated with the center, the fact that the New Jersey performing arts center that was visited by the Committee does not contain anywhere near the diversity that Mesa's project will contain if approved, the fact that land costs in excess of \$8 million have been added to the original estimates once it was determined that the current site of the old City Hall building could not accommodate the facility, and the Committee's commitment to see the project to fruition.

Councilmember Hawker stated the opinion that a significant amount of citizens would prefer that the City stay within the original \$63.5 million estimates and said that this figure is the amount approved by the voters. Councilmember Hawker recommended that this item be placed on the ballot and allow the voters to decide whether to increase funding for the center.

Mayor Brown commented on the fact that the next agenda item, to discuss and consider the half-cent sales tax program, will address a number of unanswered questions but noted the minimum amount of time remaining in which to adequately discuss this issue during that time.

Assistant City Manager Mike Hutchinson agreed that the following agenda item is a complex issue and the remaining meeting time may be insufficient to thoroughly address this crucial matter. Mr. Hutchinson added the opinion that a Council decision should be made within the next two weeks but said that adequate time remains for staff to provide additional information and to receive input on this issue.

Mayor Brown thanked everyone for their input and indicated that this issue will be topic of discussion at a future Council Study Session.

3. Discuss and consider the half-cent sales tax program.

Mayor Brown stated that due to time constraints this item will be discussed at a future Council Study Session.

4. Discuss and consider proposed changes to City of Mesa utility bills regarding the voluntary ABC donation.

Management Assistant Denise Bleyle presented the Council with proposed utility bill changes for the ABC (A Better Community) program. Ms. Bleyle stated that in response to previous Council concerns and direction, staff is proposing four revisions.

Ms. Bleyle discussed staff's intention to send out the revised bills to City of Mesa customers in September and added that a question and answer brochure, (containing pertinent information including what to do if you don't want to participate in the program, explaining the matching funds program, etc.) will be mailed out with the first batch of revised bills.

Vice Mayor Giles expressed concern regarding the fact that elderly citizens with failing eyesight may have difficulty seeing that the \$1.00 donation is voluntary rather than part of their actual bill. Vice Mayor Giles stated the opinion that coloring/highlighting the language relating to the donation may be beneficial.

Ms. Bleyle discussed costs associated with adding colors to City utility bills and indicated that staff could pursue shading and/or bolding the donation wording to enhance visibility.

Vice Mayor Giles stressed the importance of ensuring that it is extremely obvious by merely looking at the utility bills (rather than having to scrutinize them) that the \$1.00 donation is voluntary rather than mandatory or a part of the citizens' regular utility bill.

Ms. Bleyle stated that staff will work with the vendor in an effort to improve the visibility of the language.

Councilmember Pomeroy recommended that the proposed bills be revised and that the words "utility amount + voluntary donation" on the actual bill be bolded and perhaps underlined.

Councilmember Hawker recommended that the amount line remain blank and that citizens retain the right to fill in a donation amount or not rather than pre-printing \$1.00 donation on the bills.

Councilmember Kavanaugh stated the opinion that leaving the donation amount blank will result in a reduced amount of contributions and indicated he would prefer that staff pursue bolding, shading and/or colors to enhance the wording on the bills.

Mayor Brown stated that it is the consensus of the Council that staff pursue Councilmember Pomeroy's recommendations relative to enhancing the wording on utility bills and added that following the revisions, staff may proceed with the printing of the revised bills.

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

Mayor Brown advised that there were no reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

6. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Charles Luster advised that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Monday, July 12, 1999, 3:30 p.m. - Police Committee Meeting

Monday, July 12, 1999, 4:00 p.m. - Police Committee Public Hearing

7. Prescheduled public opinion appearances (there will be a maximum of three speakers for three minutes per speaker).

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

8. Items from citizens present. (Maximum of three speakers for three minutes per speaker).

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

9. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Carried unanimously.

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 8th day of July, 1999. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 1999

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK