

COUNCIL MINUTES

September 6, 2007

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 September 6, 2007 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker
Rex Griswold
Kyle Jones
Tom Rawles
Scott Somers
Mike Whalen

COUNCIL ABSENT

Claudia Walters

OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Debbie Spinner
Linda Crocker

(Mayor Hawker excused Vice Mayor Walters from the entire meeting.)

1. Hear a presentation and discuss the proposed name change for Williams Gateway Airport.

Government Relations Director Scott Butler introduced Lynn Kusy, Executive Director of Williams Gateway Airport Authority (WGAA), who was prepared to address the Council relative to this item.

Mr. Kusy displayed a PowerPoint presentation (A copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and spoke regarding various companies that have located to Williams Gateway Airport (WGA), including Cessna Aircraft Company and Embraer Aircraft Holding, Inc. He explained that Vision Airlines currently offers twice-weekly flights from WGA to Las Vegas and said the company anticipates expanding its service to Long Beach this winter. Mr. Kusy added that Allegiant Air provides monthly passenger service from WGA to Laughlin and Reno and has announced the establishment of a new base of operations at WGA that would offer nonstop service from 13 destinations throughout the country to the Phoenix-Mesa area.

Mr. Kusy indicated that in FY 2007, WGA generated \$7.3 million in operating revenues; performed over 300,000 aircraft operations; served over 18,000 passengers; handled an estimated 164,000 pounds of cargo; completed \$7.4 million in capital expenditures; and was ranked as one of the 40 busiest airports in the country.

Discussion ensued relative to the airport's 60-year history and its various name changes; a historical overview of Lieutenant Charles L. Williams, for whom the airport was named; the fact that the WGAA hired a consulting firm to conduct research with regard to a possible name change for the airport; that the interviewees concurred that the name should identify itself with Phoenix and the surrounding region; that over 80% of all airline tickets are currently purchased

online; and that at the September 15, 2007 WGAA Board of Directors meeting, Mr. Kusy would recommend that WGA's name be changed to Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.

Mr. Kusy further reported that it is anticipated that the proposed name change would result in the airport receiving international recognition as a Phoenix destination. He stated that in an effort to preserve the heritage of the site and honor Lieutenant Williams, an e-mail site has been established so that citizens can offer their input and suggestions in this regard.

Councilmember Griswold expressed support not only for the proposed name change, but also honoring the hundreds of pilots that trained at the airport during its 60-year history.

Councilmember Rawles inquired why, if name recognition at WGA has been an issue for sometime, the matter was not addressed earlier. He commented that with the recent addition of Phoenix as a member of the WGAA, he is concerned with the appearance that Phoenix "bought the name of the airport." Councilmember Rawles added that it is important for the WGAA to assure the community that is not the case.

Mayor Hawker said that as a member of the WGAA Board of Directors, he intends to vote in favor of the proposed name change. He commented that whatever steps can be taken to accelerate the development of WGA would benefit not only Mesa, but also the entire region. Mayor Hawker added that the Phoenix-Mesa name was proposed prior to Phoenix becoming a member of the WGAA.

Councilmember Somers stated that Phoenix is aware of "the image problem" associated with the airport's proposed name change.

Mayor Hawker thanked everyone for the presentation.

2. Hear a presentation and provide direction on lighting standards for Mountain Bridge.

City Traffic Engineer Alan Sanderson reported that staff is seeking Council direction relative to a request by Pinnacle Ridge Holdings to use reduced lighting on public streets within its proposed Mountain Bridge development in the Desert Uplands. He explained that at the September 17, 2007 Regular Council meeting, the Council would be asked to approve a Development Agreement concerning the project and said the developer is requesting that the streetlighting issue be considered at the same time.

Mr. Sanderson displayed a PowerPoint presentation (A copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and offered a brief historical overview of Mesa's streetlighting standards. He stated that the developer of Mountain Bridge is requesting permission to light only the intersections and entrances to the subdivisions and other key locations along the collector streets through the development. Mr. Sanderson noted that the reason for the request is to protect not only the dark skies of the Desert Uplands area, but also the view of the City lights from the foothill area.

Mr. Sanderson referred to a map of the Mountain Bridge collector streets and reviewed the proposed design elements. (See Attachment 1.) Such elements included the following: wide raised medians (30 to 60 feet) separating opposite directions of travel; sidewalks set back from the roadway; pedestrian lighting along the sidewalks; 30 miles per hour speed limit on collector

streets; median openings limited to public street intersections or entrances to individual subdivisions; and sufficient space for marked bike lanes.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that based upon the developer's request, the spacing of the streetlights would range between 230 and 1,200 feet; that staff would support the reduced lighting level requested by the developer; and that an alternative option would be to apply the Desert Uplands collector street standards to the Mountain Bridge development.

In response to a question from Mayor Hawker, Mr. Sanderson clarified that the proposed ordinance would be drafted in such a manner to "link" the street design and layout of the development with the pattern of the streetlighting.

Councilmember Griswold expressed support for the developer's request and stated that he looks forward to the completion of the Mountain Bridge project.

Councilmember Somers commented that he likes the idea that the City Code provides flexibility with regard to the implementation of streetlighting regulations in diverse areas of the community (i.e., urban versus rural desert).

Further discussion ensued relative to the fact that the City Code does not provide a mechanism for the collection of an in-lieu payment for streetlighting; and that because of the uniqueness of the design, it is the opinion of staff that there would be sufficient streetlighting at the Mountain Bridge development.

Mayor Hawker stated that if there were an issue with regard to the marketing of a property because the residents wanted additional streetlighting, it would be the responsibility of the developer to address such concerns and not the City.

Councilmember Rawles said that in reviewing Attachment 1, he would suggest that for safety purposes, the developer add a streetlight "near the bend in the road" on Andalusian Drive and south of the "Proposed McKellips Road."

City Attorney Debbie Spinner said that staff has received Council input with regard to this item and would bring back an ordinance for introduction and adoption.

3. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide direction on Planned Community Districts.

Planning Director John Wesley displayed a PowerPoint presentation (A copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and provided a short synopsis of staff's proposal for the creation of a Planned Community District (PCD), which would enable the adoption of an individual zoning ordinance for large scale developments of property. He explained that staff has been working on a draft ordinance for some time and is seeking Council input with regard to the finalization of the document. Mr. Wesley advised that on September 20th, staff would present the ordinance to the Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Board, and said that pending the Board's recommendation, the ordinance would move forward to the Council for introduction and adoption.

Mr. Wesley reported that the new Code would provide developers and property owners with a greater degree of "predictability;" allow large projects to be phased in a predictable sequence; provide reasonable assurance to a developer that a consistent set of requirements would be

maintained over the life of a project; allow a look at the “whole” of a project and then a second look regarding how each part “fits into the whole;” and avoid forcing a project to fit specific, preconceived zoning definitions.

Mr. Wesley noted that at the time of zoning, a Community Plan (CP) would be created, which would apply to the overall site developed and provide a high level of review (i.e., various infrastructure, community facilities needed throughout the development, and land use amounts). He explained that pending approval of the CP, the next stage in the process is the Development Unit, which would comprise portions of the overall project and more specifically define land uses, development standards and guidelines. Mr. Wesley said that the final step is the Site Plan, which would address specific sites within the Development Unit.

Zoning/Civil Hearing Administrator Gordon Sheffield offered an overview of the various methodologies (prescriptive, general, hybrid) that staff considered relative to the drafting of the ordinance. He explained that although the Mesa Proving Ground would most likely be the first PCD in the City, because of the manner in which the ordinance is drafted, there would be opportunities for this type of district in other areas of the community.

Councilmember Rawles expressed concern relative to the language contained in the draft document suggesting that the Design Review Board (DRB) would approve Site Plans. He said that he was agreeable with the P&Z or the Planning Director assuming such duties, but would oppose the expansion of the DRB’s authority and jurisdiction.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that staff’s proposal for a PCD is a much different zoning concept than has been presented to the Council in the past; that regarding the design of a project, staff anticipates more refined concepts upfront (i.e., thematic elements, anticipated design goals, the type of materials that would be utilized); and that per Section 11-18-9 of the Mesa City Code, the DRB must review and decide commercial/industrial projects that have frontage on an arterial street.

Mr. Sheffield continued his presentation and offered an extensive analysis of the key elements of a PCD including, but not limited to, the following: a minimum size of 160 acres; the CP minimum submittal requirements; that the PC, Community Plan and Development Unit could be submitted together, but would be considered separately; that the adoption of a PCD would be reviewed/approved like any other rezoning case; evaluation criteria; the various components of the Development Unit; the Site Plan review process; the appeal of Site Plan approval; the transfer of development potential; and the minimum elements that would constitute a major amendment.

Mayor Hawker stated that it has always been a priority for him that the arrival and departure routes at Williams Gateway Airport be protected. He commented that he likes the idea that the landowners would know “what is best for their property.” Mayor Hawker further stated that it is essential that the airport remains viable long-term and that future residents in the area do not complain about commercial/industrial uses that are built nearby.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the City’s ability to coordinate the development of a large section of land and funding the cost of the necessary infrastructure.

Councilmember Rawles thanked staff for the manner in which the proposal was drafted and said that it is a flexible and comprehensive mechanism by which to develop large parcels of land.

Councilmember Griswold encouraged staff to create maximum flexibility with regard to the PCDs.

Grady Gammage, Jr., an attorney representing DMB (the purchaser of the northern portion of the GM Proving Ground), addressed the Council. He stated that he has worked with staff regarding the proposed ordinance and looks forward to its approval by the Council. Mr. Gammage explained that PCDs are not a new concept and have been used by Phoenix for 20 years. He cited examples of Phoenix PCDs such as Mountain Park Ranch, the Pointe Resorts, and Desert Ridge.

Mr. Gammage commented that during the time he has worked on this issue in Mesa, he has noticed that the P&Z and the Council “have a penchant for leaping to details right away.” He said that staff’s proposal is an enabling ordinance and suggested that the document be “as simple as possible.” Mr. Gammage also indicated that the CP is a detailed proposal and assured the Council that any issues that are not resolved by staff are highlighted and brought forward to the Council for consideration. He added that DMB anticipates the Mesa Proving Ground would be a different type of PCD than the company has used before.

Mr. Gammage responded to a series of questions from the Councilmembers regarding the PCD process.

Further discussion ensued relative to staff’s preference to include default standards in the proposed ordinance; and the importance of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and regional entities working together to reach a compromise in order to protect WGA’s airspace and encourage development in the area.

Mayor Hawker thanked everyone for the comprehensive presentation.

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

Councilmember Somers: Mesa Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors meeting;
Williams Gateway Airport Authority Board of Directors meeting;
Homeland Security Coordinating Committee meeting

5. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Thursday, September 13, 2007, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Thursday, September 13, 2007, 9:00 a.m. – Audit & Finance Committee meeting

Monday, September 17, TBA – Study Session

Monday, September 17, 2007, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council meeting

6. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

7. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 9:19 a.m.

KENO HAWKER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

LINDA CROCKER, 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 6th day of September 2007. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

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(attachment – 1)