



COUNCIL MINUTES

December 20, 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 December 20, 2004 at 4:00 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker
Rex Griswold
Kyle Jones
Tom Rawles
Janie Thom
Claudia Walters

COUNCIL ABSENT

Mike Whalen

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Debbie Spinner
Barbara Jones

Councilmember Rawles participated in the meeting via telephonic equipment, and Mayor Hawker excused him at 4:50 p.m. after the discussion of agenda item 1. Mayor Hawker excused Councilmember Whalen from the entire meeting.

1. Review items on the agenda for the December 20, 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: 4d (Hawker), 5i (Jones), 6a (Griswold), 9a (Walters)

Items removed from the consent agenda: None

Items added to the consent agenda: 6e, 8.2a

2. Discuss and consider accepting the Downtown Mesa Core Shared Parking Use Plan.

Vice Mayor Walters declared a potential conflict of interest and said she would refrain from discussion/participation in this agenda item.

City Manager Mike Hutchinson stated that a comprehensive parking management plan was developed for the downtown area, and that staff was seeking direction from the Council regarding several items in the proposal (a copy of the "Downtown Mesa Core Shared Parking Use Plan" is available for review in the City Clerk's Office).

Tom Verploegen, Executive Director of the Mesa Town Center Corporation (MTCC), stated that the plan resulted from a collaboration of private and public interests in the downtown area. He utilized a PowerPoint presentation (a copy of the presentation is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) to outline the program details.

Mr. Verploegen noted that the plan is focused on three major areas: the new Mesa Arts Center, the older downtown core area, and the City of Mesa government facilities. He added that the mission is to provide friendly and efficient parking for visitors and guests as well as residents and employees, and he outlined the program's six "guiding principles:"

1. Financially self-sufficient parking program.
2. Customer parking convenience is priority number one.
3. Downtown employee choice to walk further to free parking or pay for more convenient downtown core parking.
4. Parking management coordination – City and MTCC.
5. Parking supply and demand basis.
6. Adequate parking available or planned for vacant properties and future projects.

Mr. Verploegen stated that the five primary areas of deficiency in the Mesa Town Center Parking Program are:

1. Safety and Security Perception.
2. Parking Facilities Conditions.
3. Parking Signage and Wayfinding Improvements.
4. Larger Event Parking Capacity and Management.
5. Understaffed Parking Enforcement.

Mr. Verploegen reviewed the parking facilities available and the projected future demand. He noted that \$1.3 million is the estimated 2005 capital cost for the recommended shared parking lot physical improvements and conversion. He outlined the locations and number of spaces available for Mesa Art Center shared parking and the spaces available for the older downtown commercial area shared parking. Mr. Verploegen added that converting the Pepper Parking Garage heliport to a parking area would provide 54 additional spaces, and that converting First Street to diagonal parking would also increase the number of available spaces. He noted that the proposed changes include improvements to traffic flow, parking lot lighting and landscaping. Mr. Verploegen estimated the amount of parking expenses and revenues and provided a financial summary strategy that projects a three-year payback of the 2005 expenses.

Mr. Verploegen outlined the overall parking use plan recommendations being presented to the City Council:

Approve Overall Plan Framework

- Reconfirm six parking guiding principles.
- Acknowledge walking paradigm shift.
- Authorize staff implementing 2005/06 plan details.
- Undertake longer range planning.
- Use 20 parking categories for re-evaluation.

Policy Recommendations to City Council

- Establish Town Center Parking Enterprise Fund.
- Adopt City of Mesa Parking Reinvestment Strategy (Value credit of downtown core City employee parking).
- Develop policy/review procedures for temporary parking lots.
- Develop pay event parking fee ordinance/schedule.

Administrative Plan Recommendations to City Council

- Renegotiate Parking Management Contract with MTCC.
 - Reflect Plan implementation.
 - Parking Coordinator.
 - Supervising 3 parking monitors.
 - Parking Enterprise Fund (Accounting, Overhead).

Legal Plan Recommendations to Mesa City Council

- Authorize legal research/opinions.
 - Parking enforcement supervisory process.
 - Short and long-term handicap parking.
 - Designating some on-street parking for pay decal and fee event parking.

Public Parking Facilities Plan Recommendations to City Council

- Correct five existing parking deficiency areas.
- Increase parking supply (new lots, First Street diagonal parking).
- Accommodate 2005 and 2006 parking demands.
- Capital parking improvements: \$1,301,400.

Conclusion – Parking and Business/Economic Development

- Shared parking necessity between Mesa Arts Center, downtown commercial area, and City government facilities.
- Parking and walking and financial paradigm shifts.
- Parking improvements needed for catch-up and to implement 2005 projects.
- Parking reevaluation and reinvestment process (\$100 million Mesa Arts Center and \$1 billion plus downtown mile square district).

Mayor Hawker noted that the plan impacts budget issues.

Mr. Hutchinson advised that the Council was not required to approve the proposed plan at this meeting. He noted that staff has additional tasks to complete regarding this complicated proposal. Mr. Hutchinson added that the Council could also request more detailed information on any aspect of the proposal. He recommended that the Council provide direction to staff relative to the key points and the information presented by Mr. Verploegen.

In response to Councilmember Jones' concern regarding planned improvements to First Street, Mr. Hutchinson noted that a Council decision is required regarding the proposed diagonal

parking on First Street prior to implementing the necessary street improvements. He noted that some residents may oppose the diagonal parking plan, but that proposal will come forward for Council consideration in the form of an ordinance with a recommendation from the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB).

Mr. Verploegen advised that the resurfacing of First Street is scheduled for April, and no additional re-stripping cost would be incurred if the change to diagonal parking were approved by that time.

In response to a question from Councilmember Griswold, Mr. Verploegen advised that the development agreement for One Macdonald Place provides the developer the right to license up to 200 spaces in the Pepper Garage and up to 50 unshaded spaces. He advised that MTCC was opposed to the construction of a new parking garage in that area because two floors could be added to the Serrine Garage. He noted that two parking garages could create a "canyon effect," and he also expressed the opinion that constructing a new parking garage would not be financially viable.

Mr. Hutchinson concurred with Mr. Verploegen's comments. He advised that staff had preliminary conversations with the developer, and that a proposal to construct a parking garage would require Council approval.

Councilmember Griswold stated the opinion that poor lighting and the pavement conditions in downtown parking lots constitute a liability threat to the City.

Mr. Verploegen expressed the opinion that City employee parking should generate sufficient revenue to offset the reinvestment expense required to improve and maintain the parking lots.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the Aquatics Center site could be utilized as a temporary lot for MAC overflow parking and buses as well as free employee parking during the day; and that a temporary City parking lot would be advisable until the demand for MAC event parking is known.

Mayor Hawker noted that City staff has requested Council direction regarding five areas. He asked the Councilmembers to express their opinions regarding the following:

1. Prepare the ordinances to allow diagonal parking and reduce the speed limit from 35 mph to 30 mph on First Street from Country Club to Mesa Drive (See recommendation 8 on Page 17 of the Plan).

In response to Councilmember Thom's question, Mr. Verploegen advised that the reduced speed limit is proposed in order to provide added safety for the difference between parallel and diagonal parking.

2. Prepare an ordinance that allows temporary parking lots, which are not constructed to City standards (lighting, landscaping, and paving) in the downtown (See recommendation 2.1 on Page 14 of the Plan).

Mayor Hawker noted that during his presentation Mr. Verploegen referred to the different standards that would be allowed for temporary City lots compared to the requirements for temporary private parking lots.

Councilmember Jones recommended, and Councilmember Griswold concurred, that a time limit be imposed on temporary City lots to insure that the temporary aspect does not become permanent.

3. Prepare the necessary contractual documents to allow Mesa Town Center Corporation to assume parking enforcement in the Town Center (See page 27 of the Plan).

Mr. Hutchinson stated the opinion that from an operational standpoint the MTCC could more effectively supervise downtown parking operations, but added that the issue will be reviewed by the City Attorney's Office. He also stated that the contractual agreements would be subject to Council approval.

In response to a question from Councilmember Thom, Mr. Verploegen explained that "parking monitors" are Police Department contract employees responsible for enforcement in the downtown area. He advised that the contract employees are subject to the normal Police Department screening process. Mr. Verploegen further stated that MTCC staff would provide general supervision, but the parking monitors are required to follow Police Department procedures. He advised that the MTCC plans to hire a third "parking monitor" in order to provide coverage for the additional hours and area to be covered in conjunction with the opening of the Mesa Arts Center.

Mr. Hutchinson noted the difficulty of retaining "parking monitor" employees because they often move into other Police Department positions.

4. Prepare the necessary documents to establish a Mesa Town Center Parking Enterprise Fund (See page 14 of the Plan).

Mr. Hutchinson advised that staff has additional work to complete on this item prior to presenting the documents for Council approval, but staff is seeking Council direction relative to the concept of establishing an Enterprise Fund.

Responding to Mayor Hawker's questions regarding the manner in which documentation would be formulated and the possible participation of a private company in a bid process, City Attorney Debbie Spinner advised that staff has not yet fully investigated these aspects.

Mayor Hawker noted that the term "Enterprise Fund" implies that profits are generated, and he asked if the City would be compensated for the land.

Mr. Hutchinson stated that alternatives are being investigated regarding the issue, and he added that staff is inclined to recommend that the City continue to contract with the Mesa Town Center Corporation.

Mr. Verploegen noted that the parking management area includes donated land for parking, improvement districts that have purchased land, and many different customer and employee parking arrangements.

Mayor Hawker advised that the Council agreed to have staff continue to investigate the alternatives and to provide updated information as the process moves forward.

5. Develop an implementation strategy for the remaining recommendations of the Plan (See pages 12-30 of the Plan).

Mayor Hawker noted that this item relates to the budget and prioritization of projects planned in the downtown area. He suggested that staff project future routes for buses and mass transit through the year 2010.

Councilmember Griswold concurred with the proposed process that staff address the individual items and provide additional information for Council consideration at a future date.

3. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of boards and committees.

- a. Downtown Development Committee meeting held October 21, 2004.
- b. Historic Preservation Committee meeting held November 4, 2004.
- c. Parks and Recreation Board meeting held December 8, 2004.

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

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Hawker-Griswold-Jones-Thom-Walters
NAYS - None
ABSENT - Rawles-Whalen

The Mayor declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

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

Vice Mayor Walters: Closing ceremony for the old Mesa Arts Center.

Councilmember Griswold: Apache Wells Board Meeting

5. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

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

Monday, January 3, 2005, TBA – Study Session

Monday, January 3, 2005, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

5. Prescheduled public opinion appearances.

There were no prescheduled public opinion appearances.

6. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

7. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 5:32 p.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 20th day of December 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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