

COUNCIL MINUTES

September 6, 2001

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Council Planning Session at the Police Central Community Room, 120 N. Robson Street, on September 6, 2001 at 9:33 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker
Jim Davidson
Bill Jaffa
Dennis Kavanaugh
Pat Pomeroy
Claudia Walters
Mike Whalen

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Barbara Jones

Facilitator Cheryl Austin-Brown introduced herself to the members of the Council and staff present at the Planning Session and encouraged the Council to voice their opinions and provide input throughout the process.

Introduction:

- a. Goals, guiding principles, focus on Mesa
- b. Results of pre-meeting survey

Ms. Austin-Brown referred to handouts distributed to the members of the Council, including copies of the results of pre-session interviews she conducted with Council. She noted that the responses indicate that the various members share many of the same goals and priorities. The Council reviewed the results of the surveys, which touched on goals, current issues facing Mesa, other issues, trends impacting Mesa, strengths and weaknesses of the City Council, strengths and weaknesses of staff, the gifts each member brings to the City Council and the benefits the members receive as a Councilmember.

Set the Stage: Big Picture.

- a. Review of Council's 2000 - 2001 accomplishments
- b. City Council Work Plan: revisit
- c. Revisit Ideal Communications
- d. Overview of Organizational Strategic Plan

Ms. Austin-Brown requested that the Council review the list of their 2000-2001 accomplishments and noted that the list contains a significant amount of items. She requested that the Council provide

additional input regarding other accomplishments that have occurred over the past year that are not included on the list.

Mayor Hawker stated that the planning process the Council participated in last year assisted them in reaching a consensus on quite a few of the major issues. He said that the session helped the Council to focus on the goals they wanted to accomplish and assisted them in the prioritization process. Mayor Hawker also stated that he thought the last year has been a positive one and added that he is pleased with the amount of information/recommendations that the entire Council receives from members who serve on MAG agencies and other outside organizations. He commended the Council for their proactive participation on those important boards and committees.

Councilmember Kavanaugh stated the opinion that the past year has been productive and positive results have been realized for the entire City.

Vice Mayor Davidson commented that the housing roundtable that City Manager Mike Hutchinson is chairing should be added to the list of accomplishments. The group's purpose is to restore/revitalize neighborhoods and efforts such as these are extremely valuable. In addition, direction has been given by staff to the citizen advisory groups relative to updates to the City's development guidelines and residential development guidelines.

Mayor Hawker noted that Vision 2025 will have 16 separate elements.

Councilmember Whalen said that the Council's commitment to improve the City's building design process will positively impact the entire community and added that new staff has been hired, a new director has been appointed and significant positive changes in the manner in which the City conducts business are anticipated.

Councilmember Jaffa noted that although they are not yet completed, residential development guidelines are being updated and big box issues are being addressed. In addition, Desert Uplands Guidelines will also be revisited.

Mayor Hawker referred to page 2 of 38 in the Council's Work Plan and asked for a clarification regarding the "software issues that have delayed the long-range forecasting process." Deputy City Manager Debra Dollar explained that a software package is being built and that previous issues have been resolved. Ms. Dollar added the opinion that the program will be sophisticated and achieve the desired results.

Councilmember Jaffa said that an additional accomplishment to be added to the list is the extensive amount of infrastructure that has gone into Williams Gateway Airport.

Councilmember Kavanaugh commented that he has greatly appreciated the periodic updates he received on the work plan throughout the year and said that summary and Council materials as well as City Manager's reports have greatly improved.

Councilmember Pomeroy stated that efforts have also been expended to improve Mesa's image.

On the issue of Communications, Ms. Austin-Brown said that Mayor Hawker requested that this item be placed on the agenda of this planning session since it generated good discussion at the last session and helped to improve communication efforts.

Mayor Hawker noted that on the first and third Mondays of the month, prior to the Council Study Sessions and Regular Council Meetings, he is available to meet with the members of the Council for briefings. He said that not many Councilmembers have availed themselves of this opportunity because of conflicting schedules, but added that he would like the Council to provide input on how this area could be improved.

Councilmember Jaffa said that the City has a hard working Council and Mayor and when a member goes out into the community to speak on an issue, it should first be made clear whether it is his or her individual opinion that is being expressed or the opinion of the Council as a whole. He added that whatever is said to one another and to the public must be honest and frank.

Councilmember Walters commented that perception exists that the Mayor's word goes farther than the members of the Council but that does not mean that the Council voted on an issue. She said the Mayor should not have to clarify each time who he is speaking on behalf of and agreed that discussion should occur to determine a more appropriate time to schedule briefing sessions with the Mayor.

Councilmember Whalen expressed the opinion that when issues of a controversial nature arise, such as Day Labor, the Mayor should run his ideas/views by the other Councilmembers prior to making a statement. He added that on issues with potentially large impacts, it would be beneficial for all of the members of the Council to consult with one another before issuing statements.

Vice Mayor Davidson stated that he is not sure he agrees with Councilmember Whalen's comments and cautioned against hampering and hindering the individuality of each Councilmember.

Councilmember Kavanaugh said that he thought it would be helpful to have dialogue but stressed the importance of having faith and trust in one another. He said that guidance and feedback should be sought but the information that is obtained should not be used to enhance the members own agendas.

Councilmember Pomeroy stated that the sheer number of spontaneous issues that arise would make it impossible to have dialogue among all the members of the Council prior to issuing statements.

Ms. Austin-Brown commented that it appears the Council would like to look at other options for getting together with the Mayor for briefings and find time to talk before big controversial issues are spoken about.

Vice Mayor Davidson said that he doesn't agree with the second item listed by Ms. Austin-Brown and believes the members of the Council should be spontaneous and retain their unique points of view.

Councilmember Whalen clarified that he is not asking the Mayor to change his opinions, just to let the other members of the Council know what those opinions are before they become public.

Councilmember Walters said that she believes it is important for the Mayor to let the members of the Council know when a significant issue occurs but said she does not believe there is ever enough time to solicit seven opinions and develop a stance that represents the views of all the members.

Mayor Hawker commented that he should and will utilize the Vice Mayor on a more frequent basis. He said he and Vice Mayor Davidson will share ideas and then the Vice Mayor and his staff will help get the word out to the other members of the Council.

In response to a request for input on the City Manager's interaction with the Council, Councilmember Kavanaugh said that he appreciates the meetings that he has with Mr. Hutchinson once or twice a month, ranging in time from 5 minutes to 40, and said he would encourage the continuation of that process.

Councilmember Pomeroy agreed with Councilmember Kavanaugh's remarks.

Vice Mayor Davidson noted that sometimes citizen advisory board meetings are cancelled and notification does not go out in time. He asked Mr. Hutchinson to address this issue and improve cancellation notifications.

Councilmember Jaffa said that he enjoys the informal meetings he attends with the City Manager and stated the opinion that such meetings have helped bring development to the City.

Vice Mayor Davidson commented that although managers and staff attend most of the Council meetings, Redevelopment Director Dick Mulligan has not been in attendance and requested that he be asked to attend the meetings on a consistent basis.

Councilmember Walters said that she would like formal meetings to be held where the Councilmembers would have an opportunity to present a list of items they want to address. She added that the formal meetings would be in addition to the informal meetings.

Mayor Hawker discussed the fact that because of the office configuration, he has no idea when the various members of the Council are actually in their offices. He encouraged the members to drop by his office anytime they are on the floor and if he is available to meet with him to discuss issues.

Councilmember Kavanaugh agreed that the office configuration does not support congeniality. He discussed the gulf that has been created and said that the space set up retards and delays communication.

Councilmember Walters said that she would like to discuss philosophy as opposed to decision-making. She stated the opinion that it would be beneficial if there were specific designated times for the Councilmembers to be in their offices but added that she is also aware of the fact that her schedule is probably more flexible than those of the other members.

Mayor Hawker informed the Council that his schedule is on the computer and they can access it at their convenience.

Discussion ensued among the members of the Council relative to the large number of contracts that are approved at the Regular Council Meetings and the fact that one of the charter amendments being proposed for placement on the March 2002 ballot would increase the limit on the contracts that must be approved by the Council. This action would significantly decrease the amount of time the Council currently spends on contract issues.

Strategic Plan:

City Manager Mike Hutchinson said that copies of the Strategic Plan were distributed to the members of the Council and commended staff who expended significant effort in developing the plan. Mr. Hutchinson commented on KRA's (Key Result Areas) and said that the Council will see much of this in the budget in the future.

Councilmember Jaffa stated the opinion that the Plan is a good model for dealing with and implementing policy.

Councilmember Pomeroy said that he has received many positive comments about the high level of customer service the citizens receive from City employees.

Mr. Hutchinson stated that new training programs are being implemented which he believes will also positively impact customer service.

Councilmember Walters commented on the fact that she has received complaints regarding the amount of time it takes to go through the building permit process and said that standards must be improved. Mr. Hutchinson said that staff is attempting to benchmark with other agencies and has joined a national group to compare their standards to Mesa's.

Councilmember Kavanaugh discussed the importance of information technology (IT) and said that it is vital to the success of a community. He also discussed the role of CIO's (Chief Information Officers).

Councilmember Whalen commented on the building permit and development process and said that he would like to schedule a meeting to address this issue. He said that the issues haven't changed, other than the fact that new staff, including a new director, have been hired. He said that the Council needs to explore this matter from a policy standpoint.

Ms. Austin-Brown said that items that are important to the Council but are not included as part of the work plan, will be placed on a separate list entitled "Study Session Agenda Items."

Vice Mayor Davidson said that he has attended monthly meetings with developers and that the feedback he has received has been mixed. He added that residential home builders' still comment that Mesa is a relatively easy City in which to get a permit.

Councilmember Whalen stated that a majority of the negative comments he receives are coming from the business development community.

Mr. Hutchinson advised that a meeting will be scheduled to address this issue.

Vice Mayor Davidson referred to page 26, objective #5, and said that affordability language is still missing from this area. He asked that this be addressed.

Councilmember Walters agreed with Councilmember Kavanaugh's comments relative to the importance of IT and said she hopes that a "Virtual Mesa" website will be developed in the new future that will allow citizens to access the City of Mesa and extensive locations, including the Chamber of Commerce, through that site.

(At 10:35 a.m. the Council declared a break and the meeting reconvened at 10:45 a.m.)

Council Action Plan: Short and Long Term

Ms. Austin-Brown requested that the Council review the previous Council Work Plan and determine the items that should remain a priority, items that should be removed, and identify new items that should be added to the list.

Extensive discussion ensued relative to establishing the various Work Plan categories and priorities. And it was determined that the following issues will be added to the Council Workplan:

- Transportation
- Redevelopment
- Standards for New Development
- Communication
- Economic Development

Items determined appropriate for placement on a "Short-Term Action Plan" include:

- Discuss Day Labor issue
- Review status of Town Center Redevelopment Sites
- Discuss power line corridor issues
- Update on Freeway landscaping issues
- Hear an update on canal path development
- Update on Williams Gateway Regional Economic Activity Area
- Update on Arts Center Construction Schedule
- Joint Meeting with Economic Development Advisory Board
- Discuss Regional Governance Issues (MAG, RPTA, Light Rail)
- Review status of mining operations along 202
- Discuss timing for future bond authorizations
- Discuss the practice of inclusionary zoning
- Hear an update on Performing Arts fundraising
- Review Building Permit and Development process
- Discuss the development of an Economic Development Plan for Falcon Field
- Review budget process for the upcoming year
- Monitor FAA Northwest 2000 Study
- Monitor progress of 2025 – A Shared Vision Plan
- Monitor East Mesa Flood Control Study
- Hear status of Development Guidelines' changes
- Discuss proposed transportation election issues and timing

The Council continued discussions to identify on-going goals to be included in the 2001-2002 Council Workplan during lunch. The following items were identified:

- Balanced revenue streams
- Mesa as an Entertainment and Sports designation (Aquatics, Golf, etc.)
- Williams Gateway Airport as an economic center for the East Valley

- Balance of residential/commercial/industrial development
- Exceptional public safety, Police and Fire
- Mature and well-maintained neighborhoods
- Desert development and harmony in Northeast Mesa
- Parks and Open Space throughout the City of Mesa
- Williams Gateway Regional Airport with Passengers and Cargo
- Vibrant Downtown with mid-rise residential
- Zoning and infrastructure support
- Rio Salado is finished (Va Shly'ay Akimel)
- City beautification
- All neighborhoods represented by Neighborhood Associations
- Energy System in place that will meet needs and is non-polluting
- Encourage cooperative relationships between educational partners in the City of Mesa
- Health, housing and human services
- Host major event in the East Valley
- Enterprise Accounts continue to fund government expenditures
- Citizen access to City services via Internet
- Immigration work agreement in place in Mesa
- Regional Cooperation, Communication with other government groups
- Leisure time activities
- Quality construction (landscape and buildings)
- Dedicated public transit/mass transit in place
- Diverse active communities working harmoniously
- Mesa has fair share of County, State and Federal facilities

In addition, the Council discussed:

- Finishing the four (4) parts of Vision 2025, General Plan, Economic Development Plan, Parks Plan and Transportation Plan and
- Defining specifics to improve Mesa's image

Mayor Hawker thanked Ms. Austin-Brown for her efforts at the Session and also thanked the members of the Council and staff. He stated the opinion that the Planning Session was extremely worthwhile and the goals and priorities that have been identified are both challenging and appropriate.

Adjournment:

Without objection, the Council Planning Session adjourned at 12:42 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 Planning Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 6th day of September, 2001. 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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