

# MEETING MINUTES

Office of Economic Development  
Economic Development Advisory Board  
City Council Chambers - Lower Level  
57 E. 1st Street  
Mesa, AZ 85201

Date: October 1, 2013 Time: 7:30am

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## MEMBERS PRESENT

Rich Adams  
Terry Benelli  
Mitzi Montoya  
Jeff Pitcher  
Laura Snow  
Jo Wilson

## EX-OFFICIO

Mayor Scott Smith (excused)  
Chris Brady (excused)  
Brian Campbell  
Sally Harrison

## STAFF PRESENT

Karen McNulty  
Jaye O'Donnell

## MEMBERS ABSENT

James Christensen (excused)  
Jeff Crockett (unexcused)  
Tony Ham (excused)  
Steve Shope (excused)  
Tony Siebers (excused)

## GUESTS

Tom Ellsworth  
Amy Trethaway  
John Wesley

### 1. Chair's Call To Order

Chair Rich Adams called the October 1, 2013 meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Board to order at 7:35 a.m. at the City Council Chambers, Lower Level, 57 E. 1st Street, Mesa, AZ 85201.

### 2. Items from Citizens Present

None.

### 3. Approval of Minutes from August 6, 2013, Board Meeting

Chair Adams called for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on August 6, 2013.

**MOTION:** Terry Benelli moved that the minutes from August 6, 2013, be approved.  
**SECOND:** Jo Wilson  
**DECISION:** Passed unanimously.

#### **4. Mesa Counts on College Update**

Amy Trethaway, Mesa Counts on College Director, stated Mesa Counts on College is a partnership between the City of Mesa, Mesa Public Schools (MPS) and Mesa Community College (MCC). A grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation three years ago made the Mesa Counts on College initiative a reality. Ms. Trethaway's full time job as Director places her under the supervision of the City Manager. Once the grant funding ended, a mission statement was established for the continuance of the program with a focus on college completion and workforce readiness. The target population of this program is low income Mesa youth with little or no post-secondary education. With high remediation rates in the core areas of reading, math and English, approximately half of the graduates of Mesa schools are in need of remedial education before college courses.

One of the key strategies includes resource development; specifically, a group of individuals that will raise funds by obtaining grants, donations and engaging the community. Another important strategy involves workforce development by exposing high school students to experiences relevant to their interests. Community engagement, a third initiative, involves attempting to engage disconnected youth who are not in the educational system at all and attempt to reengage them in post-secondary endeavors including certificate programs as well as two-year degrees.

Lastly, a key strategy is workforce development; namely, the Learn to Earn Program. This program includes internships for juniors and seniors learning about jobs such as experienced this past year by students in the healthcare field. The program desires to expand this initiative in the future to the other areas such as the aerospace program. Research is underway for a College Access Center similar to the College Depot in Phoenix. This center provides an opportunity for students to go to the facility and obtain information for items such as college admission, tuition assistance, and information for parents and so forth.

The program is looking to expand beyond the public schools to new partners such as Mesa United Way, New Leaf/Mesa CAN and MCC downtown campus. Plans are also underway to develop partnerships with all of the new colleges in Mesa.

Chair Adams inquired about the involvement of the Economic Development Department with this initiative. Ms. Trethaway assured the Board that Economic Development has been involved from the very beginning.

Jo Wilson opined that Mesa has stepped forward to take leadership with the grant and made it a priority along with the Mayor's HEATT initiative.

Terry Benelli requested a review of the numbers from the three-year grant program which indicated the success rate. Ms. Trethaway replied that systemic change between the community and the school was the primary goal. As far as programs for students directly, 43 successfully completed the internship program in healthcare. In addition, an unknown number of students went through the GED to MCC program.

Jeff Pitcher asked how the program is getting the word out to the City. Ms. Trethaway stated that a great deal of energy has not been put into that aspect yet since the program is fledgling and in its infancy. She believes community support and commitment are vital before inviting students through marketing into this program.

Mitzi Montoya encouraged EVIT partnership and to consider ASU as well which in turn can create an ongoing and capable workforce that continues to see the importance of education.

Chair Adams inquired about the targets set for the program. Ms. Trethaway responded that the original target was the low-income youth of Mesa, but has not decided yet if that is the appropriate goal. Doubling the completion rate among low-income youth is a priority of the program. Current completion rate of 7% is targeted at 14% in the next 10 years.

Brian Campbell expressed that ASU's Dr. Crow has stated that over 9,000 students applying are not ready for a four-year program and are in need of remediation so the school is exploring programs to assist with this issue. The education component from an economic development perspective is more than a workforce component: technology initiative and innovation baseline need to be engaged in by the community more aggressively.

Jaye O'Donnell indicated that working to identify educational initiatives to address the marketing for resources is a broader option. She further expressed the possibility to invite MPS and MCC to future meetings to find out how they are drilling down on remediation and how the community can support this endeavor.

Jo Wilson declared that ASU and MCC are currently working together in the remedial areas. With remediation more of a focus in the current climate, schools are finding the expense great for providing these services.

Mitzi Montoya reminded the Board of the importance of stem fields; specifically, training and educating in a variety of disciplines. Math readiness is important and is being realized as an issue even before high school. She further acknowledged that the state of Arizona is on the decline for students' readiness to enter into post-secondary education endeavors.

Brian Campbell, as Chair of the EDAB Higher Education Committee, offered to help connect the dots with all of the educational partners.

Chair Adams offered the resources of EDAB to help Mesa Counts on College in their efforts.

## **5. General Plan Update**

John Wesley, the Planning and Zoning Director, assured the Board that the first draft is virtually completed and ready to present to the public. The goals include attracting employment and a high-quality living environment.

The General Plan focuses on employment opportunities, creates sense of neighborhoods as well as public spaces where residents and visitors will want to frequent such as parks, shopping and entertainment. By creating a sense of place, the plan hopes to transform the City. The City expects to add 70,000 dwelling units over the next years but still maintain current neighborhoods and making them even greater. Further recognition of public spaces to attract and retain jobs and residences is a priority. These can draw people together by capitalizing on public spaces such as parks, patios and dining areas. Culturally, the plan seeks to work with the Mesa Arts Center, libraries as well as public recreation facilities.

A draft of the character area map discloses more flexibility in the future for employment areas, neighborhood areas, commercial, downtown as well as mixed use activity such as car dealers, malls and entertainment.

Laura Snow requested to review the incorporation of health into the community in the General Plan. Mr. Wesley responded that the plan is not all-inclusive; however, the five basic elements include health improvement encompassing but not limited to items such as walkability and urban gardens.

Mr. Tom Ellsworth pointed out one of the key areas is the economy. Projections indicate 130,000 new jobs in the next 30 years which in turn creates a stable economy. The key elements include a business climate and key industries and employment areas. As far as workforce development, the key is education, training and development. Four key areas of the City include the downtown and Main Street area, Falcon Field, Superstition area and Mesa Gateway. The Power and Main area is projected to grow in the next 30 years as well. In addition, the light rail should affect the Broadway business corridor area.

Regional collaboration is the key to facilitating economic growth and development. The infrastructure should attract higher end projects. Retail development and revitalization are seen as crucial elements.

The ultimate goal of the plan is to grow stable and diverse jobs as well as create interesting and exciting places. The next steps include the first draft slated to finish in October then focus on village meetings in the community. The second draft is planned to be completed by January in anticipation of finalization by May then on the ballot by November of 2014.

Chair Adams observed that from a planning and zoning perspective the statement on Slide 28, ***Economic Development P1: Preserve designated employment areas for future job growth*** needs to be stated strong enough to give the Planning Department what it needs to effectively respond in the negative for encroachment of residential in areas designated non-residential. Mr. Wesley responded that any statement in the plan will be as strong as the Advisory Board and City Council want to make it. This is the goal to preserve these areas.

Mr. Campbell indicated that the City has great opportunities in the Gateway area. He emphasized we are in a national and international competition for businesses. It dramatically undercuts our competitiveness when you get that residential encroachment in these key areas. All of the good things in the plan do not happen without the baseline of the economic strength beneath them. He pointed out that Detroit and Chicago have struggled with this very issue. This is what happens to a community that loses its economic base. He stressed his concern with the plan presented. This plan has more vagueness and more flexibility than the plan presented in June. We need to protect Mesa from becoming Detroit. He stressed the Planning Department needs to empower themselves to be able to say no to the pressure they are going to receive for residential developments.

## **6. Council Members to Attend EDAB Meetings**

Councilmember Glover has been invited to attend the November 5, 2013 meeting. Councilmember Luna is scheduled to attend the December 3, 2013 meeting. The Board discussed the idea that council members be exposed to areas of the City other than their particular district in order to see how everything fits together. Furthermore, perhaps better

support for preserving the economic zones might be realized through their involvement of the overall City Plan.

**7. Director's Report**

Mr. Bill Jabjiniak is attending the Economic Development Conference this week. Able Engineering and Gateway Airport will recognize the Economic Development Department at a luncheon tomorrow. The following week a conference in Philadelphia will notably recognize the department with two awards; namely, the newsletter with a gold award and the downtown development summit with a silver award. This reflects favorably on the efforts of the community. The department welcomes input for topics or presentations for future meetings.

**8. Other Business**

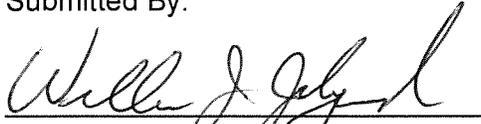
GPEC will host its annual dinner October 17, 2013, with exciting news to share at that time.

Tuesday, November 5, 2013, will be the next board meeting.

**9. Adjournment**

Chair Adams adjourned the Board meeting at 8:36 a.m.

Submitted By:



William J. Jabjiniak  
Economic Development Department Director  
(Prepared by Jeanne LaRue)

