

COUNCIL MINUTES

October 3, 1996

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Policy Session in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on October 3, 1996 at 4:50 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Wayne Brown
Pat Gilbert
John Giles
T. Farrell Jensen
Dennis Kavanaugh
Joan Payne
Jim Stapley

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster
Wayne Balmer
Cindy Barris
Neal Beets
John Gendron
Mike Hutchinson
Lars Jarvie
Barbara Jones
Harry Kent
Wayne Korinek

STAFF PRESENT (CONT.)

Karen Kurtz
Frank Mizner
Ruth Anne Norris
Ellen Pence
Bryan Raines
Andrea Rasizer
Tom Remes
Denise Samuel
Mindy White
Ralph Wisz

1. Discuss proposed motto, mission statement, and values.

Assistant City Manager Mike Hutchinson reported that after receiving input/feedback from employees, a new motto, mission statement, and values statement have been proposed for the City. Executive Assistant Ellen Pence reviewed the proposed motto and statements:

Motto

Great People, Quality Service!

Mission Statement

We are dedicated to providing quality City services for Mesa residents, businesses, and visitors.

Values

We serve with honor and integrity.
We treat everyone with fairness and respect.
We provide friendly and efficient service.
We value the public's confidence and trust.
We are responsible for our actions.
We pursue excellence.
We work as a team.
We make Mesa even better.

Ms. Pence briefly outlined anticipated marketing efforts and guidelines for use of the motto and statements.

Mayor Brown commended staff for their work.

2. Consider assignment of Councilmembers to City advisory boards and committees.

Mayor Brown recommended the following Councilmember assignments to boards and committees:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

Mayor Brown

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Vice Mayor Gilbert (Chairman, Transportation Committee)

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD

Councilmember Giles (Boardmember, Mesa Town Center Corporation)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

Councilmember Jensen (Chairman, General Development Committee)

MUSEUM AND CULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

Councilmember Kavanaugh (Chairman, Utility Committee)

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Councilmember Payne (Chairman, Fire Committee)

CRIME PREVENTION ADVISORY BOARD

Councilmember Stapley (Chairman, Police Committee)

It was moved by Councilmember Stapley, seconded by Vice Mayor Gilbert, that the Council concur with the Mayor's recommendations and the assignments be confirmed.

Carried unanimously.

Vice Mayor Gilbert noted the importance of the City's boards and commissions and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to discuss methods to further improve their effectiveness.

3. Review the requirement for 3'-high screen walls at certain locations.

Community Development Manager Wayne Balmer stated that the City's Zoning Ordinance currently requires 3'-high screening walls for parking areas and driving lanes adjacent to the required yard abutting a public street. Mr. Balmer indicated that this provision is generally well accepted by the public and the development community, with the exception of new/used car dealers who do not want vehicles/display areas screened from street view. Mr. Balmer advised that many auto dealers have applied for, and received, variances to reduce the height of the screen wall and/or to allow an open-type fence.

Mr. Balmer said that in recognizing the unique circumstances of vehicle dealers, it is the suggestion of staff that Council consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the height of the required screen wall from 3' to 18" for vehicle dealerships. Mr. Balmer expressed the opinion that the reduced height represents an appropriate compromise that is sufficient to allow vehicles to be seen while maintaining the streetscape.

Brief discussion ensued concerning the role of the Design Review Board and screening walls as elements conducive to graffiti and crime. Mayor Brown spoke in support of the use of wrought iron as fencing material.

4. Shopping carts - out of control.

Councilmember Stapley outlined a plan proposed by a contractor to retrieve shopping carts on behalf of the City and return them to their owners.

City Attorney Neal Beets noted that the City has control over public rights-of-way but could not authorize individuals to enter private property to retrieve shopping carts. Mr. Beets commented that the City could perhaps contract with an individual but a policy decision would be involved regarding the responsibility of the City to clear rights-of-way of such items.

Mr. Beets stated that it is his understanding that many businesses such as grocery stores currently pay individuals to retrieve and return their shopping carts. Councilmember Stapley concurred but said that a contract with the City would authorize the removal of carts from the rights-of-way. Councilmember Stapley suggested that he and Mr. Beets meet with the individual proposing the contract to further discuss the matter.

Mr. Beets noted that the shopping carts are not the property of the City but that the City has the authority to remove the carts from rights-of-way when, for example, deemed necessary for public safety.

Mayor Brown clarified that the individual is seeking authorization to remove shopping carts and that he would then charge owners for the return of the carts.

Discussion ensued among the Council relative to concerns regarding the proposal.

Councilmember Stapley indicated his intention to further investigate this issue.

5. Hear an update and further consideration concerning halfway houses.

Mr. Balmer provided background information regarding the City's change in March 1996 to incorporate the operation of halfway houses as part of the Council Use Permit (CUP) process. Mr. Balmer reported that staff has not yet developed standards for the Council Use Permit, in part due to Council's request to additionally consider a licensing program for halfway houses. Mr. Balmer indicated that the State currently has a licensing mechanism but has chosen not to license halfway houses included on a list presented by the City. Mr. Balmer said that the City is currently attempting to develop CUP standards and possible licensing requirements on the local level.

Mr. Balmer advised that since March, no new halfway houses have been proposed in Mesa and some existing houses are no longer in operation. Mr. Balmer noted that concerns remain relative to compatibility with residential development and that neighbors have been asked to identify issues of importance.

Human Services Coordinator Karen Kurtz reported that she has had discussions with residents and halfway house providers in one particular neighborhood concerning difficulties and benefits of the halfway house program and elements recommended for inclusion in licensing provisions. Ms. Kurtz said that she plans to schedule a meeting within the next two weeks between the residents and providers to identify specific incidents and potential solutions related to the neighborhood halfway houses.

Council and staff spoke regarding the anticipated outcome of the meeting between residents and providers, attempts by residents to require State regulation, and input from the Residential Recovery Association. Mr. Balmer stated that once standards to promote neighborhood compatibility are established, it is the intent of staff to request that the Association encourage voluntary adoption of the standards by halfway house operators. Mr. Balmer commented that it is staff's suggestion to focus efforts toward a "good neighbor" policy rather than licensing.

Councilmember Jensen questioned conditions for citing and closing halfway houses. Zoning Administrator John Gendron noted that the City's current halfway houses have been grandfathered under the new City ordinance. Brief discussion ensued concerning an establishment on North Date Street and pending actions to determine whether the facility is being operated unlawfully as a halfway house.

In response to a request for clarification from Councilmember Giles, Ms. Kurtz indicated that staff has not precluded licensing in relation to halfway houses but would prefer not to implement licensing regulations without first considering alternative options.

Mayor Brown requested that this issue be discussed further at the next Policy Session.

6. Review and discuss proposed residential development in Southeast Mesa.

Mr. Balmer requested Council policy direction regarding development trends for the southeast portion of the City, noting potential significant pressures on the area south of the Superstition Freeway and east of the future San Tan Freeway as the last major source of readily available land in Mesa for production home development. Mr. Balmer referred to maps and advised that several large parcels have entered the zoning review and approval process and are scheduled for Planning and Zoning and/or Council consideration in the near future.

Mr. Balmer outlined factors to consider when discussing development trends in the area, including school impacts (one-third of the Gilbert District lies within Mesa's City limits), infrastructure, existing land uses, general development trends, and regional issues. Mr. Balmer indicated that the new General Plan designates this area primarily as medium-density residential, but expressed concern that the recent moratorium in the Town of Gilbert and the residential diversity standards (point system) in the City of Chandler may induce developers to construct housing in this area on the lower end of the spectrum. Mr. Balmer stated that the

Planning and Zoning Board has requested that a joint meeting be scheduled with Council to discuss residential diversity and design guidelines/requirements for Mesa.

Councilmember Payne asked that this issue be placed on a future Study Session agenda for additional review. Councilmember Payne advised that she has received conflicting testimony pertaining to residential encroachment at Williams Gateway Airport. Councilmember Payne requested a verbatim transcript of the meeting of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors concerning the Sandhu case (owner of property adjacent to the GM Proving Grounds) and the City Council meeting where a request was presented to incorporate the Williams Regional Planning Study into the City's updated General Plan.

In response to a request from Vice Mayor Gilbert, Mr. Balmer explained the recently approved moratorium for the Town of Gilbert (to become effective in November 1996) and Chandler's residential diversity standards. Mr. Balmer stated that he can provide Council a copy of Gilbert's ordinance adopting the moratorium.

(At 4:57 p.m., Councilmember Payne was excused for the remainder of the meeting.)

Council noted the importance of this area as the "final frontier" for large-scale home construction in Mesa and commended staff for their proactive approach to the issue of development. The Council requested information pertaining to impact fees, design guidelines/standards in surrounding communities, comparisons among Valley communities of average household costs, and future services (Police officers, libraries, parks facilities/programs, etc.) necessary to accommodate anticipated growth. Council suggested future discussion with the Chandler and Gilbert Councils concerning residential development.

7. Review and discuss new regulations concerning possessory interest tax.

Mr. Hutchinson related recent changes to state law that now require government lessors (cities) to collect a new excise tax in place of the possessory interest tax formerly collected by Maricopa County. Mr. Hutchinson advised that lessees in Mesa have been personally notified in advance or provided their tax packet by a staff member who could explain the material to them.

8. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

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

Friday, October 4, 1996, 7:30 a.m. - Study Session

Monday, October 7, 1996, 5:30 p.m. - Regular Council Meeting

Mr. Luster advised that the October 11, 1996 Study Session has been canceled and that the October 23, 1996 Joint Dinner Meeting with the Chandler City Council will be rescheduled.

9. Adjournment.

It was moved by Councilmember Stapley, seconded by Vice Mayor Gilbert, that the Policy Session adjourn at 5:26 p.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 Policy Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 3rd day of October 1996. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 25th day of October 1996

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK