

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 16, 2000

The General Development Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on October 16, 2000 at 3:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Claudia Walters, Chairman
Jim Davidson
Mike Whalen

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson

COUNCIL PRESENT

Bill Jaffa

Chairman Walters welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Discuss and consider proposed amendments to the Peddlers, Solicitors, and Transient Merchant's Ordinance relating to sidewalk vendors operating within the designated Redevelopment Area boundaries.

Assistant to the City Manager Brian Raines, Redevelopment Director Greg Marek and Redevelopment Specialist Shelly Allen addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item. Mr. Raines stated that the purpose of this agenda item is to present proposed amendments to the Peddlers, Solicitors, and Transient Merchants Ordinance relating to sidewalk vendors operating within the designated Redevelopment Area boundaries. (See Attachment 1.)

Ms. Allen addressed the Committee and stated that at their meeting on September 21, 2000, the Downtown Development Committee (DDC) voted 6-0 to recommend that the City Council approve the proposed ordinance. (See Attachment 2.) Ms. Allen discussed calls that staff received from sidewalk vendors requesting permission to operate within the designated Redevelopment Area and said that a call was received from one of the City of Mesa Court Magistrates requesting that a sidewalk vendor have the opportunity to operate outside the Court building. She stated that the Court building is located within the designated Town Center Redevelopment Area. Ms. Allen noted that the current Sidewalk Vendor Ordinance prohibits sidewalk vendors from operating from any location within the Town Center Redevelopment Area boundaries.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the City of Mesa recently invested \$14 million on the Main Street Streetscape Project, creating a pedestrian friendly environment along Main Street, Macdonald Street and Robson, the fact that allowing street vendors in downtown will help develop the pedestrian environment, staff's recommendation that sidewalk vendors requesting permission to operate in the Town Center area be expected to operate from a higher quality designed facility, the fact that staff is also recommending the prior to allowing sidewalk vendors to operate in the downtown area, they must first apply for and obtain a Special Use Permit to operate within a specifically designated area.

Mr. Marek commented that the proposed ordinance will cover the entire redevelopment area.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the City's ability to prevent vendors from selling sexually explicit materials, staff's opinion that the City may be able to regulate that area based on the fact that a Special Use Permit will be required and this could be part of regulating what is being sold in the downtown area, staff's intent to further research this area, and concerns expressed by Committeemember Davidson relative to enforcement and approval standards.

Assistant City Attorney Joe Padilla stated the opinion that it would be extremely difficult to regulate the materials and discussed free speech rights.

Committeemember Davidson said he does have significant concerns regarding this issue, particularly opening up a process with very little controls in place, but recognizes that staff is still working on the matter in an effort to "fine-tune" the ordinance and process.

Ms. Allen stated that staff is seeking recommendations at this point and is not requesting that the Committee vote on this agenda item. Committeemember Davidson said he supports the proposed amendments and strongly encourages staff to continue to work on the enforcement component of the ordinance.

Chairman Walters stated the opinion that the Special Use Permits will provide some measure of control and indicated support for staff's recommendations.

Chairman Walters thanked staff for their presentation.

2. Further discussion and consideration concerning the review of the PricewaterhouseCoopers study of the Community Center and Amphitheatre.

Deputy City Manager Debra Dollar stated that in September the Council heard a presentation of the consultant PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) regarding a study of the Convention, Community Center and Amphitheatre and following extensive discussion, it was referred to the General Development Committee for your review and analysis. She said that staff will present the highlights of the study and offer suggestions on how to proceed.

Community Services Manager Wayne Korinek and Community Center Director Eric Norenberg addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item and briefly outlined the contents of a report submitted to the Committee. (See Attachment 3.) Mr. Korinek said that staff is seeking guidance and direction from the Committee and noted that a funding sources for the proposed work has not been identified. He added that it has become increasingly more difficult to sell space, particularly in view of the age and deteriorating conditions of the facilities.

Chairman Walters stated that should the Mesa Verde Project go forward, it will significantly impact what will be done to these facilities and added that based on the fact that no monies are available for improvements at this time, suggested that this issue be put on hold pending the outcome of the Mesa Verde project.

Committeemember Whalen indicated that he is well aware of the condition of those facilities and said he is not sure that a public meeting is in order at this point in time. He said that considerable time must be spent in looking at what needs to be done and said that he would support the continuation of this issue on the staff level but would hesitate to bring it forward in a public forum at this point.

Committeemember Davidson commented on the fact that a significant amount of time and money has gone into the report and stated the opinion that this issue should be discussed on the Council level to gain their input and suggestions. He said he is concerned that if this matter is postponed the meaning of the PWC report will be lessened over time and an issue that is of critical importance will be placed in a position of being a lower priority.

In response to a request for clarification from Committeemember Davidson, Chairman Walters said that this report has been forwarded to the General Development Committee for further review and recommendations and said her suggestion is that this proposal be tracked along with the Mesa Verde project. She stated that if the Mesa Verde project becomes a reality, it will impact what is done at the Conference Center. Chairman Walters stressed the importance of not duplicating Mesa Verde's space, but rather enhance and complement what they are developing. She said she is unwilling to invest a lot of time in something that may not happen but agreed that timing is also important. Chairman Walters stated that she would be opposed to scheduling public hearings on this issue at this time.

Robert Brinton, Director of the Convention and Visitor's Bureau, commented that the Bureau broke this down into three parts, short, intermediate and long term priorities. He agreed that there are items contained in the report that could be done and said that the longer term items, such as massive renovations/expansion, are more involved and would have many more points that require additional input.

Chairman Walters proposed that the short term recommendations be brought before the General Development Committee at a future meeting and said that because of time constraints, the Committee will not be able to do that at this time. She said that she believes the Committee could make recommendations on the short-term recommendations for the Council's consideration and review. Chairman Walters also suggested that when staff brings back the short-term goals, that they also bring forth the intermediate and long-term recommendations so that the Committee can review them, receive input from staff and develop a plan for proceeding.

Committeemember Davidson said that in his opinion, this issue is one of the top priorities for the City, to define what the area is going to be and whether this is the location for the facilities, and assured Mr. Brinton that the issue will receive Council input and consideration.

Chairman Walters requested that this issue be the subject of the next General Development Committee meeting.

Committeemember Whalen said that there are a couple of items that could be dealt with quickly and said that since the convention season is upon us, the policy of booking 18 months out should be considered as well as the naming issue. He agreed with the importance of defining what the area is going to be, a convention center or a community center, and said that these issues should be addressed as quickly as possible.

Chairman Walters said that a meeting will be scheduled within the next two months to discuss this issue.

It was moved by Committeemember Whalen, seconded by Committeemember Davidson, that this item be continued to the next scheduled meeting of the General Development Committee.

Carried unanimously.

Chairman Walters thanked Mr. Brinton and staff for their input.

3. Discuss a proposal to create Redevelopment Site #25.

Redevelopment Director Greg Marek said that the proposal before the Committee is to create a new Redevelopment Project Areas, Site 25, and to consider a Request for Proposals. He advised that this issue will be presented to the Downtown Development Committee this Thursday for their review and consideration. Mr. Marek said that there has been some developer interest in looking at doing some office buildings in this area, which is generally bounded by Main Street, on the north, Macdonald Street on the east, 1st Avenue to the south and Robson Street to the west, including the properties and the southwest corner. He added that Site 25 encompasses approximately 10 acres.

Mr. Marek said that the site would be designated for office, commercial and retail type projects as well as accommodating the potential expansion plans of the Tribune Newspaper building. Mr. Marek added that in order to redevelop this area, it must be designated as a Redevelopment Project area and said that by creating a redevelopment project area, the City is able to assist in the development of this area and find a developer to redevelop the site as well as work with the Tribune on their expansion plans.

Mr. Marek said that the Redevelopment Office has also worked with Megacorp and the Mesa Town Center Corporation Executive Director regarding this project and both groups believe this project offers an important opportunity for economic development in the Town Center.

Committeemember Davidson said he has the utmost respect for the staff of the Redevelopment Office but stated that he would like to recommend that the Committee not express opinions regarding this issue or take any action pending consideration and review by the Downtown Development Committee. He said that he recognizes how important this issue is and appreciates staff's efforts to bring this before the Committee but he feels that the DDC should be the first group to review this issue.

It was moved by Committeemember Davidson, seconded by Committeemember Whalen, that this item be continued pending review and consideration by the members of the Downtown Development Committee.

Chairman Walters commented on the fact that a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the previous agenda item and said that this item could also be placed on the agenda of that meeting.

Carried unanimously.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the meeting of the General Development Committee of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 16th day of October, 2000. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2000

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK