



COUNCIL MINUTES

January 22, 2009

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 January 22, 2009 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Scott Smith
Alex Finter
Dina Higgins
Kyle Jones
Dennis Kavanaugh
Scott Somers

COUNCIL ABSENT

Dave Richins

OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Debbie Spinner
Linda Crocker

Mayor Smith excused Councilmember Richins from the entire meeting.

1. Review items on the agenda for the January 26, 2009 Regular Council meeting.

All of the items on the agenda were reviewed among Council and staff and the following was noted:

Conflicts of interest: None

Items added to the consent agenda: None

Items removed from the consent agenda: None

2. Hear a presentation and discuss the Fiesta District Design Handbook.

Assistant Economic Development Department Director Shelly Allen reported that for the past year and a half, staff has worked with PMC Consulting (PMC) regarding the Fiesta District Design Project. She introduced Economic Development Specialist Cathy Ji, who was prepared to address the Council relative to this item.

Ms. Ji provided a brief overview of a series of improvements currently underway in the Fiesta District. She reported that Banner Desert Medical Center is undergoing a \$330 million property upgrade, including the construction of a Children's Medical Center. Ms. Ji advised that Mesa Community College (MCC) recently opened a new \$20 million Science Building and has made renovations to property located on Longmore Avenue that would be dedicated for a Performing

Arts Center. She further spoke regarding various improvements/upgrades to the Mesa Financial Plaza, M&I Bank and Hilton Hotel.

Lorelei Cappel, Project Manager with PMC, stated that the Fiesta District Design Project consultant team consisted of PMC, Sloat Landscape Architects, PBS & J and Liquid Line Design.

Ms. Cappel displayed a PowerPoint presentation (A copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and offered an extensive overview of the various components of the Fiesta District Design Handbook. She reported that the Fiesta District extends from the Tempe Canal to Extension Road and is bounded by Southern Avenue and the U.S. 60. Ms. Cappel explained that the Handbook is not only intended to be the catalyst for the revitalization of the Fiesta District, but more importantly "a momentum builder" for private interests that are making substantial investments in the area.

Ms. Cappel stated that the key objectives specified for the Fiesta District Design Project include the following:

- Develop a unified District brand.
- Identify transportation and pedestrian linkages.
- Identify the cost of implementation to define "a sense of place" in the District.

Ms. Cappel highlighted the major components of the Fiesta District Design Project as follows: 1.) Brand development (financed by the private sector); 2.) Urban design; 3.) Circulation; 4.) Community involvement; and 5.) Implementation. She indicated that such elements were combined to create the Fiesta District Design Handbook, a tool that can be used by the public and private sectors. Ms. Cappel also noted that the Handbook provides "certainty" and "direction" to the development community and property owners in the Fiesta District so that future projects conform to the District identity as memorialized in the document.

Ms. Cappel further reported that throughout this process, City staff and the consultants conducted extensive outreach with members of the community to garner not only their assessment of the Fiesta District, but also their vision for future development. She commented that various components of the community's vision included, but were not limited to, the following: Unique "branding" and sense of place; Urban atmosphere with buildings facing and interacting with the street; Cohesive street improvements; and a well connected and engaging pedestrian environment.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that stakeholders and community representatives offered extensive input concerning brand development for the Fiesta District; that the design goals regarding Private Realm Design Guidelines include visually connecting the District through integration of the District brand and design elements, physically connecting the District and its users through safe circulation systems that encourage pedestrian traffic, and encouraging a denser, high quality urban development pattern that will encourage smart growth and highly utilized sites.

In response to a series of questions from Councilmember Somers, Ms. Cappel explained that the developer/operator of Fiesta Mall is eager to improve the project area and has completed significant renovations inside the mall. She noted that the developer/operator also intends to

develop new pads on the outside of the mall, which would provide interaction with the street and screen the “sea of parking” that currently exists at the site. Ms. Cappel added that many of the elements contained in the Handbook would allow for more pedestrian friendly environments.

Ms. Cappel referred to the PowerPoint presentation and highlighted a variety of design schematics and concepts contained in the Handbook that demonstrate the Private Realm goals (i.e., proposed pedestrian routes; a District circulator and improvements to the sidewalks; paseo nodes; site furniture, fixtures and lighting; conceptual signage design).

Ms. Cappel, in addition, reviewed the Public Realm Design Guidelines that would encompass the connectivity in public streets, paseo rights-of-way, public parks, plazas and civic spaces. She highlighted the Public Realm design goals as follows:

- Provide visual cues and design features to physically and symbolically connect the different users in the District.
- Limit conflicts between pedestrians and motor vehicles by improving automobile flow.
- Create a series of gateways.
- Provide amenities that animate and add visual interest to the streetscape.
- Provide facilities, plantings and other improvements that make the streetscape comfortable for pedestrians.
- Design individual streets to have a distinct design character and identity that reflects the District’s land use character and function.

Ms. Cappel referenced various design schematics/options to address the above-cited goals including, but not limited to, street improvements and public/private partnership for paseos; signs that announce the arrival to the District and orient site users; and seating, landscaping and shading to create a pleasant environment.

Further discussion ensued relative to the various elements of the Implementation Plan for the Fiesta District Design Project; that the prioritized Action Plan includes regulatory and non-regulatory action; and the fact that the chapter in the Handbook related to the Private Realm contains suggested design guidelines (i.e., landscaping, parking, signage) for the commercial properties located just north of Southern Avenue.

In response to a series of questions from Councilmember Finter, Zoning/Civil Administrator Gordon Sheffield clarified that many of the activities taking place with regard to the Fiesta District Design Guidelines “dovetail” with the proposals of the City’s consultant who is conducting the Zoning Ordinance update. He stated, for example, that staff proposes to make modifications to the City’s parking regulations, which include a shared parking analysis. Mr. Sheffield explained that such an analysis would take into account time of use and peak periods and should reduce the amount of required parking that is necessary for more mixed use type of projects.

Mr. Sheffield further commented that staff is also reviewing overlay districts (Module 3 of the Zoning Code update) and proposes that the Private Realm design guidelines be incorporated into the Fiesta overlay district, thereby providing greater uniformity in that section of the Code. He also noted that the Fiesta District Design Guidelines contain various concepts with regard to signage that are currently prohibited under the City’s sign ordinance. He stated that it would be

necessary for staff to make certain modifications to the ordinance in order to enable such concepts to take place, and in particular, signs relating to commercial development located within public rights-of-way.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact that the property owners just north of Southern Avenue have participated in the public input process with regard to the Fiesta District Design Project; and that Mesa Community College intends to utilize the Design Guidelines for new development and construction projects on campus.

Mayor Smith expressed appreciation to City staff, the stakeholders and the consultant team for their efforts and hard work with regard to the development of the Fiesta District Design Handbook. He commented on the demise of the Fiesta District in recent years because, in his opinion, "a unique sense of place" was never defined and added that he is hopeful the Handbook would assist the public and private sector in remedying that situation.

3. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide direction on the 2009 State Legislative agenda.

Government Relations Director Scott Butler displayed a PowerPoint presentation (A copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and stated that the purpose of today's presentation is to provide an overview of the City's priorities for the 2009 State Legislative Session.

Mr. Butler reported that the State Legislature convened on Monday, January 12, 2009 and stated that former Governor Janet Napolitano delivered her final "State of the State" address to the Legislature. He advised that yesterday, Governor Jan Brewer was sworn into office. Mr. Butler added that following the November 2008 General Election, the Legislature now has a Republican majority in both the Senate and the House.

Mr. Butler advised that the major theme for the Legislature is the projected \$1.6 billion to \$1.9 billion FY 2009 budget deficit, which is anticipated to grow to more than \$3 billion in FY 2010. He also noted that the Legislature has new leadership, including Mesa resident Kirk Adams, who is the Speaker of the House.

Government Relations Coordinator Brent Stoddard briefly highlighted the "Guiding Principles" utilized by staff to address City of Mesa issues with the State Legislature as follows:

- Fiscal Sustainability – Protecting State shared revenue and the full funding of existing revenue streams.
- Local Control – Maintaining local self governance and opposing mandates and preemptions.
- Economic Development – Maintaining and enhancing current economic development tools.
- Neighborhoods – Preserving and enhancing the quality of life in Mesa neighborhoods.
- Public Safety – Providing the ability to plan and respond to public safety needs.
- Transportation – Continuing to support regional transportation planning efforts and ensuring that dedicated revenue streams are maintained.
- Water – Ensuring the sustainability of water resources and sustainable development.

Mr. Butler provided a short synopsis of various Legislative priorities:

- Fiscal Sustainability – Support staff’s efforts to reverse the mandatory contribution of \$30 million to the FY 2009 State budget (\$1.7 million would come from Mesa); and protect Statewide Transportation Acceleration Needs (STAN) funding, including \$20.4 million for State Route 802 (Gateway Freeway).

Mr. Stoddard continued with the presentation:

- Public Safety – Support 9-1-1 Emergency System funding needs; strengthen law enforcement’s ability to reduce metal theft; and oppose efforts that would negatively affect Mesa’s ability to control its arterial photo enforcement program.

Mr. Butler spoke regarding the following Legislative priorities:

- Economic Development – Oppose efforts that would weaken Government Property Lease Excise Tax (GPLET) as an economic tool that allows the development of commercial property in areas with challenging public infrastructure needs; support efforts to promote Arizona as a desirable location for solar and renewable energy companies; and support efforts to provide additional infrastructure (i.e., roads, utilities and classroom facilities).

Mr. Stoddard continued with the PowerPoint presentation:

- Neighborhoods – Support efforts to increase the penalty for damaging property with graffiti; oppose any attempts to eliminate the 2010 sunset provision for payday lending operations.

Mayor Smith requested that staff provide the Council regular updates with regard to any discussion or action undertaken by the Legislature concerning the 2010 sunset provision for payday lending operations.

Councilmember Kavanaugh stated that it was his understanding that there is a very limited number of corporations that operate all of the payday loan stores in Arizona. He asked that staff conduct research to identify the corporations, the location of such entities, and the type of corporate structure under which they currently operate.

It was moved by Vice Major Jones, seconded by Councilmember Somers, that the 2009 State Legislative agenda be approved.

Mayor Smith declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

Mayor Smith thanked staff for the presentation.

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

Councilmember Higgins:	“Progress in Arizona’s Bioscience Roadmap” Event held at the Arizona Science Center
Vice Mayor Jones:	Martin Luther King Day Parade

Mayor Smith: United States Conference of Mayors' Winter Conference;
Inauguration of President Barack Obama

5. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Saturday, January 24, 2009, 10:00 a.m. – Historic Home Tour

Monday, January 26, 2009, 3:30 p.m. – Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Monday, January 26, 2009, TBA – Study Session

Monday, January 26, 2009, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

6. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

7. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

SCOTT SMITH, MAYOR

ATTEST:

LINDA CROCKER, 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 22nd day of January, 2009. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

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