

## COUNCIL MINUTES

May 6, 2004

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 May 6, 2004 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT	COUNCIL ABSENT	OFFICERS PRESENT
Mayor Keno Hawker Rex Griswold Kyle Jones Dennis Kavanaugh Janie Thom Claudia Walters Mike Whalen	None	Mike Hutchinson Debbie Spinner Linda Crocker

1. Hear, discuss and consider:

- a. An update on the roundabouts proposed for the Red Mountain Freeway at McKellips and at Brown Road.

Assistant Traffic Engineer Dan Cleavenger introduced Joe Warren, Project Manager with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), and representatives of DMJM+Harris, the consulting firm utilized by ADOT relative to the subject project. He advised that construction of the Loop 202 extension between Power Road and University Drive is scheduled to begin in late 2005 with an estimated completion date of late 2007.

Mr. Cleavenger reported that ADOT has encountered difficult design challenges related to the Brown Road and McKellips Road interchanges and that public meetings held relative to possible modifications identified public concerns regarding the elevation and alignment of crossroads, skewing of interchanges, and visual impacts on mountain views. He advised that ADOT is proposing modern roundabouts to address these issues. Mr. Cleavenger stated that the preliminary design for modern roundabouts was well received at a recent neighborhood public meeting, and that the Transportation Advisory Board recommended that the design proposal be forwarded to the Council. He noted that documents listed below were provided in the Council packet (copies are available for review in the City Clerk's Office):

- No. 1: ADOT "Red Mountain Project Update" (Fall/Winter 2003-2004)
- No. 2: ADOT "Red Mountain Project Update" (Spring/Summer 2004)
- No. 3: "Summary of Public Comments – March 25, 2004 Public Meeting"

No. 4: "Red Mountain Freeway: McKellips and Brown Road Alternatives Evaluation"  
(dated December 8, 2003)

No. 5: Diagram of "McKellips Road Roundabout"

No. 6: Diagram of "Brown Road Roundabout"

Steve Wilcox of DMJM+Harris utilized a PowerPoint Presentation (a printed copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) to outline the alternatives for the Brown Road and McKellips Road interchanges on the Red Mountain Freeway. He reported that the Neighborhood Task Force was included in numerous meetings with the agencies involved in the project, including ADOT, the Federal Highway Administration, the City of Mesa, and the consultant team working with ADOT on this project. Mr. Wilcox noted that the project team recognized the following factors:

- Crossroad interchanges cannot be eliminated.
- Crossroad freeway access is required by the City's *Transportation Master Plan*.
- The existing crossroad alignment must be maintained.
- Geometric design standards must be met.
- Relocation of the Central Arizona Project (CAP) canal is not possible.
- The existing function of the Spook Hill Dam must be maintained in order to prevent flooding.

Mr. Wilcox advised that the project team concluded that the alternatives presented at the August public meeting would not meet the above conditions, and that other technologies should be investigated. He stated that the current proposal for a "roundabout interchange concept" is the result of investigation by the Neighborhood Task Force and ADOT, and he provided the following information:

- The modern roundabout is much smaller than a typical traffic circle.
- Traffic in the roundabout always has priority, and vehicles entering the roundabout must yield to existing traffic.
- The roundabouts are designed to reduce vehicle speeds without utilizing traffic signals.

Mr. Wilcox stated that the proposed elevation of McKellips Road has been reduced significantly as a result of comments received at the August public meeting. He added that a bypass lane to the right enables traffic diversion to the freeway without utilizing the roundabout. Mr. Wilcox advised that the roundabout enables the typical six-lane bridge over a freeway to be reduced to four lanes, resulting in a savings of approximately \$1.5 million.

In response to a question from Councilmember Walters, Mr. Wilcox reported that a "spiral feature" designed into the roundabouts forces vehicles into the outside lane and prevents a vehicle from being "trapped" in a center lane.

Mr. Wilcox advised that the capacity of the McKellips roundabout is designed to accommodate 150 percent of the Maricopa Area Government (MAG) traffic projections for the year 2030. He noted that the traffic projection for Brown Road is 60 percent of the projection for McKellips Road. The benefits of a modern roundabout include:

- Increased traffic capacity with less vehicle delay when traveling through the intersection.
- Safety benefits resulting from significant reductions in the number of projected traffic accidents, personal injury accidents and fatal accidents.

- Environmental benefits include reduced travel speeds that result in reduced noise levels for neighborhoods and improved visual impacts associated with ramp alternatives.

Mr. Wilcox reported that ADOT is planning the construction of 30 roundabouts statewide, and he outlined the future schedule for design, construction and public involvement.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the proposed roundabouts are designed to accommodate future growth; the freeway bridges are being designed to enable the construction of additional lanes if needed in the future; and that braided ramps would add substantial costs to the projects and create a negative visual impact.

Vice Mayor Kavanaugh expressed support for the proposal and noted that the success of the roundabout in Vail, Colorado was encouraging.

Councilmember Griswold stated that roundabouts would reduce vehicle speed and promote safety, and he noted that the neighbors have indicated support for the proposal.

Mayor Hawker also expressed support for the proposal, and added that the roundabouts are a creative solution for protecting the view corridors.

It was moved by Vice Mayor Kavanaugh, seconded by Councilmember Griswold, that staff be directed to proceed with the construction of roundabouts on the Red Mountain Freeway at McKellips Road and Brown Road.

Carried unanimously.

Mayor Hawker thanked staff and the ADOT representatives for the presentation.

- b. Red Mountain Freeway noise mitigation near the Sumrall property located at 156 East Lehi Road, east of Center.

Assistant Development Services Manager Jeff Martin provided a brief history of the noise mitigation issue that involves the Sumrall property.

- The Red Mountain Freeway opened to Gilbert Road in January 2002 with a noise wall installed in the Lehi neighborhood, but no wall was installed between Center and Mesa Drive on the south side.
- The City began to receive noise complaints in January of 2003, and in turn ADOT initiated mitigation efforts by installing a noise wall in late 2003. However, there was an 800-foot gap in the noise wall, and in the area of the Sumrall property, the noise wall was as low as 5-1/2 feet.
- ADOT then determined that the height of the wall should be raised four feet, but that effort provided no significant reduction in the noise levels.
- ADOT agreed to mitigate further without giving consideration to the installation of rubberized asphalt.

Mr. Martin explained that the application of rubberized asphalt significantly reduced the noise levels, and that ADOT now considers the problem solved and is refusing to honor their previous commitment that the benefits of rubberized asphalt would not be considered. He advised that the Sumralls are concerned that the benefits of rubberized asphalt will not last forever. Mr. Martin stated that ADOT made a number of commitments to City staff, City officials, the neighborhood and the Sumralls, but ADOT now refuses to guarantee that future noise issues will be addressed as the benefits of rubberized asphalt disappear.

Councilmember Walters noted that the Sumralls attempted to work with ADOT for one year prior to bringing their concerns to the attention of the City. She stated that ADOT staff members, although slow to respond, have finally acknowledged their responsibility, and the agency has been more responsive in the past few months.

In response to Mayor Hawker's question relative to how City staff determines whether commitments from ADOT staff members are binding, Mr. Martin responded that City staff and ADOT staff meet on a monthly basis regarding construction and engineering issues. He noted that senior level ADOT personnel have occasionally overturned decisions made in these meetings. Mr. Martin explained that staff was more concerned that ADOT would fulfill the commitments made to residents.

Mayor Hawker noted that when he indicates to a citizen's group that he supports a particular issue, he also clarifies that approval requires a majority of the Councilmembers. He stated that his understanding of ADOT's policy was that rubberized asphalt would not be considered relative to noise mitigation issues.

Mr. Martin confirmed that Mayor Hawker's understanding was correct. He also noted that most of the funding for rubberized asphalt came from the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), and that MAG advised ADOT that the rubberized asphalt would not be a substitute for other improvements previously agreed to by ADOT.

Councilmember Walters noted that ADOT contends that their established policy is being followed, and that rubberized asphalt is not considered relative to noise mitigation. She recommended that ADOT be requested to confirm their commitments in writing. Councilmember Walters also suggested that a resolution be prepared on behalf of the Council requesting that ADOT continue to address the Sumrall's noise mitigation concerns.

Matt Burdick, a representative of ADOT's Community Relations Office, advised that ADOT has been addressing the Sumrall's noise issues since 2002. He reported that ADOT's initial noise mitigation efforts resulted from the recommendations of a local design firm, after which ADOT consulted with two nationally recognized noise experts from the University of Louisville. He explained that the geometry of the freeway at this location results in unusual noise mitigation problems. Mr. Burdick advised that the recommendations of the noise experts, to close the gap and increase the height of the existing wall, were implemented and that a noise level of approximately 63 decibels (below the maximum level 64 decibels) was achieved without the benefit of rubberized asphalt. He further advised that the Federal Pilot Study in which ADOT participates requires that noise levels be monitored every six months for a ten-year period, and that at the end of ten years the existing layer of rubberized asphalt would be removed and replaced as part of ADOT's ongoing pavement preservation and maintenance program.

In response to a question from Mayor Hawker, Mr. Burdick advised that ADOT staff met with the Sumralls on Monday, and that the current noise levels were determined to be satisfactory. He stated that the Sumralls were informed that noise levels would be monitored every six months, but that ADOT could not provide a guarantee regarding future noise levels. Mr. Burdick explained that data on future noise levels is part of the discovery process for the Federal Pilot Study on rubberized asphalt.

Councilmember Walters suggested that ADOT provide a written commitment to the Sumralls stating that ADOT will address any future noise mitigation problems, and she questioned how citizens and others could determine if an ADOT representative has the authority to speak on behalf of the agency.

Mr. Burdick stated that the request to provide a written commitment to the Sumralls would be referred to ADOT management or the ADOT Environmental Office. He stated that ADOT was concerned about the issue of commitments and advised that ADOT is in the process of revamping their public involvement and communication process to insure that staff properly communicates with local communities and residents.

It was moved by Councilmember Walters, seconded by Councilmember Whalen, that the Council adopt a resolution requesting that ADOT provide assurance to the Sumralls that the issue of noise mitigation will continue to be addressed.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whalen, Mr. Burdick advised that ADOT is monitoring noise levels along all Arizona freeways that have been paved with rubberized asphalt. He reported that the research to date in Arizona and other states indicates that noise levels on highways with rubberized asphalt tend to increase a half a decibel in the first year, and then the noise level is sustained during the next six to nine-year period.

Mayor Hawker called for the vote.

Carried unanimously.

Mayor Hawker thanked staff and Mr. Burdick for their reports.

2. Hear, discuss and consider a proposal for the 2004 Main Street holiday lights.

Mr. Hutchinson advised that the holiday light proposal is a budget issue that will be presented to Council next week, and that the City's contribution to the project is projected to be \$90,000.

Assistant to the City Manager Ellen Pence introduced personnel from the Town Center Corporation and The Christmas Light Decorators. She advised that the proposal is a public/private partnership, and that the contract for holiday lighting would be executed through the Mesa Town Center's Ultimate Imaginations. Ms. Pence stated that The Christmas Light Decorators is the company being recommended for this project.

Ms. Pence used a PowerPoint presentation to provide background information on The Christmas Light Decorators, a Mesa firm and the largest company in Arizona to provide this type of service, and she outlined the details of the planned decorations. She advised that the company would install, maintain, and remove the decorations. Ms. Pence reported that the total

projected costs are approximately \$150,000, with a recommended contribution from the City of \$90,000.

In response to Mayor Hawker's suggestion that the cost be split and that the City contribute \$75,000, Ms. Pence advised that \$90,000 was a starting point and that if additional funds were received from the corporate and private sector, the City's contribution would be reduced.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the contract would be a rental agreement for the decorations; that the community expects the downtown area to be decorated for the holidays; that the business attracted to this area will provide a return on the City's investment; that the division of costs reflects the fact that a greater percentage of the decorations would be on public buildings; and that the decision to move forward regarding the decorations can be made following the budget discussions.

Responding to a question from Mayor Hawker regarding lighting for the Mesa Arts Center (MAC), Ms. Pence stated that meetings are planned with the lighting architect for the Mesa Arts Center to determine what would complement the Arts Center.

Mr. Hutchinson advised that the MAC buildings will be complete in March 2005, but the grand opening will be in September. He noted that staff's proposal is in response to Council's direction to plan lighting for the 2004 holiday season.

Councilmember Walters expressed the opinion that the holiday lights be considered in the context of the budget. She stated that funding for both children's programs and the holiday lights were eliminated from the budget last year. Councilmember Walters noted the examples of other Valley communities that invest in decorations to attract business, and she added that the sales tax generated by merchants fund City operations.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact that the proposed contract is a lease for the decorations; and that there would be no additional lease charge to extend the length of display time for decorations on the Arts Center, but there could be additional maintenance charges.

Mayor Hawker thanked staff for providing the information early in the budget cycle.

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

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| Councilmember Griswold: | Ad Hoc Redevelopment Committee Tour of the<br>Town Center Area<br>Public Safety Awards Ceremony |
| Councilmember Thom:     | Pubic Safety Awards Ceremony                                                                    |
| Vice Mayor Kavanaugh:   | Dobson Ranch Library Park Concert Series                                                        |
| Councilmember Whalen:   | Delegation from the National League of Cities will arrive<br>today for meetings.                |

4. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Mike Hutchinson stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Monday, May 10, 2004, 7:30 a.m. – Budget Hearing

Tuesday, May 11, 2004, 7:30 a.m. – Budget Hearing

Thursday, May 13, 2004, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Thursday, May 13, 2004, 8:00 a.m. – Budget Hearing

Monday, May 17, 2004, 3:00 p.m. – Fire Committee

Monday, May 17, 2004, TBA – Study Session

Monday, May 17, 2004, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

Thursday, May 20, 2004, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

5. Prescheduled public opinion appearances.

There were no prescheduled public opinion appearances.

6. Items from citizens present.

Mark E. Imbeault, 119 W. Main Street, expressed concern relative to the fact that the proposed contract for holiday lighting is not being awarded through a bid process.

Mayor Hawker clarified that the Town Center Corporation's Ultimate Imaginations would be handling the contract, and that questions regarding the contract should be directed to the Town Center Corporation Board and/or Ultimate Imaginations.

8. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

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KENO HAWKER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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BARBARA JONES, 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 6<sup>th</sup> day of May 2004. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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