



COUNCIL MINUTES

February 11, 2009

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Joint meeting with the Dobson Ranch Homeowners' Association Board of Directors at the The Landmark Restaurant, 809 W. Main St., on February 11, 2009 at 7:45 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT	DOBSON RANCH BOARD PRESENT	DOBSON RANCH STAFF PRESENT
Mayor Scott Smith Alex Finter Dina Higgins Kyle Jones Dennis Kavanaugh	Christopher Brady Tammy Albright Nikki Amberg Dan Cleavenger Linda Crocker Jack Friedline Beth Huning Kari Kent Charlotte McDermott Vicki Myers Bryan Raines Ray Thimesch Ray Villa Heather Wolf Christine Zielonka	Ted Disbrow Chuck Fletcher Barry Hegrenes Sandra Murray Mike Wall Guy Wolf	Michele Ray-Brethower-E.D. Faye Bristow Donna Chapman Roger Singleton Kimi Towery
		CANDIDATES FOR THE BOARD	OTHERS PRESENT
		Lynda Bailey Stephen Denison Frank Mizner Joanne Smith Robbie Venditti	Todd Hoover

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Mayor Smith thanked the members of the Dobson Ranch Homeowners' Association for scheduling the meeting with the City and requested that everyone present introduce themselves at this time.

The Mayor noted that Dobson Ranch was the first major development in the City of Mesa and discussed the development's high level of quality and commitment to the community. He thanked the members of the Board for remaining involved with the City of Mesa and commented on the great partnership that has been in existence for many years.

Dobson Ranch Executive Director Michelle Ray-Brethower thanked the Council and members of staff for their attendance.

2. Update on Economic Development Activities.

Mesa's Economic Development Director Bill Jabjiniak addressed the group and thanked them for the opportunity to meet with them this morning. He expressed the hope that during the last quarter of the current year they will see an improvement in the economy. He said that the list of properties that he has been asked to comment on are all retail related and reported that the last time he checked retail sales were down 19% during the first six months of the year. He stated that City staff is focused on creating jobs for the entire community and briefly discussed business retention efforts that are expended in coordination with the Chamber of Commerce. He said that they reached out to 72 businesses and listened to their concerns. He added that these are the types of partnerships that the City hopes to move forward with.

Mr. Jabiniak advised that on Friday, the Mayor came out with his "four pillars of the community" and focused on healthcare, education, aero space and tourism. He commented on Banner Healthcare's success and new additions as well as Mesa Community College and said they are hopeful that they will be able to proceed with projects as well. He discussed the Fiesta District Design Guidelines and said that they "set the bar" for development. He also commented on "branding the area" and said that these are just a few of the things staff has been working on for the last 12 months. He stated that he looks forward to pushing the initiatives forward.

In response to a question as to whether the City has a mentoring resource, someone designated to go out and work with businesses, Mr. Jabjiniak replied that he has tasked everyone in his department to participate in that process. He added that they are looking to their partner, the Chamber of Commerce, and reported that they have established six volunteer teams made up of two individuals per team to make business visits, listen to complaints/concerns, provide input, etc. He said that he believes they need to expand that program even further.

City Manager Chris Brady noted that small business development is funded through Mesa Community College and added that the College is a tremendous resource.

Discussion ensued relative to some of the areas around Fiesta Mall that have seen an "outflow" of businesses moving to Riverview; the importance of looking at adaptive reuses that will benefit the community and thinking "outside of the box;" and the fact that Basha's is closing at Dobson and Albertson's has closed at Stapley and University.

Mayor Smith expressed the opinion that there will be a transformation in Fiesta Mall, an urban core that will create more of a retail core in the mall area. He said that along Southern, the City is going to push for urban core development – boutiques, specialty retail, high density residential, etc. He added that they will have to work with what their strengths are in that area.

In response to a question as to whether the DMB/Gaylord project will be a "done deal" if approved by the voters, Mayor Smith advised that Gaylord has said that if the project is approved they will get the financing.

3. Update on crime issues in Dobson Ranch.

- a. Dobson Substation – Meet Commander Vicki Myers

Commander Vicki Myers introduced Dobson Ranch's new Commander, Mark Wesselman and provided brief background information on Commander Wesselman. She said that she enjoyed her brief association with the community. The Commander discussed one of the assignments that she will carry over to her new assignment beginning Monday – Project Manager for the Police Department for the new Dobson Ranch station – and said that she is very excited about being involved in this project. She stated that some preliminary meetings have been held with the City Manager and his staff and they have developed some site proposals for the Dobson area. She added that nothing had been “nailed down” yet; they are still looking at costs and figures to determine what they can actually afford as far as the property. She noted that it is their intent to locate property within Dobson Ranch district and said that they are looking for something that is centrally located and easily accessible.

b. Meet Commander Mark Wesselman

Commander Wesselman thanked the Board for the opportunity to address them and said that he looks forward to getting to know everyone. He provided a brief overview of crime statistics for Dobson Ranch and reported that in the past month Part I crimes are down 12% Citywide and 25% in Dobson Ranch. He added that there were only seven vehicle burglaries in January of this year compared to January of 2008 and commented on this significant reduction.

In response to a question relative to deploying a bike patrol in Dobson Ranch, Commander Myers stated that they are seeing an increase nationwide in violent crime trends so the Department is looking at their resources to determine the best ways to combat crime. She added that the statistics support the need for a bicycle patrol unit but perhaps not a full-time unit. She said that she views the bicycle unit as a resource to use and apply depending upon what is going on in the community. She stated that from her perspective she sees a bicycle patrol unit being critical but not necessarily on a full-time basis. She advised that Commander Wesselman will be involved in this issue.

Commander Wesselman agreed that the bicycle patrol units are a useful tool in combating crime and said that he will look into the matter.

Mayor Smith advised that one of the City's goals is to make the new station as centralized and visible as possible. He said that they want the Police stations to be more “community friendly.”

City Manager Chris Brady noted that the Police Department is driven by performance and activity and so they have to look at trends and where things are happening. He added that where they locate the station will not change the Department's strategies in Dobson Ranch.

Discussion ensued relative to the actual boundaries of the Dobson Ranch district.

Councilmember Kavanaugh, who represents District 3 and Dobson Ranch, noted that the current building will still be used for public safety purposes. The Fire Department will be housed in it and there will still be space for other public safety services.

4. Transportation Update.

a. Dobson Road/Guadalupe Intersection Project 01-370-001

Transportation Director Dan Cleavenger addressed the group and stated that last November staff's package was passed. He noted that \$5.5 was the original estimate but staff believes the cost will be

much less now. He discussed the advantages that will occur as a result of the project.

City Engineer Beth Huning said that they are at the 90% design phase right now and future parcels and easements will have to be acquired. She added that construction will start the beginning of the next calendar year.

b. Dobson & Baseline Bus Pull Out

Ms. Huning said that Dobson and Baseline is a very popular bus route with lots of traffic. She stated that having buses stopping in the lane of traffic presents potential safety problems and presents a problem for the Association's driveway and so staff has been asked to look at a bus bay. She added that they have a design and the bus will stop on the far side of the driveway. She estimated the cost to be \$115,000 and advised that a funding source has not been identified as of yet. She stated that staff is looking into how they can proceed forward with this project.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the light rail system has been very successful and it is anticipated that ridership will continue to increase (several thousand riders a month, more than anticipated); the fact that there are 26,000 riders a day from the Sycamore Station; the fact that discussions will be taking place regarding the possible extension of the light rail system or bus routes from Sycamore to Horne and construction of whatever is decided will begin approximately one year down the road.

5. Parks & Recreation Update.

a. Rhodes Pool

Parks & Recreation Director Rhett Evans addressed the group and distributed information on the status of the Rhodes pool. He noted that the pool is currently under construction and said that it will have some new features including a zero depth entry for the younger children as well as a splash pod and standing wave feature. He reported that the pool is scheduled to open the first of September. He commented on the fact that that date is past the swim season and discussed a "soft opening" that will take place for a few weeks to allow youths the opportunity to enjoy the pool before it is closed for the winter months.

b. Dobson Ranch Park Irrigation System Upgrades

Mr. Evans discussed the Dobson Ranch park irrigation system upgrades and explained that the water pressure is so low that they are unable in the summer to keep the grass going so they have to keep the system ongoing. He said that they are in the process of taking nonpotable water out of the lake and pumping it into our irrigation system to water the park. He noted that the City owns the bottom of the lake and the HOA owns the water rights and the water in the lake. He said that the City will purchase water from the Association and hopefully the Association will model this system down the road to water all of the common areas (rather than using potable water). He further stated that the irrigation replacement should take place within the next couple of weeks.

6. Neighborhood Services Update.

a. Neighborhood Stabilization Funds

b. Foreclosures

Neighborhood Services Director Ray Villa commented on the problem with foreclosures that is occurring daily on a nation-wide basis. He reported that the Federal government, in July of last year, specifically the Housing & Urban Development Department, allocated funding for cities throughout the country in an effort to stabilize neighborhoods that are suffering from the foreclosures. He explained that as a result, a program known as the Neighborhood Stabilization Program was established. He added that in September of last year the government allocated funding to the various cities based on a formula and the City of Mesa was allocated \$9.6 million to work towards the goal. He noted that the City was required to apply for the funding and did so.

Mr. Villa stated that with him this morning is Ray Thimesch, a Project Manager for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program and said that he would provide a brief update on the status of that matter and also talk about Mesa's foreclosure program.

Mr. Thimesch addressed the group and said that staff is strategizing in an effort to ensure that the funding is used in the best possible manner to achieve maximum benefit. He noted that the \$9.6 million can be used over and over (as homes are rehabbed and sold the monies realized as a result of the sales can be used until they eventually run out). He stated that this is a great opportunity to have a significant impact in areas of the City. He reported that City staff is focusing on zip code area 85204, which has experienced the largest number of foreclosures (170 plus another 150 homes that have not yet come onto the market).

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that Dobson Ranch currently has 41 homes in foreclosure.

7. Update on Waveyard project.

Mayor Smith stated that the Waveyard project that was presented to the voters in November 2007 was estimated to be a \$250 million project. He said that the project is currently estimated to cost \$750 million and explained that \$250 million would have resulted in too small a project to attract the kind of financing available for those types of projects. He advised that the developers were working primarily with east coast, European and Middle Eastern investors and negotiations took place with certain companies that were soon taken over by the government because they were failing. He stated that the developers were in the wrong place at the wrong time as far as obtaining financing and noted that the real challenge is getting equity investors.

The Mayor said that staff met with them within the last month and they were provided assurance that they are continuing to work on obtaining the necessary financing and believe that they will move forward when the market improves.

Councilmember Kavanaugh noted the fact that they have until next year to perform, almost a year from now, according to the terms of the contract.

Mayor Smith briefly commented on the differences between the City North agreement and the Gaylord project.

8. Miscellaneous Issues.

a. Library update

Library Director Heather Wolf reported that the department has made some reductions and took that opportunity to “shift” some of the staff around. She added that there are five new faces at Dobson and said that those people are there because of their skills and experience. She discussed her intent to open the building up and make it more inviting and added that staff wants to display items more effectively (make low cost cosmetic changes). She said that they are also looking at programming (for children and teens at the Dobson location) by using staff from other locations – “Take the show on the road” so to speak - and encouraged the members to visit the Library and share in their excitement. She advised that the Dobson Library is in need of volunteers to help stock shelves, etc. and encouraged anyone interested to contact the facility. Ms. Wolf discussed the Library’s hours of operations.

b. Angel Tattoo Parlor

Planning Director John Wesley advised that this zoning case will go before the Planning & Zoning Board on February 19th and will come before the Council in March.

Councilmember Kavanaugh noted that the applicant has held a community meeting and reported that there is significant opposition to allowing the case to be approved.

Ms. Ray-Brethower thanked the members of the Council and City staff for their attendance at the meeting and for the quick manner in which the City always responds to Dobson Ranch. She added that the pool will be a wonderful addition to Rhodes and said that she is very happy to hear that light rail is doing so good. She asked whether the hours will be expanded when there are future events and Mr. Cleavenger advised that staff continues to work on that. He noted that there is always the option of expanding hours for special events.

9. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Joint Meeting with the Dobson Ranch Homeowners’ Association Board of Directors adjourned at 8:52 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 Joint Meeting with the Dobson Ranch Homeowners’ Association Board of Directors held on the 11TH day of February, 2009. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2009

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK