

COUNCIL MINUTES

June 14, 2007

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 June 14, 2007 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker
Rex Griswold
Tom Rawles
Scott Somers
Mike Whalen

COUNCIL ABSENT

Kyle Jones
Claudia Walters

OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Debbie Spinner
Barbara Jones

Mayor Hawker excused Vice Mayor Walters and Councilmember Jones from the entire meeting.

1. Hear a presentation and discuss the Southeast Mesa Strategic Development Plan.

Acting Williams Gateway Airport (WGA) Area Project Manager Scott Butler stated that several months ago, the Council authorized staff to initiate the process to select a consulting firm to facilitate a comprehensive plan for the WGA area. He noted that the planning area, which is larger than the City of Tempe and almost as large as the City of Glendale, offers many challenges and opportunities

Deputy Transportation Director Mike James advised that staff was addressing the fiscal aspects of the plan in a very thorough manner. He introduced Project Manager Chet Teaford and Assistant Project Manager Leslie Dornfeld of HDR, the consulting firm selected to facilitate the process. He said that the consultants would provide an overview of the Plan utilizing a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office).

Ms. Dornfeld stated that HDR was pleased to have been selected for this project, and she noted that this area of southeast Mesa offers great opportunities for development. She listed the other members of the project team and their areas of expertise:

- Land Use – Community Design & Architecture
- Transportation/Service/Infrastructure – HDR
- Economic Development Strategy/Financing – IMG
- Fiscal Impact – Fishkind & Associates
- Transit/Community Liaison – TranSystems

Ms. Dornfeld summarized HDR's planning philosophy, which includes enhancing the existing assets, recognizing the value of the airport, and integrating land use and transportation plans in a fiscally responsible and strategic manner. She said that the planning approach emphasizes partnerships with landowners, other jurisdictions, agencies, the airport and the State. Ms. Dornfeld noted that the activities are scheduled over a thirteen-month period and that target dates would be added to the calendar at a later date.

Government Relations Director Scott Butler stated that development of the Plan is not a City or staff driven effort, but rather a concerted effort by many private entities in southeast Mesa. He reported that many of the partners, such as Paragon, DMB and Williams Gateway Airport, participated in the process to select the consulting firm. Mr. Butler said that funding is included in the 2007-2008 budget, and he advised that staff anticipates presenting a final plan to the Council in May of 2008.

In regard to a question from Mayor Hawker regarding the coordination of transportation issues, Mr. James advised that staff has been meeting with Pinal County and Town of Queen Creek personnel on a regular basis and that HDR would be included in future discussions.

Responding to a series of questions from Mayor Hawker, Ms. Dornfeld stated that their efforts would begin by reviewing the approved General Plan and other completed studies and reports, which could result in some proposed adjustments to the current General Plan land use designations. She said that the intent of her firm is to ensure the City's ability to capitalize on various opportunities that may come forward. Ms. Dornfeld said that existing areas of protection for the airport would remain in place. She stated that the tools available for financing would be examined and that funding alternatives could be discussed when plan updates are presented to the Council.

Mr. Butler noted that the City Manager directed staff to compile and analyze the best practices from around the country so that any new financing mechanisms not presently available in Arizona could be presented to the State Legislature for consideration.

In response to a question from Mayor Hawker, Ms. Dornfeld said that the Fishkind model would illustrate the impact of completing projects in earlier timeframes and advancing infrastructure to accommodate that activity.

City Manager Christopher Brady responded to a question from Councilmember Whalen by advising that the portion of the planning area that is in Pinal County is not included in this study. He advised that Queen Creek, Apache Junction and the State Land Department requested that this area be excluded until the State is able to participate.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the study would include the types of mixed-use development appropriate for the area; that the consultant would address the possibility of commuter rail service in the area; and that transit-oriented development is typically funded by the Region.

Mr. James advised that an update to the existing Transportation Plan is planned as part of the study. He added that existing funding for the regional transit system approved in Prop 400 would be considered initially, after which other options within the City's existing financial model would be considered.

Councilmember Somers suggested that a number of transportation models be developed based on possible funding sources.

Responding to a question by Councilmember Somers, Ms. Dornfeld concurred that the development of Superstition Vistas would affect the plan, and she stated that the modeling in the study would include that development.

Mr. Butler stated that development trends and the timing of the release of State Trust land would affect development in the southeast area of Mesa. He noted that the presentation under the next agenda item would address some of these issues.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact that Mesa's job to resident ratio would be affected by the development of Superstition Vistas; that the consulting firm is aware of the ongoing Zoning Code update; and that funding alternatives for transit issues would be analyzed as a part of the study.

Mr. Butler said that the East Valley Partnership is planning to hold a public meeting later in the month in order to provide an update on this process and receive input from the community.

Mayor Hawker thanked staff and the consultants for the presentation.

2. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide direction on Superstition Vistas.

Mr. Butler stated that this presentation continues the focus on planning for southeast Mesa, and he introduced Roc Arnett, President and CEO of the East Valley Partnership.

Mr. Arnett stated that Superstition Vistas is an unprecedented opportunity to develop a large piece of property that is strategically located in close proximity to a major metropolitan area. He displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and reported that the City of Mesa and other partners began planning for Superstition Vistas more than four years ago. Mr. Arnett advised that a Morrison Institute report, jointly funded by the City of Mesa and other partners, refers to the property as Arizona's Trust Land "Jewel." He noted that the City participates on the Superstition Vistas Steering Committee (SVSC), which is collaborating with the State Land Department to ensure that the property is properly developed.

Mr. Arnett advised that the following statement outlines the mission of the SVSC: "Creating vibrant communities with a sense of place anchored by community values establishing Arizona as a leader in sustainable development." He explained that the project would be completed in an 18 to 24 month timeframe with a budget of \$1.8 to \$2 million, one quarter of which is to be funded by each of the following: the private sector, counties and cities, foundations, and quasi-governmental entities. He advised that each city is being requested to provide \$120,000 over a three-year period, and he reported that the Salt River Project (SRP) has made a three-year commitment totaling \$450,000. Mr. Arnett said that a Senior Project Consultant is being recruited to guide the planning and visioning process and that the East Valley Partnership, in collaboration with the Pinal Partnership, would facilitate all activities. He added that Superstition Vistas plans to hire a Director with local experience to manage local project operations.

Mr. Arnett noted that many key issues, such as flood control, transportation, and environmental concerns, must be addressed. He stated that new funding mechanisms would be investigated

and considered for this area. He reported that the Superstition Vistas Steering Committee includes representatives of the following entities:

State Land Department	Town of Queen Creek
Governor's Growth Cabinet	Salt River Project
Pinal County	Sonoran Institute
Apache Junction	Valley Partnership
City of Mesa	East Valley Partnership

Mr. Butler advised that funding is available in the City's budget if the Council decides to move forward.

Mr. Brady recommended that the City commit to a current year contribution of \$40,000, after which future contributions could be considered on an annual basis.

Mayor Hawker complimented Governor Napolitano for her efforts that resulted in the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the State Land Department cooperating to address a master plan for the area. He expressed support for the creation of a new city in the area rather than dividing the area among the neighboring communities.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that an entity holding the County wastewater permit would control the effluent in the area; that the State Land Department recognizes the interests of the various stakeholders; and that these issues would be addressed in the study.

Mayor Hawker stated that the City's interest in the ten-mile area east of Meridian relates to the City's ongoing effort to protect the airport.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whalen, Mr. Arnett said that he understood that a settlement was reached in the lawsuit filed by the County against the State regarding the earthen dam structures, but he was unaware of the details. He confirmed that the earthen structures protect the Williams Gateway Airport, areas to the north and south of the airport and the areas extending into Queen Creek and Florence.

Further discussion ensued relative to the fact that the military operating airspace in this area is controlled by Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson; that representatives of Davis-Monthan should be consulted regarding Superstition Vistas; and that the lease for the gunnery range on the east side expires in ten years.

It was moved by Councilmember Whalen, seconded by Councilmember Griswold, that the Council allocate \$40,000 to the Superstition Vistas project in the current budget year only and that future contributions be considered on an annual basis.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES –	Hawker-Griswold-Rawles-Somers-Whalen
NAYS –	None
ABSENT –	Jones-Walters

Mayor Hawker declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

Mayor Hawker thanked staff and Mr. Arnett for the presentation.

3. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of various boards and committees.

- a. Historic Preservation Committee meeting held on April 12, 2007
- b. Housing Advisory Board meeting held May 3, 2007

It was moved by Councilmember Whalen, seconded by Councilmember Rawles, that the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Mayor Hawker declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

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

Councilmember Somers: East Valley Partnership meeting.

5. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

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

Thursday, June 21, 2007, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Thursday, June 21, 2007, 8:30 a.m. – Intergovernmental Affairs Committee Meeting

Monday, June 25, 2007, TBA – Study Session

Monday, June 25, 2007, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

Thursday, June 28, 2007, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Monday, July 2, 2007, TBA – Study Session

Monday, July 2, 2007, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

Thursday, July 5, 2007 – Study Session (Cancelled)

Monday, July 9, 2007, TBA – Study Session

Monday, July 9, 2007, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

Thursday, August 9, 2007, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Monday, August 13, 2007, TBA – Study Session

Monday, August 13, 2007, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

6. Prescheduled public opinion appearances.

There were no prescheduled public opinion appearances.

7. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

8. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

KENO HAWKER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

LINDA CROCKER, DEPUTY 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 14th day of June 2007. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

LINDA CROCKER, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

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