



INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 9, 2009

The Intergovernmental Affairs Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on February 9, 2009 at 4:02 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Kyle Jones, Chairman
Alex Finter
Dennis Kavanaugh

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Scott Butler

1. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

2. Hear a presentation, discuss and make recommendations on the 2009 Federal Legislative agenda.

Government Relations Director Scott Butler introduced Government Relations Coordinator Brent Stoddard and advised that the presentation would address broad policy topics rather than specific legislation.

Mr. Stoddard displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) to provide an overview of the current Congress, which has a Democratic majority. He noted that our Senators are Jon Kyle, who serves as the Republican Minority Whip, and John McCain. Mr. Stoddard said that Mesa's Congressional Representatives are Republican Jeff Flake and Democrat Harry Mitchell, whose service on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee should prove beneficial with regard to projects at the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and local transportation issues. He reported that the Senate is in the process of changing the House version of the Stimulus Package, and he said that City staff and department heads are being made aware of the contents of the proposed package so that projects that may benefit the City of Mesa can be identified.

In response to a question from Chairman Jones, Mr. Stoddard said that the City's lobbying firm in Washington provides updates approximately every two hours regarding changes and

proposed amendments to the Stimulus Package and that the City responds regarding areas that are of benefit to the City.

Responding to a question from Committeemember Kavanaugh, Mr. Butler reported that the City is represented by the Washington, D.C. lobbying firm of Patton Boggs, and he said that the City has been very pleased with the services provided. He advised that Patton Boggs is the largest lobbying firm in Washington and represents many large cities with interests similar to those of the City of Mesa.

Chairman Jones added that his recent visits to Washington have been very successful as a result of the efforts of Patton Boggs.

Mr. Stoddard continued the presentation by noting that staff anticipates that the City's infrastructure and airport projects would receive favorable consideration in the Stimulus Package. He said that the goal for Congress is to present a bill for President Obama's signature no later than February 16, 2009.

Mr. Butler advised that although the FY09 Federal budget has not yet been finalized, the government is funded under a "continuing resolution" through March 6, 2009. He said that a compromise budget has been prepared for consideration after the Stimulus Package has been completed. Mr. Butler noted that there is no certainty regarding the manner in which the City's discretionary spending requests would be addressed in the FY 2009 budget. He explained that in the past few years, the City's Federal legislative focus has been related to the following areas: Transportation – Housing and Urban Development (THUD); Energy and Water; Interior and Environment; Commerce, Justice and Science; and Labor – Health and Human Services. Mr. Butler outlined four projects that were funded in FY08 as discretionary appropriations: Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport; Law Enforcement Tactical Environmental Simulator Training; Va Shly'ah Akimel River Restoration Project; and Making Every Student Accountable (MESA) Program.

Mr. Butler said that several issues have been identified for FY 2010, one of which is the reauthorization of the five-year Surface Transportation bill (SAFETEA-LU). He advised that the current bill expires on September 30, 2009, and there is no expectation that the bill will be reauthorized before that date. He noted that the Mayor and members of the Council have expressed an interest in direct funding to the Region that would bypass the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT). Mr. Butler added that efforts would also be expended to ensure that funding of the Gateway Freeway is a priority item.

In response to a question from Chairman Jones regarding SAFETEA-LU, Mr. Butler explained that reauthorization of the bill could take as long as two years.

Mr. Butler reported that the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) Act expired in September 2007, and he said that a possible reauthorization this year could fund a robust airport improvement program, including infrastructure improvements at Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and Falcon Field. Mr. Butler noted that Senator McCain has provided strong support for Passenger Facility Fees (PFCs) as a means of financing the infrastructure. He explained that the Federal government establishes a cap for PFCs and the airport sets the fees accordingly. Mr. Butler stated that the Gateway Airport is reapplying for the five-year designation to be

considered a part of the Military Airports Program, which addresses the costs of transforming former military airports to commercial civilian uses.

Mr. Butler noted that the City of Mesa, in conjunction with the Region, plays a supporting role as far as Valley Metro regarding the Federal Transit Program's appropriations process. He advised that the new administration is being encouraged to support the full funding grant agreement, which designates \$90 million per year for light rail. Mr. Butler said that the results of the alternatives analysis study regarding the extension of light rail into downtown Mesa would be presented to the Council in the next few months, and then the preliminary engineering could move forward. He reported that Congress would be encouraged to include transit-oriented development when considering the cost-benefit assessments for light rail. He added that staff would continue to work with the RPTA (Regional Public Transit Authority) regarding bus rapid transit and regional bus routes.

Addressing the area of Public Safety, Mr. Butler said that efforts are ongoing relative to obtaining funding for 287(g) training and Public Safety communications interoperability.

Responding to questions from Chairman Jones, Mr. Butler stated that Congressmen Mitchell and Pastor have been very supportive with regard to Public Safety issues. He reported that the City would continue to pursue Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) and Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) grants. Mr. Butler advised that past disagreements between the Public Safety community in the Valley and State officials regarding the pass-through of funds have been resolved. He noted that the significant problem was that Homeland Security downgraded the Phoenix Metropolitan Region with regard to the allocation of funds, and he reported that the Public Safety community has worked to restore the funding to a level that is appropriate for the Region.

Committeemember Kavanaugh said that during an earlier term on the Council, he served on a national taskforce related to communications interoperability. He expressed the hope that the Federal government would respond favorably to requests for funding in this area.

In response to a request from Committeemember Finter for an update on the status of 287(g) training, Mr. Butler advised that favorable discussions with the Department of Homeland Security during the past few months resulted in four Mesa officers being approved to attend the National Training Center in South Carolina. He said that the training has been delayed until the Department of Homeland Security develops a Memo of Understanding (MOU), which is a requirement of the process.

Mr. Butler said that Justice Assistance Grants (JAG) and technology grants are being sought for the Fusion Center, a cooperative effort that enables police departments to work together to identify criminals who commit crimes in more than one jurisdiction.

Mr. Butler reported on issues related to the environment and advised that \$1 million in funding to complete the final design phase of the Va Shly'ah Akimel Project is expected to be included in the FY 2010 Federal budget. He added that the construction phase was a part of the reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act.

Responding to a series of questions from Chairman Jones, Mr. Butler noted that the City agreed to be a fifty/fifty partner with the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community through the design

phase of the project. He said that because the project is on tribal land, the City's participation would be far less than fifty percent in the construction phase and in the ongoing operating and maintenance of the completed project. Mr. Butler said the Army Corps of Engineers has always been supportive of the project.

Committeemember Kavanaugh noted that this project started in January 1988 with a request from Keno Hawker who was then a private citizen.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that staff would provide Committeemember Finter with an historical overview of the Va Shly'ah Akimel Project; and that staff is making an effort to schedule a joint meeting with the leaders of the Indian community regarding the project.

Mr. Butler reported that a joint effort is underway between Mesa, Tempe and the Maricopa County Flood Control district to extend a multi-use pathway along the southern bank of the Salt River from McClintock Road in Tempe to Alma School Road in Mesa. He said that efforts continue to address air and water quality regulations and energy efficiency standards with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Mr. Stoddard noted that the new administration is expected to impose additional air quality regulations.

Mr. Butler advised that although the City has been in compliance with ozone levels, the regulations regarding PM10 (particulate matter less than 10 microns) pose problems for the Valley area.

Committeemember Kavanaugh noted that Phoenix Councilmember Claude Maddox is the incoming chairman of the National League of Cities and Towns committee that addresses these issues, which should prove to be beneficial for Western cities.

Mr. Butler said that the East Valley Water Forum, a collaborative effort between Mesa and multiple agencies, works extensively with the Bureau of Reclamation to provide water resource management in the East Salt River Valley. He noted that although no State funding is available, staff is optimistic that Federal funding will be allocated to this effort.

Mr. Stoddard responded to a question from Chairman Jones by advising that CAGR (Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District) has the responsibility for the replenishment and recharge of water. He said that the issue is being addressed on a State-wide basis and includes discussions of the possibility of an entity being allowed to draw water from an East Valley aquifer and replenish the water in a different aquifer within the State.

Mr. Butler stated that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds have been a valuable tool for local communities to address quality of life projects and that the current administration is expected to continue the program. He advised that programs to address housing issues include the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Neighborhood Stabilization Program as a part of the stimulus package and the Federal Housing Administration's proposal to implement mortgage reform.

In response to comments by Committeemember Finter regarding the stimulus package, Mr. Butler advised that at this point in time, staff would simply be responding to actions by the Congress and the Administration.

Mr. Butler stated that the Sunbelt areas of the country have been disproportionately affected by the funding formula for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which primarily benefits residents in cold weather states. He noted that many Arizona citizens require energy assistance during the summer months for cooling and air conditioning. Mr. Butler advised that advocacy efforts would continue for a more balanced funding formula.

Addressing the Arts and Cultural area, Mr. Butler stated that efforts are ongoing to gain support from the Department of Interior for the historic preservation of the Mesa Grande Cultural Park. He advised that with the completion of Phase 1, visitors are now able to view the ruins. Mr. Butler said that funding would also be sought for interactive exhibits at the Arizona Museum for Youth and for cultural programming that is being offered to at-risk youth at the Mesa Arts Center in conjunction with the Mesa Police Department.

Committeemember Kavanaugh advised that funding opportunities also exist through the National Endowment for the Arts. He noted that an opportunity to discuss local needs will occur next month when the Mesa Arts Center hosts the Acting Director of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Mr. Butler stated that the presence of Boeing is a tremendous asset for the City of Mesa and provides an economic benefit to the entire State of Arizona. He said that the City would cooperate with Boeing to support continued military funding of the Apache Program.

It was moved by Committeemember Kavanaugh, seconded by Committeemember Finter, to recommend to the Council that staff's recommendations regarding the 2009 Federal Legislative agenda be approved.

Carried unanimously.

3. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 9th day of February 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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