

COUNCIL MINUTES

September 14, 2005

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Joint Dinner Meeting with the Mesa Chamber of Commerce at the Broadway Palm Dinner Theater, 5247 E. Brown Road on September 14, 2005, 7:30 a.m.

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker
Rex Griswold
Kyle Jones
Tom Rawles
Janie Thom
Claudia Walters
Mike Whalen

MESA STAFF PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Heidi Hast
Barbara Jones
Ellen Pence

MESA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESENT

Michele Fiore, Chairman
Steve Adams
Susan Anable
Mary Baldwin
Neil Barna
John Barry
Susan Carland
Steve Durtschi
Debra Duvall
Pat Esparza
Eric Jackson
Jared Langkilde
Bob McNichols
Ann Merritt
Marc Pierce
Michael Pollack
Jay Roundy
Warren Rucker
Jack Sellers
Cris Tutera
Steve Wegener
Dave Wier
Lois Yates

MESA CHAMBER OF COMERCE STAFF PRESENT

Charlie Deaton
Barbara Caravella
Pam Stapley

OTHERS PRESENT

Tessa Hill, East Mesa
Independent
Helen Karst, Salt River Project

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Mesa Chamber of Commerce Chairman Michele Fiore welcomed everyone and stated her appreciation for the large attendance at this worthwhile meeting. Chairman Fiore also recognized Salt River Project representative, Helen Karst who is also the sponsor of this event.

2. Review purpose of the meeting: A candid discussion on the business community's role in the City's future.

Chairman Fiore advised that two handouts have been distributed. She indicated that one of the handouts is the information that is provided to businesses that have decided to join the organization. Chairman Fiore commented that this informative handout outlines the organization's goals and functions along with a view of its current leadership. Chairman Fiore stated that the other handout, "Chamber's "Public Policy Positions" reflects the Chamber's support or opposition regarding various key local issues which affect the entire community. She reported that state issues are addressed through the East Valley Chamber of Commerce. Chairman Fiore advised that the Mesa Chamber of Commerce is supported by approximately 1,200 businesses that provide 100,000 jobs in the City. In addition, she mentioned that a Board of Directors that represents both the small and large employers also manages the Chamber.

Chairman Fiore emphasized that the purpose of the meeting is to mutually identify the most critical issues that the City and the business community will be facing in the next three to five years.

Chairman Fiore introduced and welcomed the Mayor and the City Council and stated appreciation for their attendance. She also requested that everyone in attendance introduce themselves and state the business or entity they represent.

Mesa Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Debra Duvall, served as the facilitator of the meeting and outlined the meeting's format. She stressed the importance of engaging in the discussions of today's meeting to ensure a productive session for all in attendance.

3. Review the major issues facing the City and each Council district.

At the request of Dr. Debra Duvall each Councilmember discussed major issues or concerns that they face in their respective district along with any Citywide issues.

Councilmember Thom discussed the challenges associated with District 6, which included the number of retirement areas in the district and the economic importance of Williams Gateway Airport. She also mentioned that the planning of the Superstition Vista area is of great importance not only to her district but to the City as a whole. Councilmember Thom clarified that this area is State Trust Land located south of Apache Junction. She stressed the importance of securing and maintaining small businesses throughout the community and commented on the fact that small businesses actually employ more people than government employers or large corporations/companies. Other issues presented by Councilmember Thom were impacts from Day Labor issues, budget priorities, transportation and property rights.

Councilmember Griswold commented on the difficulties associated with individuals that reside in his district but are located in a County island. He stated that there are issues related to annexation (Code requirements) that present challenges in providing services to those individuals. Councilmember Griswold also touched on other issues in his district, i.e., tremendous growth, the need for executive housing, and the City's current codes that may inhibit businesses in locating in the area.

Councilmember Jones announced the opening of the Mesa Arts Center and spoke of the importance of ensuring its success. He commented on the need for the development of housing, restaurants, and businesses in the area in order to support this large investment. Councilmember Jones also discussed challenges in District 4 with aging neighborhoods and issues relating to Code compliance. He pointed out that a portion of his constituents request higher standards for living conditions while others have an

opposing point of view. Other issues of great concern expressed by Councilmember Jones included day labor and Mesa's financial struggles and aging infrastructure.

Councilmember Rawles stated the opinion that the Fiesta Mall area is the greatest level of concern for District 3 but commented on the positive fact that it has been purchased by Westcor. He mentioned that there has been progress in the area with the development of new restaurants and Target's replacement of Montgomery Wards. Councilmember Rawles reported that District 3 transportation issues are related to street repair and maintenance opposed to new streets and freeways. He also spoke of an overworked fire station in his District, which is a typical occurrence with older neighborhoods that are densely populated. He also stated great concern with geographic barriers and demographic differences found between individuals who reside south of US 60 and those residents located north of Southern. Councilmember Rawles emphasized that these differences can permeate economic classes that will continue to segregate the residents in these two locations.

Vice Mayor Walters emphasized that the budget is one of Mesa's greatest concerns. She pointed out the diversities in her District relative to the type of housing and condition of the neighborhoods. She commented on the fact that while there are numerous fourplex-housing units with crime issues, there is also affluent high-end housing for residents. In addition, she pointed out that her District has many new housing subdivisions while there are numerous aging neighborhoods. Other issues of concern expressed by Vice Mayor Walters regarding her District included the aging infrastructure in West Mesa, landlords that do not take care of their buildings and the amount of payday loan establishments. Vice Mayor also provided positive comments regarding the Riverview project and the jobs that will be generated from that development and the Mesa Community College fire training facility that will be located in downtown Mesa.

Mayor Hawker mentioned that the City of Mesa will have a new City Manager on board which will promote many new changes. He also stressed the importance of maintaining a stable and predictable revenue source for the City and discussed the need to balance the job to housing ratio. Additional comments by the Mayor related to the need to strengthen the partnerships between education, government, business and healthcare. He also expressed concern regarding illegal immigration issues and the need for long-term planning for the State of Arizona as a whole, not City by City.

4. Review the Chamber's 2005 Public Policy Position and most critical public issues facing the business community in the next five years.

Chamber of Commerce Vice Chairman, Susan Anable, reiterated comments made by Chairman Fiore regarding the Chamber's Public Policy Position 2005 handout. She stated that the information identifies critical key issues that have an impact on Chamber members and the City of Mesa. Vice Chairman Anable said that the key issues cover a variety of topics from tax policy, economic development to regulatory and permitting processes. She commented on the fact that there are a number of issues in which the Chamber supports the City Council in regards to moving forward. Vice Chairman Anable emphasized that this document is an ongoing process that will need to be updated and revised as time goes by and changes take place.

Dr. Duvall mentioned the school bond election to be held on November 8, 2005 and spoke of the education provided to parents so that they may fully understand where the money comes from, where it is spent and the reasons it was necessary to go the voters for bond approval.

Dr. Duvall stated that based on the critical issues presented during this meeting, focus should be expended to determine the necessary steps the Chamber should take to ensure that Mesa's business sector is involved in future planning and remains an integral part of the growing, vital community.

Dr. Duvall identified various critical issues discussed during the meeting which related to the business community including centers, redevelopment areas and the need for infill, the perception of doing business in Mesa, transportation issues and the City's current budget condition.

5. Discuss and determine the critical issues for the future.

President and CEO of the Mesa Chamber of Commerce, Charlie Deaton, stated that beyond the critical issues already identified and discussed under previous agenda items, economic development should be noted and reemphasized. Mr. Deaton outlined the City's historical dependency on sales tax and discussed the need for high salary jobs. Additional items outlined by President Deaton included education, code compliance issues, and land use. He commented that all of these issues have an enormous impact on the success of a community.

Michael Pollack, Real Estate Investments, stated that an additional focus should be diversity within the economy, diversity within those jobs. He emphasized the risks involved when there is dependency on any one industry and noted that communities cannot exist as a one-industry entity.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection the meeting adjourned at 9:05 a.m.

KENO HAWKER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Joint Dinner Meeting with the Mesa Chamber of Commerce and the City of Mesa Council held on the 14th day of September 2005. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2005

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK