



OFFICE OF CITY CLERK

GENERAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 20, 2008

The General and Economic Development Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on March 20, 2008 at 9:20 a.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT	COMMITTEE ABSENT	STAFF PRESENT
Tom Rawles, Chairman Claudia Walters Kyle Jones	None	Bryan Raines

1. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

2. Hear a presentation, discuss and make recommendations on regulating the sale of alcoholic beverages (Liquor License/Special Event Liquor License) – Mesa City Code Title 5, Chapter 9.

Chairman Rawles stated that the topic was placed on the agenda at his request in advance of next week's Audit and Finance Committee meeting regarding fees, and he noted that the issue was discussed at a previous General & Economic Development Committee meeting. He expressed support for charging an initial, one-time application fee to recover the costs incurred by the City to process the application and satisfy the requirements of the State of Arizona, but he does not support an annual renewal fee. Chairman Rawles noted that although staff suggested that the annual fee addressed the additional costs to the Police Department related to establishments that serve alcoholic beverages, no data was provided to substantiate that claim.

It was moved by Chairman Rawles, seconded by Committeemember Walters, to recommend to the Council that the existing liquor license regulation be eliminated and that staff be requested to prepare an ordinance that establishes a one-time, liquor license application fee that represents full recovery of the City's costs to process the application and satisfy the requirements of the State of Arizona.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Rawles
NAYS – Jones-Walters

Chairman Rawles declared the motion failed by a majority vote.

Chairman Rawles stated that he is considering utilizing the power to introduce an ordinance granted to individual Councilmembers by the City Charter in order to address his concerns regarding liquor licenses. He thanked the Committeemembers and staff for allowing him to bring the issue forward again.

3. Hear a presentation and discuss the status of the Alston House.

Neighborhood Services Director Ray Villa introduced Landscape Architect Steve Stettler, who is serving as the Alston House Project Manager. Mr. Villa displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) to provide historical background information and an update on the restoration project. He advised that the Martin Luther King (MLK) Celebration Committee and the Mesa Association of Hispanic Citizens initiated a joint effort in 2005 to seek Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds in order to obtain the Alston property at 453 North Pima. He reported that Habitat for Humanity, which had been deeded the property by the Alston family, agreed to an exchange of property with the City of Mesa, after which a \$100,000 Heritage Grant was secured and the Council approved \$90,000 in CDBG funding.

Mr. Villa advised that the Alston House is representative of homes found in a 1930's African-American working-class neighborhood. He noted that the building meets the requirements of the National Historic Registry based on the home's association with Dr. Alston.

In response to a series of questions from Chairman Rawles regarding the costs, Mr. Stettler advised that separate bids are being requested for different phases of the project. He stated that as the project moves forward, additional fundraising efforts would be implemented as needed. Mr. Stettler confirmed that staff continues to be in contact with CEMEX, the firm donating the concrete for the project. Mr. Stettler noted that Ron Peters, the architect for the project, has donated a substantial amount of time. He also recognized Management Assistant Ernestine Tesarek of the Neighborhood Services Department, who has been instrumental in moving the project forward. He added that the neighborhood has wholeheartedly embraced the project.

Mr. Stettler reported that the private donations received for this project have earned interest during the intervening time, and he confirmed that the funds are not a part of the City's General Fund.

Chairman Rawles stated the opinion that the community is aware that this is a worthy project. He explained that Dr. Alston, the first African-American physician in Mesa, was significant to the City's history for his efforts to provide medical care to African-American and Hispanic citizens at a time when Mesa was a segregated community. He noted that he personally raised funds and in-kind donations for the project. Chairman Rawles acknowledged the efforts of the community organizations, and he thanked staff for the update, which provided reassurance that the project continues to move forward.

Committeemember Walters said she shared Chairman Rawles' enthusiasm for the project.

Ron Peters, the Project Architect, came forward to address the Committee and reported on the types of renovations that are required.

Mr. Stettler advised that if the bid for the roof exceeds \$25,000, on April 21st staff would request Council authorization to distribute additional funds that have already been allocated to CDBG or from another identified source. He commented that the neighborhood meeting regarding the Alston House was refreshing in that the project is viewed as being positive for the neighborhood and the entire community. Mr. Stettler said that there was a sense of stewardship in the neighborhood regarding the project.

Chairman Rawles stated the opinion that the Alston House is a valuable project because it identifies where the community came from, where the community is going and how we are going to get there. He said the effort demonstrates that Mesa is an inclusive and open community, and he thanked everyone for the update.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the General Development Committee meeting adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the meeting of the General & Economic Development Committee of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 20th day of March 2008. 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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