



**Meeting Action Minutes**  
**Downtown Vision Ad-Hoc Committee**

February 24, 2015

Mesa City Council Lower Chambers, 57 E. First Street  
3:00 p.m.

Jo Wilson, Chair  
Debby Elliott, Member  
Marco Meraz, Member  
Lorenzo Perez, Member

Steve Chucri, Member  
Charles Huellmantel, Member  
Rich Marchant, Member

1. Chair's call to order. **Approximately 3:05 pm**
2. Review and take action to approve Downtown Vision Committee minutes from the January 27, 2015 meeting. **Approved.**
3. Hear a presentation by and discuss feedback from Vic Linoff and Ron Peters, Mesa Preservation Foundation, regarding downtown history, heritage and development goals and suggestions. **Guests provided a presentation related to a two-part plan: 1) Removal of colonnades in order to recognize historic buildings. 2) Historic zoning overlay for downtown commercial district. Guests spoke about the importance of heritage tourism and that Downtown Mesa has several buildings dating back to 1895 (Alhambra) and 1890 (TLC—used to be Mesa Opera House). Historic preservation is an economic driver. There was discussion about property owner's willingness to remove colonnades; guests said they'd received positive feedback. Committee members said they'd heard some mixed reviews. But all Committee members expressed interest in finding ways to preserve history in downtown.**
4. Hear a staff presentation, discuss and provide direction related to the Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> open house format, roles and responsibilities. **Jeff McVay provided an overview of the format, which includes three stations: 1) Downtown history timeline; 2) Initiatives underway (downtown restaurants; City Center design proposal; Central Main Plan; Form-based Codes; Holiday 2015; Mesa Arts Center 10<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary; Transit-Oriented Development 101; and Light Rail update); and 3) Envision Downtown's Future, to include combination of poster boards and post-its and laptops for community members to provide feedback. Committee members Elliot, Marchant, Wilson, Meraz and Huellmantel will attend and participate.**
5. Hear a staff presentation and discuss feedback on the draft "Community Outreach Dashboard." **Natalie Lewis presented a draft summary of community outreach as well as a 'word cloud' of commonly used phrases/comments from the public. She was asked to add in comment at RAIL meeting related to interest in creating greenbelt/connections from outside of downtown to improve the journey into downtown.**
6. Hear a staff presentation and discuss plans and areas of focus for the March 10<sup>th</sup> facilitated, electronic brainstorming session. **Natalie Lewis explained the use of electronic brainstorming at the Advanced Strategy Center as a way for everyone to quickly and seamlessly provide feedback in a way that creates immediate results and focus of common themes. All committee members will be in attendance at the March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting except Committee Member Marchant. Natalie Lewis will make sure there is a way to include his feedback and bring him into the discussion via conference call.**

7. Hear a staff presentation, discuss and provide direction on an updated Committee calendar and timeline. **Natalie Lewis reviewed an updated timeline, which provides for process conclusion and presentation to Council as early as April 2, 2015. The Committee agreed with the updated schedule, noting that if they are not ready for presentation to Council by April 2<sup>nd</sup>, they will take time as needed.**
8. If time allows, hear committee discussion and possible direction to staff or committee assignments relative to: 1) Downtown Boundaries; 2) Parking and way finding; 3) Unique and creative development opportunities, particularly transit-oriented development for housing or mixed uses; 4) Restaurant/Bar opportunities; and 5) Committee discussion about adding other categories for later discussion and/or follow up by the Committee at future meetings. **Committee used this time to discuss their own experiences and reflections relative to Downtown Mesa. LPerez focused on validating community knowledge about existing assets first, expressed excitement about preserving history and the opportunity for downtown to become an urban campus and extension to Benedictine. SChucri discussed need for restaurants and that now is the time for Downtown's renaissance. DElliot fondly recalled downtown of the past and how excited she is about its future. She talked about love of the arts and that her vision is for a compelling future. RMarchant expressed interest in ensuring connections to and from downtown as well as ensuring that we work to change the perception that Downtown Mesa is unsafe. CHuellmantel agreed about the need for connections to downtown such as greenbelts and the need for restaurants. He's seen restaurants truly transform areas and the negative perceptions they once had. He believes the core purpose of downtowns has changed and that today's downtowns, in part, are urban settings for younger crowds to hang out, eat, meet and be social. JWilson said that entertainment and nightlife are important to Benedictine's students. She also wants to build on existing assets such as history, arts and museums. She wants Downtown to be the heart of Mesa and for light rail to bring people to Mesa for entertainment vs. leaving Mesa to find it elsewhere.**
9. Confirm next meeting date: March 10, 2015, Visit Mesa Conf. Room, 120 N. Center **(Confirmed)**
10. Discuss and provide direction on the primary agenda items next meeting:
  - a. Committee to participate in an interactive, facilitated discussion to begin formulating a shared Downtown Vision and related recommendations. **(Committee to consider key themes in advance of this meeting in order to be prepared for the discussion)**
11. Items from citizens present **(None)**
12. Adjourn meeting **(Approx. 4:37pm)**

*Committee members will attend either in person or by telephone conference call. City Council members may elect to attend the meeting for their own information, not for purposes of any legal action nor decision making by the Council. The City is committed to making its public meetings accessible to persons with disabilities. For special accommodations, please contact the City Manager's Office at 480-644-3333 at least two business days before the meeting.*