

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 8, 2001

The General Development Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on January 8, 2001 at 3:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Claudia Walters, Chairman
Jim Davidson
Mike Whalen

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson

COUNCIL PRESENT

Keno Hawker

1. Discuss and consider proceeding with implementation of the recommendations of the Day Labor Task Force.

City Manager Mike Hutchinson addressed the Committee regarding this agenda item and noted staff's general support of the Day Labor Task Force's Final Report (See Attachment 1). Mr. Hutchinson explained that, contrary to staff's report to the Committee dated January 2, 2001 (See Attachment 2), it is now staff's recommendation that a feasibility study be performed to determine the most appropriate manner in which to create a day labor work center in the community and then, after reviewing the results of the feasibility study, decide whether to go forward with a day labor work center. Mr. Hutchinson added that staff recommends that efforts continue regarding immigration reform on an ongoing basis. Mr. Hutchinson informed the Committee that Human Services Coordinator Karen Kurtz and Neighborhood Services Manager Wayne Balmer are present and will respond to any questions regarding the feasibility study phase.

In response to questions from Committeemember Davidson, Ms. Kurtz voiced the opinion that proceeding with the feasibility study as the next step is appropriate and necessary and should be accomplished prior to creating a day labor work center.

Committeemember Davidson discussed recently published census data that had come to his attention including the fact that the immigrant population in Arizona increased 129% over the past 10 years with 40% to 60% having illegal status. Committeemember Davidson expressed concerns that the recently released data may have affected the results of the task force and noted that some citizens believe that an increased illegal immigrant population increases taxes, and negatively impacts available health care and education resources. Committeemember Davidson added that some citizens may interpret the creation of a day labor work center as an incentive for illegal immigrants to locate in Mesa. Committeemember Davidson also expressed the opinion, based on information from Senator McCain's staff, that meaningful change in immigration law is not going to occur in the near future.

It was moved by Committeemember Davidson, seconded by Committeemember Whalen, to recommend to the Council to proceed with implementation of the recommendations of the Day Labor Task Force but first giving

authorization to proceed with a feasibility study regarding the work center.

Committeemember Whalen voiced support for moving forward with the feasibility study and suggested contacting the City of Los Angeles for input based on the City's extensive experience in this area. Committeemember Whalen stressed the importance of involving the Police Department in the project from the beginning and also selecting the proper location for the work center.

Chairman Walters stated support for proceeding with the feasibility study first to examine numerous issues including funding sources and location. Chairman Walters emphasized the importance of working in tandem with Phoenix and Chandler to avoid attracting day laborers from other communities. Chairman Walters voiced support for ongoing lobbying with respect to immigration reform.

Committeemember Davidson stated that an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) presentation regarding day labor issues will be held on January 16, 2001 in Phoenix. Committeemember Davidson commented on conflicting information he had received from INS regarding an employer's duty to question legal status and stressed the importance of further investigation of this issue prior to proceeding with the work center.

Discussion ensued regarding confusion surrounding INS' position with respect to immigrant employment laws, duties of an employer to question legal status of workers and INS enforcement.

In response to questions from Chairman Walters, Committeemember Davidson clarified his motion: *It was moved by Committeemember Davidson, seconded by Committeemember Whalen, to recommend to the City Council to proceed with implementation of the recommendations of the Day Labor Task Force.* Committeemember Davidson added that the intent of the motion is to go forward with the day labor work center following the feasibility study but regardless of its results, which will determine specifics such as location, costs and funding sources.

Chairman Walters stated that she supports the recommendations of the task force and found their work to be insightful, but added that due to the numerous questions and issues the task force recommended be addressed in the feasibility study, she interpreted the feasibility study as being an initial, separate step. Chairman Walters added that a large number of issues remain to be addressed prior to approving the entire work center proposal and commented that the results of the proposed feasibility study could, in fact, alter the direction in which they ultimately proceed.

Committeemember Davidson said that the Task Force's recommendations are the result of extensive, thorough research and effort and stated the opinion that the recommendations are appropriate and should be approved at this time.

Chairman Walters spoke in support of the Task Force's efforts and clarified that she believes that the recommendations should be broken down into three separate phases: first, the feasibility study, second, the day labor center be implemented and operated as a pilot project for one year and third, that the entire program be evaluated after that year. Chairman Walters noted that the feasibility study will address specific implementation issues rather than whether or not to proceed with the center.

Chairman Walters advised that she would not support the motion and explained that her concerns center around the implementation of the recommendations rather than the recommendations themselves. Chairman Walters reiterated her preference that the implementation occur in three stages, beginning with the feasibility study.

Committeemember Whalen indicated continued support of the motion and for moving the matter forward to the full Council. Committeemember Whalen stated the opinion that implementing the recommendations of the Day

Labor Task Force may be stopped at any time if the results are not acceptable.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Davidson-Whalen

NAYS - Walters

Chairman Walters declared the motion carried by majority vote.

2. Hear an update on urban design standards for a light rail project.

Transportation Planning Administrator Kevin Wallace addressed the Committee regarding this agenda item and introduced Betsy Moll of Valley Connections who presented an update on the light rail project.

Ms. Moll informed the Committee that in November 2000 an agreement was reached on alignment of a light rail system, and said that the current focus of the project is on urban design. Ms. Moll referred to graphics displayed in the Council Chambers and provided a brief overview of several design issues to be considered including: system identity; how the system relates to community features; engineering components such as placement of wire and track surfacing; appearance of the vehicles; appearance and size of the stations; and appearance and locations of the power substations.

In response to a question from Committeemember Davidson, Ms. Moll advised that costs to be associated with the power substations are included in the presently estimated cost of the project, \$45 million per mile. Ms. Moll explained that the power substations will be located approximately every mile along the project, and said that the substations can be located and hidden (inside a building or parking garage) within several hundred feet of the track.

Discussion ensued regarding voltage, rail lengths and noise associated with turns.

Ms. Moll discussed the importance of proper signage associated with the system to provide information such as station locations, fares, way finding, and activities and facilities accessible from the system. Ms. Moll also noted that art may be incorporated into the system in the mitigation walls, signage, guardrail and structural columns.

Ms. Moll advised the Committee that the information assembled from the public regarding values and priorities associated with the urban design of the system will be provided to the architects and engineers as guidelines. Ms. Moll explained that the process of determining the guidelines included assembling a citizen task force for input. Ms. Moll noted that the task force is comprised of people from all three cities including residents, business owners and representatives from civic organizations, the arts community, the architectural community and persons with disabilities. Ms. Moll also noted that in addition to input from the task force, a series of open houses are planned for February and March to solicit additional public input.

Discussion ensued regarding soliciting public input and providing a presentation and information to the public at the *Mesa 2025 – A Shared Vision* public workshop in Council District 1 on January 25, 2001.

Committeemember Davidson voiced strong support for keeping the system simple and fundamental and ensuring the system's capacity to grow in the future.

Mr. Wallace advised that although the baseline system will be funded by the project, the City will have the option of enhancing the baseline system at the City's expense.

Ms. Moll stated that the citizen task force is focusing on design decisions primarily related to function as opposed to aesthetics.

In response to a comment from Committeemember Whalen regarding the use of low cars, Ms. Moll advised that the decision to use low cars throughout the system had already been made.

Chairman Walters expressed appreciation for the update.

3. Hear an update on development of the infill policy.

Planning Director Frank Mizner addressed the Committee regarding this agenda item. Mr. Mizner discussed numerous advantages related to infill development including nearby utilities and schools and increased revenue to the City through utility sales and sales tax. Mr. Mizner also noted that some infill projects result in citizen complaints regarding property values, crime rates and over-crowded schools. Mr. Mizner explained that infill development refers to the development of vacant land, while redevelopment involves a parcel with a structure already present.

Mr. Mizner advised that staff is presently working on an infill development policy and added that although Mesa previously dealt with infill development on a case by case basis, addressing infill in the land use portion of the City's General Plan is now required by Growing Smarter legislation. Mr. Mizner discussed options available to address infill including designating infill districts, providing incentives to new infill development through zoning fees, waiver or reduction of impact fees and other financial incentives.

Mr. Mizner informed the Committee that infill development is being addressed in the impact fee study presently underway by Duncan & Associates, the City's impact fee consultant. Mr. Mizner noted that the issue of waivers associated with infill development will be addressed in the second phase of the study.

Mr. Mizner referred to the *Mesa – 2025 “A Shared Vision” Vacant Parcels* map provided to the Committeemembers (See Attachment 3) and noted that approximately 30% of Mesa's land is vacant, mostly in the northeast and southeast fringes of the City.

In response to a question from Committeemember Davidson regarding the Valley Forward infill project model, Mr. Mizner confirmed that parts of the model will be presented to the General Plan Subcommittee for consideration. Mr. Mizner added that other valley communities are addressing infill development and that Valley Forward accurately summarized the pros and cons of infill development.

Committeemember Davidson commented that valley utility companies have accomplished significant work regarding infill development and suggested that those resources be utilized in development of the General Plan. Committeemember Davidson expressed the opinion that waivers are the best incentive to encourage infill development within the Town Center.

In response to a question from Committeemember Davidson regarding the residential development guidelines, Mr. Mizner advised that new residential development within older neighborhoods dictate compatibility of design and interconnectivity of streets.

Discussion ensued regarding the impact fee system and how infill development affects the system, the waiver of fees and its impact to the system, and whether infill development can create the need for changes to existing utilities and parks.

Chairman Walters voiced the opinion that infill policy should primarily address the development of small parcels that will directly influence existing neighborhoods. Chairman Walters commented that she hoped infill policy and development would work to upgrade existing problem neighborhoods. Chairman Walters added that infill policy should address several issues including size of parcel, buildability of the parcel and impact to the neighborhood; and provide for improved design and landscaping as trade-offs for fee reductions.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the meeting of the General Development Committee of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 8th day of January, 2001. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2001

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

Attachments

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