

MEETING MINUTES
Office of Economic Development
Economic Development Advisory Board
57 E. 1st Street, Mesa, AZ 85201
Lower Level Council Chambers

Date: August 2, 2022 Time: 7:30 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Rich Adams, Chair
Brian Campbell
Michelle Genereux
Kathleen "KJ" Jolivette
Christopher Nickerson
Dominic Perry
Laura Snow

EX-OFFICIO

Mayor Giles (Excused)
Chris Brady (Excused)
Sally Harrison
James Kasselmann
Natascha Ovando-Karadsheh
Jennifer Zonneveld, Vice Chair

STAFF PRESENT

William Jabjiniak
Chris Molnar
Jaye O'Donnell
Maribeth Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT

N/A

GUESTS

Marc Garcia
Alison Brooks
Vince Di Bella
Ryan Yee

The Economic Development Advisory Board meeting was conducted in-person and via virtual platform with options for public participation.

1. Chair's Call to Order

Chair Adams called the August 2, 2022, meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Board to order at 7:31 a.m.

2. Items from Citizens Present - None

Chair Adams welcomed Laura Snow to the Board. Ms. Snow is the Associate Vice President at Banner Health and a 21-year Mesa resident. She previously served on the Advisory Board and is happy to support the City and all the great work that Bill and his team are doing as a member of the Board again.

3. Approval of Minutes from June 7, 2022, Meeting

Chair Adams called for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion was made to approve the June 7, 2022, minutes by Brian Campbell, seconded by Christopher Nickerson.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Adams, Campbell, Genereux, Jolivette, Nickerson, Perry, Snow

NAYS – None

Chair Adams declared the motion carried by unanimous vote.

4. Hear a presentation on Mesa's hotel demand

Chair Adams welcomed Marc Garcia, President & CEO of Visit Mesa.

Mr. Garcia introduced Alison Brooks, the Visit Mesa Director of Destination Experience and Advocacy. He thanked the Board for the invitation to talk about what Visit Mesa does. He stated that they are storytellers and appreciate sharing the fantastic story that is Mesa with direct customers, both domestically and overseas, when booking meetings and conventions, and when working with corporate association meeting planners. Mr. Garcia shared that they do an annual study each year with Longwoods International which includes a visitor profile study. He shared an overview of the market, the performance in the market, and the direct efforts that Visit Mesa has been working on. There were four million visitors to Mesa in 2021, just shy of 2019 record levels, resulting in \$436,400,000 in direct visitor spending. Overnight visitors to Mesa, excluding day visits, resulted in \$278,700,00 in direct visitor spending, and \$259 is spent per person, per day, in the market. Air passenger statistics for Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport reflects a tremendous amount of growth since the pandemic in international visitors. For first time since 2019 international visitors, international arrivals from Canada, is one of our top origin markets. This is very positive because the international markets stay longer and spend more dollars.

Mr. Garcia shared a market overview using a geolocation-based program showing points of interested visited (POIs). Mesa Riverview, Downtown Mesa, Dana Park, Mekong Plaza and Bell Bank Park are all reflected in the top 10 POIs. There was 33% growth in visitors from the Midwest from FY21 to FY22. Slides of demographics for visitors to hotels and Bell Bank Park detailed the visitor's origin market, household income, age, and POIs. We've never had the younger age groups visiting Mesa, which is a nod to Bell Bank Park. In addition, there was a lot of concern early on that locals would not have access to Bell Bank Park. That the only folks that would be able to use it would be those coming in from out of market. These numbers reflect quite the opposite, that 53.4% of the visitors to Bell Bank Park were locals.

Marc Garcia also mentioned that this was the first time they've seen household income at this level (Median \$98.9K). When people think about the sports market, they often say you only really need to develop select-service hotels rather than a full-service product. However, when you look at income at these levels, I promise you that families are looking for full-service product as well. We have begun discussions with developers sharing our desire for full-service hotel products that are needed in this marketplace. Tourism Economics looks at the City's own tax rolls, the County tax rolls, they do in-plan modeling, they're looking at short-term rental information and tracking hotel performance day-over-day, hour-over-hour, but certainly month-over-month and year-over-year. Their study reflects 4.1M visitors and visitor spending to reach \$605.2M in 2021. The difference in Longwoods versus Tourism Economics is the number of factors that are considered. Most of that growth, in terms of spending, is coming from rate, especially at hotels, and short-term rentals. Rate is so high at the moment that it is driving our yield with significant increases even over 2019. For comparison, the 2022 average daily rate is \$109.32, while the fiscal year 2019 average daily rate was \$87.45. That's significant. Supply is down as we lost some rooms through the pandemic, and we haven't grown our supply of rooms in several years. We know there are some in the pipeline, but supply is down.

Visit Mesa's performance metrics were shared and included \$153,444,576 in total estimated direct visitor expenditures. For every dollar the City of Mesa invests in Visit Mesa there is a return of \$44.31 in estimated direct visitor expenditures. Referring to National Sales, this includes meetings, conventions, trade shows where Visit Mesa works directly with meeting planners, with third-party planners, and national sales booked 7,376 room nights. This is a low number that is to be expected following the pandemic. Over the last few months, our national sales director was able to put in some solid programs. These room nights reflect \$5,500,000 in direct visitor expenditures. Travel industry sales (TIS) or visitor marketing includes working with wholesale tour operators, Southwest vacations, American Airlines

vacations, third-party tour operators, domestically and overseas, and reflects 55,102 room nights. Under the sports sales segment we booked 40,000 hotel room nights alone that were Bell Bank Park related in January 2022. Not all the bookings happened in the year for the year. Very often, these are programs booking two, three years out, but we take credit for the rooms as their contracted, as it should be for sales. Total of 151,482 hotel room nights booked in this fiscal year. The previous record was a little over 101,000 hotel room nights.

Mr. Jabjiniak mentioned market conditions and how that might impact the youth and amateur sports market.

Mr. Garcia stated that bookings are typically slower during summer months, but the beauty of Bell Bank Park is that it affords the opportunity for indoor sports with a 250,000-square-foot indoor space. We're working on USA gymnastics, USA volleyball, etc. to, over the long haul, increase our overall bookings in the summer.

Ms. Ovando-Karadsheh appreciated the information and mentioned the revenue Mesa was losing because we do not have enough hotels to accommodate the guests that are coming in, especially with Bell Bank. She asked how much of those visitor dollars were going outside of Mesa.

Marc Garcia replied that a significant amount is leaving Mesa, especially for these larger programs. We just don't have enough hotel supply accommodate the needs. So they're booking into Chandler, they're booking in Tempe, they're booking into Downtown Phoenix in some cases for these really large programs. So yes, we're losing a significant amount. He wasn't aware of the exact percentage but estimated 35% minimum.

Alison Brooks shared five of the larger sports tournaments that were held in in Mesa this past year including the NCAA WAC Baseball Championships, Mexican Baseball Fiesta, and ODP National Soccer. The Arizona Disabled Desert Challenge brought over 15 countries to showcase what we have done as an accessible destination. The USA Gymnastics Nationals, first time in Arizona, will be held in Mesa. These five tournaments booked almost 5,000 room nights.

Mr. Garcia mentioned Perfect Game, which is one of the large outfits running youth and amateur baseball in the country. Stating that a significant amount of market share is moving from the West Valley to Bell Bank. They are also using City baseball fields and expect to execute a significant contract that's bringing about 1,000 rooms a month into Mesa.

Alison Brooks touched on Visit Mesa's social media performance. Their Instagram audience is up by 27%, which is a significant year-over-year growth. Website performance metrics were also shared highlighting campaigns and landing pages. Earned media impressions doubled year-over-year.

Mr. Garcia explained that the For the Love of Mesa is a podcast that was established during the pandemic. There are currently five episodes available including a great discussion with Armani Williams, who is the first autistic NASCAR driver. DMOs like Visit Mesa, Destination Marketing Organizations, had to pivot during the pandemic. It wasn't business as usual, where we're primarily going outside of market. Locals hardly ever see what we do because we don't typically market to locals. We created a paper to engage with local businesses and residents to understand the value, the importance, the value proposition of visitors and their dollars on our community. We created the For the Love of Mesa Resident Steering Committee which helps us drive our content. A lot of our storytelling is coming from residents themselves, them sharing their own stories about what they love about Mesa. As you often know, tourists don't want to go where the tourists go, they want to go where the locals go. So we thought this was a really nice pivot. We created a custom song, using local artists. It's proven to be quite successful and is now being used as a best practice in our industry nationally.

Alison Brooks shared information on their partnership and community building program. We revamped it this past year and now have three tiers of partnership with 142 paid partners. We've also added add-on packages. About 40% of our partners now add an add-on package, which allows people to customize the marketing that they get from Visit Mesa for social media, restaurants, and a jobs page. As you probably know, we became autism certified in 2019. We're the first ever city to become certified for autism in all the entire nation. We have over 5000 people who have completed that autism certification through IBCCS. We could have never done it without the support of the City of Mesa, the mayor, the Mesa Chamber, and everyone involved. We knew it was the right thing to do, but we also knew it was a great business decision. In fact, the AutismOne Conference is coming to the Delta Hotel this month booking 500 room nights

Laura Snow asked what it means to be autism certified, and what is involved.

Ms. Brooks replied that to become autism certified, you complete a process with the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards, which is our partner. They provide online training specific to your position with a retention quiz. The certification is valid for two years, and then it gets renewed because the data changes. To become an autism-certified business, you need 80% of your guest-facing staff to become certified and we do have about 50 businesses that are autism certified.

Ms. Snow asked what behaviors change on behalf of the employee base that then make it more amenable and accessible by people with autism.

Ms. Brooks responded that it comes down to being aware, understanding, and patient.

Mr. Garcia stated that it's a business certification, and the training differs based on your position. At the lower levels there's a quiz, but when you go through higher levels of certification, 14-hour courses, it's a full exam. Our partnership with IBCCS, unlike other platforms, doesn't allow us to just put a video together and put a sticker in the window saying we're autism friendly. This is about truly understanding and becoming aware of what autism is. My son was the inspiration for this initiative, so I wanted to make sure, when I'm looking at the autism community and I'm looking at autism families, that I could tell them this had substance, there was teeth to this certification. It was important for me that this was substantive and that it evolved, which is why I like the certification happening every two years.

Ms. Snow asked if this initial autism focus serve as a platform for even broader activities.

Alison Brooks thanked Ms. Snow for the question. We want to be as inclusive as possible. In fact, our vision is to become the most accessible city in the United States. We've started that through technology and through training. One in four people have a disability now. Virtual tours allow individuals to know the parking lot situation, what the restaurant layout is, or if the hotel has a roll-in shower before they visit. These virtual tours on our website and we can see they're performing very well. It's not just something you use for accessibility, but also for sales. Hidden disabilities are another focus. Our Sunflower Program allows people to wear a lanyard that signifies they have a hidden disability. When they are in Mesa and go into a business, it signifies they may need a little extra help, a little extra patience, a little extra kindness. So simple. We have distributed over 1100 lanyards. A lot of people, when they come to the AutismOne Conference, are already requesting these. Aira is an app through your phone, which if you're blind or have low vision, it connects you with a person to be your eyes as you go about. So if they sit down at a restaurant and can't read the menu, someone who is trained will read that menu to them. What is interesting about this is that we are geofenced for the entire city, and if you're in our city, it's free for you to use, unlimited. This is at all Starbucks and Targets nationwide, but there is a five -minute usage cap. If you're in Mesa, there's no cap.

Mr. Garcia mentioned that this service has been underwritten by Visit Mesa.

Alison Brooks shared that she approached Marc with a desire to more but needed additional funds. Marc suggested starting a foundation and that's how the Mesa Regional Foundation for Accessibility, Diversity, and Inclusion began. She highlighted the STEP Program. As an industry, we don't do a really great job of building a pipeline. Sometimes jobs in our industry are looked at as low paying or not rewarding, and that's absolutely not the case. We're expanding to four high schools this fall, and we're taking a group of 50 kids to different tourism-based things, like hotels, restaurants, attractions, and showing them what tourism jobs look like. We take them out of school once on Friday, and it's just a great, great way to build a pipeline of talent. Camp Level Up is a partnership with ASU Endless Studios, which is a gaming company. We showed a group of kids, they were all on the spectrum, that they could also have a job. They learned to build a game from start to finish, including storyboarding and coding. Finally, Spectrum Double IPA was a great collaboration in April. We developed a beer, and part of the proceeds benefited our foundation. And it was called Spectrum, which was a nod to what we have done with the autism certification, and it was sold at Chupacabra and 12 West. It sold out and was well received.

Ms. Brooks also mentioned Bandwago, which is a digital passport program that anybody can download on their phone, and we have one for all the autism-certified businesses. If you're near a location, you can check it off, and after five, you get a jigsaw puzzle from us, and we have a deals' pass. If you download that pass, you access all the partners sponsored deals. Visit Mesa's website was shared with the Board.

Marc Garcia shared that looking forward while CPI and average daily rate have a high correlation coefficient, we're not seeing inflation rates impacting demand a much. While inflation continues to rise, demand is staying relatively steady. We're seeing a concern about fuel costs, but obviously, we're more a fly market than we are a drive market. Many DMO organizations across the country are factoring a 10% contraction. Bill, and others in this room, are far more knowledgeable about what may be in the pipeline for future hotel development, because very often developers are going to the city, looking to determine what is available in and around Bell Bank Park or Cannon Beach. Very often we get inquiries from research organizations like HVS for data to include in their feasibility studies. We have heard that at least three, perhaps more, up to five or six, select-service hotels are eyeing space around Bell Bank Park.

Mr. Garcia mentioned that a developer contacted Visit Mesa looking to purchase 144 homes in Eastmark creating a whole neighborhood of short-term rentals. This developer's solution to the concern about short-term rental parties and noise is to put them all in one area where they would not impact year-round residents.

Chair Adams asked if there are any other places in the country where that's been done.

Mr. Garcia stated that he was not aware of another development such as this and this developer was based in California.

Laura Snow asked what the sales tax at short-term rentals was and does it generate the same level of revenue for the City as hotels do.

Mr. Garcia replied that yes, short-term rentals, by law in Arizona now, have to pay rates just as they would a hotel. They are paying 5.5% sales tax to the State, 1.77% to the County, and 5% TLT to the City of Mesa, along with the 2% TPT to the City of Mesa.

Mr. Jabjiniak mentioned that there are some short-term rentals that don't submit taxes.

Marc Garcia mentioned that more auditors are needed at the State at the Department of Revenue to ensure collection. Approximately 30 auditors were let go at the beginning of the last administration. It would be nice to see some of those come back and dedicated to this very purpose.

Chair Adams would appreciate being kept updated on that issue as it develops.

Mr. Garcia mentioned the Visit Arizona Initiative (VAI). The governor dedicated \$101,000,000 to the State through the Arizona Office of Tourism was for the purpose of investment in tourism marketing. Visit Mesa received \$500,000 this past fiscal year and have just submitted a proposal for another \$500,000 in this coming fiscal, or the fiscal year we have just begun. We've worked really hard on some legislation for a Tourism Marketing Authority, a Tourism Improvement District.

Alison Brooks mentioned that typically we hold an Annual Summit online. This time we're going to flip it on its back and do something new and invite everybody to ASU to really showcase what we do.

Mr. Garcia concluded the slides with two huge projects we're engaging in. MMGY NextFactor is a master plan that we fully funded. It will be a collaborative process with all our stakeholders to create a road map for what Mesa looks like in 10 years. What does it look like in terms of technology, connectivity, transportation? What is our industry doing to match what the City is doing with its Climate Action Plan? This will be a 10-month process to determine what that road map looks like. Secondly, we're working with Tourism Diversity Matters, the leader in DEI space across the country for the tourism industry, making sure that strategic plan matches what we put in our own master plan and our own strategic plans. And that's a pretty significant long process, as well.

Natascha Ovando-Karadsheh mentioned that we've talked over the years about our convention space and the use of it. She asked if, after COVID, we're seeing business come back online. Are we actively seeking them out or focusing more on tourists and less on conventions?

Marc Garcia stated we are always seeking convention business. Engagement with the customer at trade shows across the country were closed for the last two years. They are reopening now, and we're attending. We have a specific staff person dedicated to just that market who is fielding calls. We also use a lot of third-party sourcing information. Lead volume is way up. Our bookings are now starting to pick up, so it's back.

Laura Snow asked what role healthcare tourism plays a part or is tracked. How big is healthcare tourism for elective-type procedures, within the State or Phoenix market, for things like oncology, pediatrics services or orthopedic services or that are not available in various parts of the State?

Mr. Garcia replied that it is something they looked at rather closely a few years back. Aurora, Colorado was doing some extremely good work in this space. It's really expensive to get into if you want to do it right, although the market is there. I don't know how much advertising Banner is doing out of market for certain procedures. I'm glad you brought it up, because it is something that's been on our minds and something we want to look at again. We need to find out if there are willing partners in our community to do it.

Laura Snow responded that, just speaking for Banner, we have reorganized ourselves to focus on key strategic service lines, and orthopedics is one of them, and that's largely an elective-type of business. I'd like to follow up offline and talk through how we do that because there is a population that can afford and has the flexibility with their insurance to be able to travel to a destination place for exceedingly high-quality care.

Mr. Campbell thanked Marc and Allison and the whole of Visit Mesa for doing wonderful work to elevate Mesa's brand. It's shown by the comprehensive level and presentation. Regarding business travel, one of the issues we focused on is partnering with our government contractors, our defense contractors, and we hear anecdotally how much we're losing of that market, outside of the employment centers. They're coming to Mesa because of our defense contractors, but the executives are staying other places. It's a unique market with government contractor rates and the international aspects of it. How can we capture that market?

Mr. Garcia responded that we need the product. We need luxury hotels.

Mr. Campbell reiterated why the work Visit Mesa is doing elevates Mesa in your master plan. He would like to see specificity in some of these segments of market, whether it's defense, healthcare, other places in the master plan, so that we can capture that, because you did the hard work elevating the brand.

Marc Garcia expressed his appreciation and will follow through on that suggestion.

Chair Adams thanked Mark and Allison for their detailed presentation and introduced Mr. Vince Di Bella, Adaptive Architects, and Ryan Yee, City of Mesa Engineer.

Vince Di Bella stated that they would present two projects that are interrelated. The new home for Economic Development and the new City Council Chambers project. They're interrelated because relocating Economic Development allows for the demolition and rebuild of a new City Council Chamber. The Visit Mesa building that will house Economic Development will be completely remodeled. There will not be one piece of finish or furniture that remains, other than the boardroom table. The main floor plan will not change much except for the addition of a few offices and upgrading some other areas. The primary focus was the interior finishes to give it that bright, upscale, business esthetic to cater to corporate visitors. Mr. Di Bella displayed interior and exterior renderings of the Visit Mesa building remodel. The current glass front conference room will remain, and a wall of glass will be installed to open the large conference room on the north side to the lobby. This allows the room to communicate with the interior space so that it to flow freely as an event space. The exterior remodel will include landscaping, exterior windows, and new lighting. The huge ficus trees will be removed as they are affecting the foundation of the building.

Mr. Campbell commented that it is an exciting project and asked if there would be upgrades to the HVAC system for efficiencies or LEED certification. It is important to incorporate energy efficient design in City buildings to project the City's vision to prospective businesses.

Mr. Di Bella stated that the HVAC systems will be replaced with new high-efficiency units, and they will zone the spaces differently as well. Although LEED certification isn't tied to the building, they were focused on energy efficiency. The building will include LED lighting throughout and some of the finish materials are recycled content.

Dominic Perry asked if they were required to build to a LEED certification on the design and rebuild.

Mr. Di Bella stated they were not.

Mr. Perry commented that it is about how we design moving forward as a city, and, how we project what we see is important in our community.

Mr. Di Bella mentioned that the exterior landscape plan removed the turf and zero-scaped to be water efficient. Single-paned windows were being replaced with dual-pane. Responsible design was incorporated wherever possible.

Ryan Yee commented that the offices along the east and south wall were all existing. We worked within the constraints of what we could reuse and incorporated Economic Development's needs. The design itself was a balance of what we had versus what he needed while being stewards of taxpayers' dollars.

Chair Adams thanked Vince and Ryan for the presentation and has appreciated all the designs Adaptive Architects has been involved in. He also thanked everyone involved for retaining the Robert Brinton Conference Room. Mr. Brinton was a great advocate for Mesa and Mr. Garcia's predecessor.

Mr. Di Bella moved to the City Council Chambers portion of the presentation. The initial vision was to provide transparency, a relationship to the street, and a relationship to the public. Renderings of the building were shared. The existing two-story building that exists today will be demolished, hence Economic Development moving to the Visit Mesa building. The front Main Street Heritage Wall, planters, and fountain will be removed and re-envisioned as part of the overall context of the facility. A two-story facility replaces the existing two-story for City Council Chambers. The first floor is where the main entry occurs with an open two-story atrium concept, Study Session, and Executive Session locations are on this floor as well. Public will enter this facility from Main Street. There is a conscious effort to engage Main Street and to have a presence on Main Street. The second floor will house the City Council Chambers. Upon entering the building, there's a grand staircase that takes you up to that second-floor level where the City Council Chambers is located. The second-floor location also allows for a secure environment for staff and City Council to enter from the existing Mesa City Plaza building.

Natascha Ovando-Karadsheh commented that it looks beautiful, and it is exciting to see this development occurring. She asked if work was being done to the existing Plaza building to make the buildings relate. Additionally, she asked if metal detectors were being installed or how security would be managed in such an open space (i.e., bulletproof glass).

Ryan Yee responded that Mesa City Plaza would be repainted, and the copper would be refinished. Several color solutions have been discussed to merge the two buildings together.

Mr. Di Bella commented that for security purposes the building's exterior is raised and there are articulated planters on the ground floor, providing a natural barrier from the street. The placement of City Council Chambers on the second floor also provides its own layer of protection. Mesa PD did conduct a threat assessment, and we have incorporated that information. Upon entry, guests will go through a scanning system. This is a state-of-the-art scanning system where you don't have to take items off or place your purse down. In this plan, everybody who enters the building will go through that scanning system. The only location that will have bulletproof glass, which will be a film, is in the Study Session level, because that's the most accessible area.

Mr. Jabjiniak asked if City Council offices were moving from the seventh floor and if the water features on Main Street were remaining.

Mr. Di Bella replied that City Council offices were not moving. This area is a place for Study Session and Chamber functions, much like it functions today. Those exact same functions will occur, but there will be more public and/or ceremonial space attributed to it. The current water features will be removed, but a future patio space connecting the building to the Plaza is still in development.

Bill Jabjiniak thanked Vince and Ryan for this effort. The plan is to move Economic Development into a new space by the end of the year to start demolition on for City Council Chambers in January.

Ryan Yee commented that Human Resources, which is currently located on the first floor will be moving into the second floor of the current tower in November. Those suites are under construction/reconfiguration now.

Natascha Ovando-Karadsheh inquired about the cost of these projects and what the current City Council building will be used for.

Ryan Yee replied that the costs were being funded by the General Fund and the purpose of the current City Council Chambers has not yet been determined.

Chair Adams thanked Vince Di Bella and Ryan Yee for the informative presentation.

6. Other Business

Bill Jabjiniak welcomed the Board back after the July break and mentioned that a lot has happened in two months. Mayor is scheduled to speak with the Board in September about what his vision is for Economic Development for the next one to two years. We're looking forward to an engaging dialogue.

Although our office is involved in a lot of things including business attraction, workforce and small business development, our focus is job creation. We ended a record-setting year in June where numbers of jobs and average salary increased dramatically. Mr. Brady pushed us with a benchmark of 135% of the County average and we exceeded that metric. Our staff performed an exceptional level with great results.

Mr. Jabjiniak highlighted a few recent and upcoming events. Greystar's Gateway Grand, approximately 2.1 million square feet, broke ground on June 28 at Pecos and Sossaman. ViaWest Advanced Industrial Center broke ground on July 26 and includes three buildings, approximately half a million square feet. Power Industrial's groundbreaking is scheduled on August 4. A ribbon cutting for Danieli, which is a supplier for CMC Steel's expansion, was held near Loop 202 and Power Road. The new Phx-Mesa Gateway Air Traffic Control Tower will be dedicated on August 23.

Sally Harrison and Bill Jabjiniak participated on a panel for Eastmark's citizen leadership and discussed a wide range of topics including retail, transportation, and rentals. He reminded the Board that the income demographic at Ray and Ellsworth Roads equals 24th Street and Camelback and represents significant buying power. Our focus over the past 15 years has been to change the image of Mesa from a retirement destination to an ideal location for businesses and Mesa now has tech giants in Apple, Google, and Meta (Facebook). While Mesa has always been strong in aerospace, we now have electric vehicles. Additionally, the Virgin Galactic and Gulfstream announcements were big wins. Combining all those industries into one city creates a different image of Mesa.

Finally, on August 10 the Planning and Economic Development staff as well as Economic Development Advisory Board members will participate in a bus tour of southeast Mesa which will include driving the Meta campus site currently under construction.

Mr. Campbell was glad to hear that Planning staff was included in the bus tour. He felt that interaction between Boards and staff involved in the development process was a positive step.

Bill Jabjiniak felt it was important for both the Economic Development staff and the Planning staff to see the fruits of their labor. While Economic Development staff is involved in site visits, Planning staff doesn't often get that opportunity. This tour will allow them to see what they've approved and ultimately how it's filled.

Rich Adams commented that when he was brand new on the Planning and Zoning Board, he was encouraged by veteran Board Members to get in the car and go look at the cases. He would encourage those involved in case decisions now to do the same.

Mr. Jabjiniak agreed. It's important to see how proposed development relates to one another. He remembered staff going out and negotiating with farmers to purchase the right-of-way for Ray Road north of the Airport. Today, that stretch of Ray Road, which didn't exist 10-12 years ago, is home to numerous employers with more to come.

Ms. Ovando-Karadsheh mentioned the importance of also discussing what proposals are not approved. This Board has for years talked about the reasons why we're selective in what comes through the door and why we make thoughtful choices. It's important to protect viable opportunities near an airport or power line for example. Reiterate why it's important to be thoughtful about the assets that you have and what that generates, when it's done correctly, as opposed to the whim of a developer or the money.

Mr. Jabjiniak agreed that it is important to reiterate the vision which is now reflected along Ray Road and Elliot Road. He encouraged the Board to articulate that vision with their elected officials.

7. Adjournment

Chair Adams announced that Mayor and Mr. Brady were excused from today's meeting, and the Board's next meeting is scheduled for September 6, 2022. Chair Adams adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Submitted By:



William J. Jabjiniak

Economic Development Department Director