



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

May 7, 2024

The Economic Development Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met in the board room at 120 North Center Street, on May 7, 2024, at 7:30 a.m.

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT

Brian Campbell
Richard Blake*
Kurt D. Ferstl
Charles Gregory*
Amanda Kay
Laura Snow

BOARDMEMBERS ABSENT

Michelle Genereux (Excused)

STAFF PRESENT

Maria Laughner
Maribeth Smith
Jack Vincent

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Sally Harrison
Natascha Ovando-Karadsheh
Jennifer Zonneveld

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Mayor Giles (Excused)
Chris Brady (Excused)
Ed Carr (Excused)
Sonny Cave (Excused)

GUESTS

Councilmember Jenn Duff
Geanluca Lorenzon*

(*Participated in the meeting through the use of video conference equipment)

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Board Chair Jennifer Zonneveld called the May 7, 2024, meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Board to order at 7:30 a.m.

2. Items from Citizens Present.

There were no items from citizens present.

3. Approval of Minutes from April 2, 2024, Economic Development Advisory Board meeting.

It was moved by Board Member Brian Campbell, seconded by Board Member Laura Snow, that the minutes from the April 2, 2024, Economic Development Advisory Board meeting be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Campbell-Blake-Ferstl-Gregory-Kay-Snow

NAYS – None

ABSENT – Genereux

Carried unanimously.

4. Introduction of new board member.

The Board welcomed new member Kurt D. Ferstl, Senior Counsel at The Boeing Company, who replaces KJ Jolivette. Mr. Ferstl shared that he has been with Boeing for 17 years and in Mesa for almost 4 years.

5. Hear a presentation and discuss the Stanford Graduate School of Business Policy Lab Summit Report on redevelopment in Mesa, Arizona.

Geanluca Lorenzon, Stanford MBA Candidate, presented the Policy Lab Summit Report which included an executive summary, project overview, and regulatory, economic development, urban environment, and marketing proposals focused on the downtown Mesa area. Mr. Lorenzon is the former Secretary for Economic Monitoring of Brazil and oversaw regulatory policy for the country from 2019-2022, prior to that he was a management consultant for McKinsey, and is now an investment banker in the real estate sector at Goldman Sachs. The report proposed the creation of a special regulatory corridor (SRC) around Mesa's light-rail based on a triad strategy: 1) Densification: allow further development by flexing restrictions and trusting free markets; 2) Active Frontage: creating a downtown people want to live, walk, shop and celebrate; and 3) EZ-building: Mesa is open for building (there is no such thing as too easy building permits). A new approach to zoning was proposed along the western Main Street corridor to the city's boundary to include the implementation of form-based code with an opt-in to promote density and encourage the use of light rail. The report also suggested investing in shade and downtown greenery to encourage walkability and the conversion of a park-n-ride into a grocery store and parking garage. Based on current inventory, Mesa has a shortage of hotel rooms compared to the national average of hotel rooms per capita, indicating a need for approximately 60% more lodging options to meet the expected standard, and recommended that the Mesa Convention Center be greatly expanded to compete for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions in the current market.

Board Member Brian Campbell expressed his appreciation for the excellent report and inquired how the city should approach, from a governance standpoint, implementing the marketing suggestions. He inquired if city government is typically too siloed.

Mr. Lorenzon agreed and highlighted the importance of avoiding a silo mentality by proposing cross-communication and the formation of project-oriented teams from various entities working together for the same purpose. For instance, the recommendation for expansion of the convention center would require collaboration of the tourism department, economic development, City leadership, City Council, and the private sector.

Councilmember Jenn Duff stated that it was an honor to travel to Stanford University for the initial presentation. She appreciated the suggestion to extend the city's development focus to the west along the light-rail with form-based code and density minimums or bonuses. Councilmember Duff commented that the City recently established a redevelopment team to focus on this initiative.

Board Member Campbell requested further discussion on the convention center expansion, hotel shortage and better coordination with Visit Mesa at a future board meeting.

Chair Jennifer Zonneveld thanked Mr. Lorenzon for the detailed presentation.

6. Discuss the administrative and legal significance of the formation of a subcommittee focused on retail recruitment opportunities.

Deputy Economic Development Director Maria Laughner shared the vision for the subcommittee which would ultimately provide recommendations for implementation of the retail strategy. A discussion regarding the number of subcommittee members, appointment of special advisors, open meeting law and quorum requirements was held.

Board Member Campell inquired if the board could delegate to the board chair the subcommittee's timeline and appointment of members as well as the appointment of special advisors. Assistant City Attorney Jack Vincent agreed that was acceptable. Board Member Laura Snow suggested that once the retail strategy report is complete, the chair, in partnership with staff, would propose to the board a set of objectives and subcommittee members, including special advisors, who would evaluate the report and provide a set of marketing recommendations for execution by the Office of Economic Development.

7. Vote on the formation of a subcommittee focused on retail recruitment opportunities within the City of Mesa and the appointment of the members of the Economic Development Advisory Board to serve on that committee.

Chair Zonneveld tabled the vote on the formation of a subcommittee focused on retail recruitment to the next meeting based on board discussion.

8. Economic Development Director updates.

Deputy Economic Development Director Maria Laughner shared an invitation to attend the Mesa Business Builder @ The Studios Grand Opening on May 23 as well as the upcoming Advisory Board and Committee Member Appreciation Breakfast planned for June 5. The City of Mesa and Mesa Chamber of Commerce will host a Next Level Workforce Development Forum on June 20, featuring author and speaker Mark Perna. The forum will highlight fresh approaches to education, training, workforce development and their profound impact on our future at the community level. Ms. Laughner also shared that a soft launch of Job Connect Mesa was underway and requested board members share this tool with their human resource contacts.

Recent groundbreakings were highlighted, including XNRGY Climate Systems at Gateway East and the Brickyards, a speculative industrial development, located at the southeast corner of Willis and Ellsworth Roads. Ms. Laughner requested that in honor of Economic Development Week board members promote the Office of Economic Development's social media posts which highlight economic growth in Mesa.

9. Introduction of new business to be discussed at a future meeting.

Board Member Campbell requested feedback on the Greater Phoenix Economic Council Washington, DC trip that Economic Development Director Jaye O'Donnell and Board Member Sonny Cave were attending.

Board Member Natascha Ovando-Karadsheh requested a quarterly data report on the industrial building pipeline, including absorption rates.

Board Member Sally Harrison shared that the Mesa Chamber of Commerce would host a City Council and Mayoral Candidate Forum on Tuesday, May 14.

10. Schedule of meetings.

The next Economic Development Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for June 4, 2024, at The Studios.

11. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Economic Development Advisory Board meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jaye O'Donnell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

Jaye O'Donnell
Economic Development Director