



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

February 12, 2024

The Economic Development Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met in the board room at 120 North Center Street, on February 12, 2024, at 7:30 a.m.

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT

Brian Campbell
Michelle Genereux – Vice Chairperson
Charles Gregory
Bill Honsaker
Amanda Kay

BOARDMEMBERS ABSENT

Rich Adams (Excused)
Kathleen “KJ” Jolivette (Excused)
Laura Snow (Excused)

STAFF PRESENT

Elyce Gobat
Jaye O’Donnell
Maribeth Smith
Jack Vincent

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Sonny Cave
Sally Harrison
Natascha Ovando-Karadsheh
Jennifer Zonneveld – Chairperson

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

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

GUESTS

Dee Anne Thomas
Caroline Harrelson

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

1. Chair’s Call to Order.

Board Chair Jennifer Zonneveld called the February 12, 2024, meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Board to order at 7:32 a.m.

2. Items from Citizens Present.

There were no items from citizens present.

3. Approval of Minutes from January 8, 2024, Meeting.

It was moved by Board Member Brian Campbell, seconded by Board Member Bill Honsaker, that the minutes from the January 8, 2024, Economic Development Advisory Board meeting be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES –Campbell-Genereux-Gregory-Honsaker-Kay

NAYS – None

ABSENT – Adams-Jolivette-Snow

Carried unanimously.

4. Introduction of new board member.

The Board welcomed new member Charles Gregory, President Emeritus of Benedictine University. In 2012, Mr. Gregory was a crucial factor in Benedictine’s decision to expand their presence to Mesa, Arizona. After 25 years of service, with the last 5 years leading the institution as the 12th President, Mr. Gregory retired from Benedictine University in August 2023.

5. Hear a presentation and discuss an update on Falcon Field Airport.

Falcon Field’s Airport Administration Manager Dee Anne Thomas discussed the significance and operation of Falcon Field, a general aviation airport in Arizona. Statistics included 2 parallel runways, 784 acres, 800 based aircraft, and 348,872 tower operations in 2023. The airport, which is financially self-sustaining and employs over 1,250 people, offers diverse businesses and services ranging from manufacturing to flight training. She highlighted its economic contributions, including an estimated daily benefit of \$2.2 million and an annual benefit of \$811 million. A development map of Falcon Field Airport was shared and reviewed with the Board, including the Falcon Field Tech Center.

In response to a question from Board Member Sonny Cave, Ms. Thomas commented that the airport is fortunate in that it is surrounded by residences and receives only 5-10 complaints per month. Falcon Field is pro-active in the community, providing tours, holding events, and attending community meetings.

In response to a question from Board Member Brian Campbell, Ms. Thomas responded that their office works closely with Development Services and the Office of Economic Development to monitor proposed development and the effect it may have on current and future airport operations including surrounding aerospace companies.

In response to a question from board Member Natascha Ovando-Karadsheh, Ms. Thomas explained that Falcon Field does see more traffic during local high-profile events, however the length of the airport’s runways limits the size of the aircraft that may utilize Falcon Field. She commented that the FAA also has a reservation system for jets.

Chair Zonneveld thanked Ms. Thomas for her time and presentation.

5. Hear a presentation and discuss an update on the city’s retail attraction strategy.

Caroline Harrelson with The Retail Coach and City of Mesa Economic Development Project Manager Elyce Gobat discussed the city’s retail attraction strategy which was launched last year at the urging of Council. The Retail Coach’s scope of work includes retail analysis, stakeholder engagement, plan development and retail recruitment. The initial retail analysis compared competing community demographics, submarkets, and location data from cell phones reflecting the shoppers’ originating zip code, the amount and timing of visits.

Board Member Campbell commented that the boarders of The Retail Coach’s demographics for northeast Mesa may need to be adjusted to reflect the discretionary income more accurately within the area. Ms. Harrelson replied that the demographics reflected in this example were drawn from the consumers originating area, not northeast Mesa specifically.

Board Member Ovando-Karadsheh asked if the retail analysis included analyzing Mesa residents' shopping activity in surrounding communities. Ms. Harrelson replied that a leakage gap analysis would also be part of the study.

Retail strategy goals include identifying quality retail opportunities, engaging developers and retailers, and developing a plan to attract quality retail and restaurants. The team is currently in the process of developing the plan, which will aim to understand why retail is not choosing to locate in Mesa and what strategies can be implemented to attract or retain it. Active recruitment of retail establishments is also within their scope.

Ms. Harrelson discussed strategies to attract high-quality retail and restaurants to various submarkets in Mesa by implementing place-making strategies. She highlighted the potential for growth in downtown and the Asian district, noting the importance of engaging with stakeholders and utilizing tools like Google Maps to showcase the unique features of these areas. She also stressed the need for improved signage and wayfinding at shopping centers like Dana Park. The development of a strategic plan will allow the city to further understand and market the unique aspects of each submarket.

In response to a question from Board Member Cave, Economic Development Director Jaye O'Donnell shared that Visit Mesa is a stakeholder in the information gathering as one of the many organizations we engage with. Ms. Harrelson commented that one recommendation may be for Visit Mesa to promote shopping and dining more actively on their website.

Chair Zonneveld thanked Ms. Harrelson and Ms. Gobat for their time and presentation.

6. Economic Development Director updates.

Director Jaye O'Donnell discussed her recent attendance at the International Economic Development Council Leadership Summit and the Consumer Electronics Show. She also shared updates on staff positions, including plans to underfill the assistant director position and the promotion of Yvette Armendariz to a project manager position focusing on business retention and expansion. Additionally, a project manager and program assistant position have been created to staff the Mesa Business Builder at the Studios programming which is expected to launch in May.

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

Board member Bill Honsaker announced his departure from the Board since he is relocating to Washington state. Various board members congratulated Mr. Honsaker and expressed their appreciation for his time and contributions.

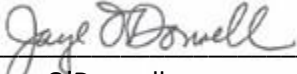
8. Other Business.

The next Economic Development Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2024.

9. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Economic Development Advisory Board meeting adjourned at 8:38 a.m.

Submitted by:



Jaye O'Donnell
Economic Development Director