

Minutes City Council's Mill and Lake District Committee September 17, 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council's Mill and Lake District Committee held on Thursday, September 17, 2009, 3:30 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Members Present:

Mayor Hugh Hallman
Councilmember P. Ben Arredondo
Councilmember Joel Navarro
Councilmember Corey D. Woods

Vice Mayor Shana Ellis
Councilmember Mark W. Mitchell
Councilmember Onnie Shekerjian

City Staff Present:

Jan Hort, City Clerk
Chris Anaradian, Dev Svcs Mgr
Hunter Hanson, Plnr
Durrant Williams, Dev Svcs
Sherri Wakefield-Saenz, Econ Dev
Fran Santos
Travis Dray, Parks & Rec
Sam Thompson, Parks & Rec
Dawn Coomer, Sr Plnr
Alex Smith, Comm Dev

Chris Salomone, Comm Dev Mgr
Lisa Collins, Dev Svcs/Comm Liaison
Ryan Levesque, Sr Plnr
Mark Vinson, Comm Dev
Jyme Sue McLaren, Comm Dev
Jeff Kulaga, Dep City Mgr
Mark Richwine, Parks & Rec
Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Admin
Jose Rivero, Volunteer
Micah Miranda, Comm Dev

Guests Present:

Betsy Moll, HDR
Nancy Hormann, DTC
Mary Bigelow
Neil Calfee, ASU

Laura Scott, DTC
Adam Jones, DTC
Julian Sodari
Adriana Gastelum

Mayor Hallman called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Introductions

Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances/Call to the Public

None.

Agenda Item 3 – Approve Meeting Minutes – July 2, 2009 & August 20, 2009

Councilmember Shekerjian made a motion to approve the July 2, 2009 minutes. Councilmember Woods seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0 with Councilmember Mitchell abstaining.

Councilmember Mitchell made a motion to approve the August 20, 2009 minutes. Vice Mayor Ellis seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

Agenda Item 4 – Mill Avenue District Visioning

Chris Salomone stated that staff began the Mill Avenue district visioning process by defining what the public realm/streetscape space is. That definition turned out to be 'functional space within public rights of way'. These spaces consist of walkways, lighting, furnishings, landscaping, displays, signage, parking, and architectural features. Staff then determined that there were three goals that must be adhered to during this process:

- 1) reinforce character of downtown – make it special/memorable
- 2) enhance connectivity while fostering diverse continuity to allow for a hierarchy of uses
- 3) maximize interdepartmental/stakeholder participation for the design and maintenance of downtown

Staff was also asked to research previous studies of the downtown to find out what they might contribute to this exercise. Since 1973, seventeen studies have been conducted focusing on art, integrating parks and neighborhoods, historic preservation, etc. The geographical boundaries of this project have yet to be determined. Streetscape themes must also include traffic patterns and projects already underway that also contribute to the atmosphere.

Mr. Vinson outlined the following potential approaches:

- Bricks & Mortar – addresses basic concerns as soon as possible by inventorying and 'coding' downtown streets with reference to a matrix which specifies physical components such as type, style and placement of paving, trees, lighting and furnishings
- Interactive – move involved than the bricks and mortar approach. Includes review/analysis of existing plans and documents to identify and reference applicable elements; also addresses issues such as overhangs, encroachments, signage and on-street parking; quantify streets by use (private vehicles, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians) and specify appropriate components.
- Comprehensive – create new zone or overlay specific to the downtown in conjunction with or in replacement of multiple existing zones, overlays and PADs, as well as research of other cities/zones; address funding and infrastructure, plus building appearance, form & height; widespread professional and community input; incorporating most aspects of the previous two approaches.

Mr. Salomone stated that the staff recommendation is to take the interactive approach. Once an approach has been endorsed by the City Council, staff will create a matrix that contains the specifics of the proposed action plan using in-house expertise. Councilmember Navarro asked if staff has considered asking ASU to participate as a consultant. Maximizing existing resources is important in order to planning and creating this distinctive new environment. Councilmember Navarro then asked for clarification of the area boundaries.

Mayor Hallman commented that in order to craft a master plan streetscape approach, consistency must be taken into consideration. It would be helpful for Councilmember's to look at the studies that have been conducted over the past five years. These studies utilized various consultant services and extensive community feedback. Perhaps once the boundaries for this project are determined, a consolidation of previous studies should be undertaken and the final part of that exercise would be to execute those final recommendations. No additional consultants are necessary because the work has already been done.

Councilmember Navarro stressed the point that it is essential that the City be poised and ready to work with developers and until this information has been compiled and the project boundaries determined, that will not be the case. Potential boundaries of the project area were then discussed. Discussions included the Mill Avenue bridge, Hardy/Roosevelt, north and south of Rio Salado, Priest and Hardy across 1st Street. Creating transition areas was another aspect of project boundaries that was deemed essential as in the area on the west side of Farmer.

Mayor Hallman suggested that staff compile the principles outlined in each of the former studies for Council to review. Once those principals have been agreed upon, staff would then compile the principals so that a plan of action would be the outcome of that work. Staff was asked to provide a copy of maps, individual studies, design principals, and three dimensional maps as a starting point for this project. Studies for review should start with the Mill and Lake District Placemaking Guidelines and the Downtown/Mill Avenue District Community Design Principles.

Agenda Item 5 – Public Appearances/Call to the Public

An employee of PF Chang's asked what is being done to attract businesses to the downtown. Mayor Hallman suggested that this individual meet with a representative of the Downtown Tempe Community to find out about downtown business recruitment activity.

Agenda Item 6 – Future Agenda Items

- ASU Block 12 and Alpha Drive updates – staff was directed to get background material to Councilmember's prior to the next meeting.
- Mill and Lake District Visioning Continued

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Prepared by: Kay Savard
Reviewed by: Chris Salomone

Jan Hort, City Clerk