0101-03-05

AGENDA ITEM 6

DATE 03-20-08

Tempe

Minutes
City Council's Social Services and Culture Committee
January 16, 2008

Minutes of the City Council's Social Services and Culture Committee held on Wednesday, January 16, 2008, 3:00 p.m., at the Library Board Room, 3500 S. Rural Road, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Members Present:
Councilmember Barb Carter, Chair
Councilmember Shana Ellis

City Staff Present:
Kathy Berzins, Social Svcs Mgr
Neil Calfee, Dep Comm Dev Mgr
Tom Canasi, Comm Svcs Mgr
Cheryl Danna, Bus Analyst
Amy Douglass, Historical Museum
Kathy Gasperich, Council Aide
Connie Krosschell, Dep City Clerk
Charlie Meyer, City Manager
Cecelia Pinkston, Mgmt Asst
Chris Salomone, Comm Dev Mgr
Mark Vinson, Principal Architect
Sherry Warren, Library

Guests Present:
None.

Councilmember Carter called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Community Center Complex Update
Tom Canasi summarized that the Community Center Complex will play an integral role in creating a "campus of culture" that will provide a venue for the arts, literature and history in a central location.

Museum Renovation
Mr. Canasi summarized that:

- Mark Vinson has worked with staff to develop concepts and work with the architect has begun.
- The vision includes:
  - A sense of entrance and identity for the museum
  - A dedicated area for children

- New interactive exhibits and utilization of technology
- Improvement of community program space
- Creation of exhibit space that is flexible and can accommodate rotating exhibits.

Councilmember Carter asked about the gift shop.

Mr. Canasi responded that the gift shop, as it was, has not been included. The return has not been worth the investment. Instead, they are looking for a space to acknowledge corporate donors and the reception area will include area for display of items for sale.

Councilmember Carter asked about the existing program (classroom) space.

Mr. Canasi responded that the program space will be doubled.

Library Renovation

Mr. Canasi summarized that the renovation and enhancement of the Library was approved as part of the City's FY 2006/07 budget process. He provided a status of the renovation.

- The self-check system has been implemented and is being used by 89% of patrons, which allows staff to provide more customer service.
- Computing bandwidth has been significantly increased and complaints have decreased. This has improved both capacity and speed of the Library's public access network, both for hard-wired computers and wireless access. It is possible to download books and CD's from home.
- An RFQ for architectural services was released on December 13 and a tour of prospective architects was held on January 3rd. Twenty-four individuals representing 19 firms attended. Seven firms responded and selection will be made by the end of February with approval by early March. Anticipate a 12-month design phase and an 18-month construction phase.

Councilmember Carter asked about plans to keep the Library open during construction.

Mr. Canasi responded that construction will be staged and the goal is to stay open. Only the lower and main levels will be renovated, with the upper level receiving new carpeting.

Councilmember Carter asked about the wireless access points.

Cheryl Danna responded that the access points at the Library are separate and are City-run.

Vihel Center Facility

Mr. Canasi summarized that the Vihel Center needs help, and a capital request has been made. He added that operating costs are usually modest for projects of this type.

Agenda Item 2 – Petersen House Historic Property Update 0705-03

Tom Canasi summarized that the Petersen House is the best kept secret in Tempe. Staff has worked to change the vision and two years ago started a Danish Christmas event. This is an interactive, accurate representation of a Danish Christmas. The first year, 640 people attended the event, and this year, 1200 attended. It is becoming a tradition.

Amy Douglass showed some handmade ornaments that were used through a partnership with a museum in Elkhorn, Iowa. She added that people are looking for genuine events, and this is a totally unique, interactive event. Arizona has the highest concentration of Danes in the country.

Councilmember Carter suggested marketing the event through the local Lutheran churches. She also asked if the Petersen House grounds were ever rented for outdoor events.

Dr. Douglass responded that lack of a catering facility on site is a drawback, and they only have one or two weddings per year on the grounds. Parking is also a problem.

Mr. Canasi added that staff is looking at potential revenue opportunities with the facility.

Agenda Item 3 – ELEMENTS Art District Update

Chris Salomone summarized that progress is being made on development of the 12 acres west of the Tempe Center for the Arts (TCA). Arizona Bronze, Childsplay, Meltdown Glass, and the Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery are working to develop and finalize a conceptual master plan and development agreement for the project. Consultants have been hired and a proposal will come to Council in February for the engineering and geotechnical studies.

Mark Vinson outlined the site. The concepts for the project involve:

- Taking advantage of the synergy between the TCA and the project.
- A campus or village concept for sustainability.
- A sense of community with each property developed and landscaped.
- Economic sustainability achieved with successful businesses.

The project would incorporate an industrial park model, with each development on a PAD and the City would develop the main drives. Each group has their own architect. The area is currently a retention area, and that would be incorporated into the design with meandering drives and parking, with run-off into a retention area. Indigenous landscaping would be incorporated (continuing the "river runs through it" theme) for an urban feel with a concentration of activities and structures.

Mr. Salomone continued that a draft DDA and CC&R have been given with a good comfort level so far. The multi-use path will be going to Council for award and the pedestrian bridge across the dam will begin construction mid-year. Both projects will complement the project and both are already funded.

Councilmember Carter asked if there was apprehension over the economy.

Mr. Salomone responded that Meltdown Glass is growing rapidly, and Arizona Bronze is stable. The School of Luthiery has the most concerns. It has modest goals and doesn't want to grow the campus. They are also working with the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community. Childsplay now has the funding and they are ready to move forward.

Mr. Vinson added that there has been a concern that the facility has to be attractive, and there are many options with materials.

Charlie Meyer asked if this project involves a public experience.

Mr. Salomone responded that it does. Childsplay will have videos and displays of costumes. Each business has a museum of sorts and galleries. Arizona Bronze plans to show the process of sculpture, and Meltdown Glass will have two-way glass to watch its process, as well as a museum. There is also the hope it will be a venue for events.

Councilmember Ellis asked about classroom space.

Mr. Salomone responded that classroom space is not incorporated, but Arizona Bronze uses ASU students to learn the craft. Over time, there might be opportunities.

Councilmember Carter asked when Council should get involved and designate the project name.

Mr. Salomone stated that the name has evolved, but the Council should have input.

Councilmember Carter suggested having the groups submit it to Council, especially since it is on City land.

Mr. Salomone suggested bringing it to an Issue Review Session.

Mr. Meyer asked if it is separated from the TCA or does it flow along the park as an entire area. From a branding standpoint, it would be important to determine the benefits of breaking it into pieces or keeping it as one.

Councilmember Carter stated that she sees a distinction starting at the railroad bridge and going west into the arts park, the TCA, and this project, all as one.

Mr. Salomone added that Council met a year ago to discuss land use west of the TCA and voted that west of the TCA would be for arts uses. He added that there will probably be a second phase to this project, as well.

Agenda Item 4 – Affordable Housing Forum 0403-01 No Material

Neil Calfee summarized that, as part of an ongoing effort, the next Affordable Housing Forum will be scheduled for February 8th at the TCA. This forum will focus on the development community. The developers will be implementing the affordable housing program, so staff is working to understand their perspective as well. It is important to continue the dialogue to determine ways to increase the amount of affordable housing.

Councilmember Carter asked if there was still federal funding for affordable housing along light rail.

Mr. Calfee responded that there is no federal funding specifically for affordable housing along the light rail route.

Councilmember Ellis added that there are some tax credits, however.

Councilmember Carter asked how staff is getting the word out.

Mr. Calfee responded that there must be a mindset to look for it. Word is spread through the forums. Whether the City needs to require more to be built will be discussed at the forum.

Councilmember Ellis asked staff to also talk about the in-lieu study and density bonuses so the developers have a full understanding.

Mr. Calfee added that through Sheri Wakefield-Saenz in Economic Development they have access to an informal network of mass email, phone calls, and a large list of those who have met with City staff and showed interest.

Mr. Salomone added that Tempe is ahead of others on an affordable housing policy and has good support from the community.

Agenda Item 5 – Meeting Dates for 2008
Tom Canasi provided the following list of meetings for 2008:

- February 20
- March 19
- April 16
- May 21
- June 18

Agenda Item 6 – Future Agenda Items.
It was determined not to schedule a meeting in February.

The following agenda items were set for the March 19th meeting:

- TCA Update including budget, operation policies, gift shop status
- Library update – architect selection
- Museum update – schematic
- Update on Paradise Earth (possible agenda item)
- Update on Elements at TCA (possible agenda item)

Meeting adjourned at 4:18 p.m.

Prepared by: Connie Krosschell
Reviewed by: Jan Hort

Jan Hort
City Clerk