



Minutes City Council's Technology, Economic & Community Development Committee July 10, 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council's Technology, Economic & Community Development Committee held on Friday, July 10, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., in the 2nd Floor Conference Room, Orchid House, 21 E. 6th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Members Present:

Councilmember Onnie Shekerjian, Chair

Committee Members Present:

Councilmember Corey Woods

City Staff Present:

Jennifer Adams, Dep Pub Wrks/Comm Rel
Chris Anaradian, Dev Svcs Mgr
Shelley Hearn, Comm Rel Mgr
Dave Heck, Deputy IT Mgr
Michele Konnath, Parks & Rec Admin
Chris Messer, Comm Dev Prin Planner
Sheri Partridge, Comm Rel Admin
Nikki Ripley, Comm/Media Rel Dir
Chris Salomone, Comm Dev Mgr
Alex W. Smith, Technology Dev Spec
Sheri Wakefield-Saenz, Econ Dev Administrator

Guests Present:

Kurtis Zinger, Citizen

Councilmember Shekerjian called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Agenda Item 1 - Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves.

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of Minutes from June 12, 2009

Tabled until next meeting

Agenda Item 3 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item 4 – Review Work Plan

Chris Messer suggested that the work plan be combined with the forum notes and incorporate into the bullet points. Councilmember Shekerjian requested that items 4 and 6 be combined and that staff review the work plan to determine what was completed.

Agenda Item 5 – Communication Of Changes In Development Services And Doing Business In Tempe

Mr. Anaradian commented on the temporary changes to the sign ordinance and how the word was being spread; he stated that Shelly Hearn's group and Community Development were assisting in that effort. There have been some press releases in print and radio. There is a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce today and staff will work with them to get the word out in their newsletter. Also word of mouth by businesses is helping. Permit counter staff has been trained to inform the public, and inspectors in the field are also spreading the word.

Councilmember Shekerjian suggested twittering, and also speaking with major developers.

Councilmember Shekerjian asked if the sign ordinance applies to churches.

Mr. Anaradian stated that currently, churches adhere to the commercial regulation. They will work with the "For Our City" group which consists of religious leaders to let them know.

Shelly Hearn's staff is brainstorming on the creation of a campaign for doing business with Development Services.

Councilmember Shekerjian suggested that some twittering be done on the ordinance change.

City Attorney posted the code update on the web.

Valley Partnership also tracks changes during Shelly Hearn's meetings; Chris Anaradian is available to attend those meetings.

Agenda Item 7 - GPEC Update

Dr. Alex Smith commented on the Solar Bill. It was passed through legislature but is just waiting for the Governor's signature. It will result in reducing property taxes of high capital investors. This will benefit cities with larger parcels. Tempe will benefit when research and development, prototyping, and supplies are needed, older facilities may be retrofitted and workers hired due to the increased demand. This is similar to the enterprise zone incentives, but is established for solar businesses, providing transferrable tax credits. Transferrable tax credit can be sold for cash up front.

The long-term benefit is that this provides relief for capital intensive investment.

A qualifying business can have the assessment ratio reduced down to (a maximum) 5%.

This will be in effect 30 days after signed; there is no emergency clause.

GPEC Contract has already passed council.

Performance metrics have been established. Staff will draft a letter to GPEC listing the metrics which will include:

- Referral partner/level of involvement
- Site visits/purpose
- Quarterly reporting requirements.

Councilmember Shekerjian stated that the forms established to measure performance need to be simple, easy, and meaningful. Hopefully this process will lay the foundation for dealing with other outside contracts; this may assist the board members. Currently, GPEC is looking to private memberships rather than looking at and relying on municipalities for revenues.

Dr. Alex Smith added that GPEC is dependant on municipalities to maintain access; private entities will provide revenue.

Councilmember Shekerjian questioned their contract previously and noticed how other municipalities were looking to Tempe to see if we were going to renew the contract. She wanted to ensure that staff had needed resources, and noted that there would be politics in the long run.

Councilmember Shekerjian stated that she received great feedback from the people attending the two forums. She would like to schedule the same timeframe next year for the forums.

Shelly Hearn and Chris Messer were assigned to work together to create a media plan/release covering what was done and upcoming items. This may be good list serve information.

Councilmember Shekerjian suggested assigning staff to serve as ambassadors to events such as Techie Tuesdays, Chamber of Commerce lunches, and DTC, and releasing article-type format news releases to add to the DTC and Chamber newsletters. Commit to a communication plan detailing how to get the word out.

Agenda Item 4, 6 – Review Work Plan/Economic Forum and Technology Forum – Discussion and update

Chris Messer distributed copies of the work plan, comments from the technology forum, and comments from the technology forum. Comments were color-coded to indicate what has been accomplished.

Councilmember Shekerjian asked that things that we have accomplished are identified. She realizes that 12 staff members were cut recently.

Mr. Messer was asked to work with Ms. Hearn to get the word out on what the city is currently doing regarding community requests.

Article for Tempe Today

Tempe Chamber of Commerce

Staff was directed to come back to committee at next meeting with a communication plan.

Staff was asked to review the comments from the forum and report what they are already doing and what they could commit to do and report back at the next Committee meeting.

Councilmember Shekerjian clarified that Dave Heck was to come back to the committee showing suggestions that are easily implemented and do not require staff resources and to present what he was willing to commit to. She added that if an item was doable, but not beneficial or important, it can be left off the list.

Dave Heck stated that staff outside of IT is required to update other information and he could not commit for other departments where the work is actually accomplished.

Councilmember Shekerjian stated that there are three categories: Technology, Communications, and Economics. Mr. Heck was tasked with looking at the technology aspect. She asked Dave Heck to come up with items that should be on the Committee work plan. Ms. Hearn was tasked with looking at the communications and Ms. Wakefield-Saenz will work on economic development ideas.

Agenda Item 8 – Future Agenda Items

Next meeting will be in September

- Future dates for forums for next year.
- Solar Legislation
- Staff's review of the Economic/Technology Forums ideas and what staff can commit to support

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Reviewed by: Chris Messer

Jan Hort
City Clerk