



Minutes City Council's Technology, Economic & Community Development Committee October 9, 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council's Technology, Economic & Community Development Committee held on Friday, October 9, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., in the 3rd Floor Conference Room, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Members Present:

Councilmember Onnie Shekerjian, Chair
Councilmember Corey Woods

City Staff Present:

Jan Hort, City Clerk	Dave Heck, Deputy IT Mgr
Chris Messer, Prin Planner	Chris Salomone, Comm Dev Mgr
Alex W. Smith, Technology Dev Spec	Sheri Wakefield-Saenz, Econ Dev Administrator
Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Admin	Sheri Partridge, Council Aide

Guests Present:

Nancy Hormann, Downtown Tempe Community, Inc. (DTC)
Lara Skutt, DTC

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 September 11, 2009

Motion by Councilmember Shekerjian to approve the minutes from September 11, 2009. Second by Councilmember Woods. Motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 3 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item 4 – Updated Work Plan - Priorities

Councilmember Shekerjian requested that staff prioritize and calendar the Committee work plan. One item that needs to be added to the work plan is assisting the DTC with their Market on Mill events.

Agenda Item 5 – Neighborhood Centers

Sheri Wakefield-Saenz voiced optimism about the commercial vacancy rates in Tempe. Currently there is 12,800,000 square feet of existing available retail space, with only 1.1 million square feet of that space remaining vacant. Staff is in the process of creating a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding proposal. Councilmember Shekerjian encouraged staff to work with the City's federal lobbyist to seek grants and funding opportunities at the federal level; the same goes for working with state lobbyists in terms of funding opportunities.

Ms. Wakefield-Saenz stated that commercial bankruptcy is another problematic area that staff will be looking at in more depth.

Agenda Item 6 – GPEC/Renewable Industries Update

Prospect activity in September totaled 9 outbound responses representing over 520,000 square feet of space and 1600 jobs. Alex Smith stated that Tempe has a 2% industrial vacancy rate, which is low compared to surrounding valley localities. A shift toward industrial space is driven by the consumer. GPEC refers prospective businesses to valley cities based upon demographics, real estate options and customized tax information. This structured approach is preferred not only by the business community, but also by local governing bodies.

Staff also arranged 10 site visits since July. Four of these were for solar manufacturing companies representing approximately 500,000 square feet and 400 jobs.

Staff was directed to present council with a performance update at the end of the GPEC contract for council evaluation.

Agenda Item 7 – Downtown Garden Update

The Marriott property has been obtained as a site by DTC and the Phoenix Permaculture Guild to provide a “Garden” in Downtown Tempe. They are currently working to get a gate put in the fence. An issue currently pending is where the water is coming from. Nancy Hormann stated that planting is scheduled to begin next week. Lara Skutt and Chris Messer will oversee this project. Additional sites will be studied for this type of project. Marketing will be done to promote the garden in conjunction with the downtown farmer’s markets.

Agenda Item 8 – Regulation Costs

Councilmember Shekerjian stated that the Arizona Chamber of Commerce is looking at meaningful regulation accountability and how that impacts small businesses. 70% of businesses are small businesses.

Agenda Item 9 – Future Agenda Items

Business data base

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Prepared by: Kay Savard
Reviewed by: Chris Messer

Jan Hort
City Clerk