

COUNCIL MINUTES

May 12, 2016

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on May 12, 2016 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

John Giles
Alex Finter
Dennis Kavanaugh
David Luna
Kevin Thompson

COUNCIL ABSENT

Christopher Glover
Dave Richins

OFFICERS PRESENT

Kari Kent
Jim Smith
Dee Ann Mickelsen

Mayor Giles excused Councilmembers Glover and Richins from the entire meeting.

1. Review items on the agenda for the May 16, 2016 Regular Council meeting.

All of the items on the agenda were reviewed among Council and staff and the following was noted:

Conflict of interest: None

Items removed from the agenda: 4-g

2-a. Hear a presentation, discuss and consider providing financial support to the Northern Arizona Forest Fund (NAFF) for high priority restoration projects on National Forests in the Salt and Verde River Watersheds.

Water Resources Department Director Dan Cleavenger introduced Marcus Selig from the National Forest Foundation (NFF) and Ron Klawitter with Salt River Project (SRP). He stated that Mesa's interest is that healthy forests provide good quality water to the City's water treatment plants. He explained that forest fires followed by rain storms result in soot, ash and mud that are difficult to treat. He mentioned that many other cities in the Valley have committed to the Northern Arizona Forest Fund (NAFF) and staff requests that Mesa support the program as well.

Mr. Klawitter displayed a PowerPoint presentation (**See Attachment 1**) and provided an overview of SRP's water service territory that covers 300 square miles in the Valley, 1,300 miles of canals and laterals, and 200 pumps used to deliver water from the Salt and Verde Rivers. He illustrated the boundaries of federal lands in the Salt and Verde River watersheds and pointed out that 90% of that land is federal land and most of that is National Forest land. He explained that creating

partnerships with the land owners to ensure the land is managed well for good water usage is important. (See Pages 1 and 2 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Klawitter stated that within both watersheds are six dams and reservoirs. He reported that the SRP reservoir system has a total system capacity of 2.3 million acre feet of water and delivers approximately one million acre feet per year. He added that 55,000 acre feet of that water goes to Mesa so the reservoirs are very important in protecting water supplies in the future and helpful for buffering the impact from wild fires. (See Page 3 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Klawitter stated that forest health translates to watershed health and sustainable water supplies. He explained that the forests have become more dense over the years resulting in much larger and more intense fires. He continued by saying that forest fires are more frequent as well, reaching almost two million acres burned in the watershed since the year 2000. (See Pages 4 through 7 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Klawitter detailed the Sunflower Fire in 2012, which started in the lower Verde River watershed and drained into an area below the reservoir system, without a buffer. (See Page 8 of Attachment 1) He explained that the ash and debris reached at least four water treatment plants. He stated that SRP worked with Mesa and other city partners to manage treatment and eventually had to spill that water and exchange it with the Central Arizona Project (CAP) to ensure that the water was treatable in those plants.

Mr. Selig provided the history of the NFF, which is a non-profit foundation that engages communities in stewardship of the National Forest lands. He highlighted the foundations accomplishments since 2001. (See Page 9 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Selig stated that the NFF worked with SRP to identify ways of improving watershed health. (See Page 10 of Attachment 1) He said that together they identified projects that were ready to go and built private investment from the multiple downstream beneficiaries of healthy water. He added that communication is important to teach understanding in building and maintaining a healthy watershed. He indicated that the partners are working to build up capacity in order to continue the work in the future.

Mr. Selig listed four main types of projects as follows (See Pages 11 through 14 of Attachment 1):

- Sediment and erosion management
- Stream and wetland restoration
- Forest thinning and prescribed burning
- Habitat improvement and revegetation

Mr. Selig explained that each year a project portfolio is identified and the NFF works with SRP and an advisory council made up of non-profit groups, local and state government, and business investors to put the funds to work. He stated that the work is completed in the following three ways: making grants to local non-profit groups, working with private and local contractors, or giving money directly to the forest service to perform the work. He indicated that the work is monitored and the accomplishments are reported annually. (See Page 15 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Selig noted that the NAFF was launched over a year ago and almost two million dollars has been invested. He displayed all of the partners involved and highlighted the following successes and projects that are in progress (See Pages 16 through 18 of Attachment 1):

- Oak Creek Erosion Control Project
- Upper Beaver Creek Forest Health Project
- Burned thousands of acres and improved miles of roadway
- McCracken Woodland Health and Habitat Improvement
- Red Flat Meadow Restoration
- Stoneman Lake Watershed Health and Habitat Protection
- Black River Stream and Riparian Protection
- West Pinto Creek Trail Rehabilitation and Erosion Control

Mr. Selig indicated that the NFF has partnered with multiple companies such as Coca-Cola, San Tan Brewery, and Crescent Crown Distributing, in order to engage the community and encourage employee volunteerism. He stated that investing comes with measurable results, resilient landscapes, and dependable water supplies. (See Pages 19 and 20 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Councilmember Luna, Mr. Selig reported that most non-profit organizations that contribute are already here, such as the Arizona Conservation Corp, Friends of the Forest groups, and Trout Unlimited, who receive grants to assist them in building their capacity. He confirmed that the NFF requests a three-year commitment from investors to allow adequate project planning and provide long-term sustainable funding.

In response to a question from Councilmember Thompson, Mr. Selig indicated that Arizona Forests are in poor health and the worst shape in the country. He explained that in the past, fires occurred every five years to keep the forests healthy and manageable and had approximately 25-50 trees per acre. He added that now the forests have approximately 1,000 trees per acre and explode when a fire starts. He noted that some large scale efforts are at work trying to correct that, but it is not happening as quickly as needed.

Councilmember Thompson commented that he volunteers with the Tonto Recreational Alliance (TRAL), which is a group of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) enthusiasts trying to protect the forest. He suggested that his group may connect with the NFF and asked if any of the funding from the OHV sticker program went to the NFF or if it is primarily used for State parks.

Mr. Selig responded that his group has not partnered with TRAL but would like to, especially for volunteer opportunities and education purposes. He reported that the NFF would be receiving some money from the Arizona Game and Fish Department for habitat improvement.

In response to a question from Councilmember Finter, Mr. Cleavenger responded that many Valley cities have given a three-year commitment and suggested that Mesa commit to \$30,000 per year. He noted that the first year's commitment could be absorbed within next year's chemical budget from the Val Vista Water Treatment Plant.

Deputy City Manager Kari Kent clarified that staff would return to Council with a resolution declaring a commitment of support from the City of Mesa. She added that if the budget is approved, then the first year's commitment is already included within that budget.

Vice Mayor Kavanaugh commented that he supports the project and inquired about other ways that Mesa might support the project, such as social media and community outreach.

Mr. Cleavenger informed the Council that SRP has provided Mesa with a short video that can be aired on Mesa Channel 11.

Mr. Selig responded that social media is a great output, as well as bill inserts explaining the benefits of the projects.

Councilmember Thompson commented that it can be tough to convince citizens to spend tax dollars in Northern Arizona or in our forests, but it is important due to the ramifications to Mesa's water supply.

Mr. Cleavenger informed the Council that the Sunflower Fire had a lingering effect for two weeks that translated to approximately \$80,000 worth of chemicals. He determined that approximately \$30,000 of that was Mesa's share.

Councilmember Luna commented that the watershed tour provided by SRP is a great way to gain understanding about the relationship between the forest and our water supply.

Mayor Giles voiced his support for the \$30,000 per year commitment. He emphasized the importance of the watershed and added that it would be fun to find other ways to get the community actively involved, such as assisting with the forest-thinning projects.

Mayor Giles thanked staff and guests for the presentation.

3. Information pertaining to the current Job Order Contracting projects.

This item was not discussed by the Council.

4. Approval of minutes from an Executive Session held on March 31, 2016.

It was moved by Councilmember Luna, seconded by Vice Mayor Kavanaugh, that the above-listed minutes be approved.

Mayor Giles declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

5. Acknowledge receipt of minutes from a Self-Insurance Trust Fund Board meeting, and verifying insurance licenses:

- 5-a. Self-Insurance Trust Fund Board meeting held on February 8, 2016; and pursuant to A.R.S. §11-981(B)(1), verifying the current insurance licenses for the insurance administrators designated for the Public Property and Liability, Worker's Compensation and Employee Benefits Trust Funds.

It was moved by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Vice Mayor Kavanaugh, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Mayor Giles declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

6. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of the following boards and committees:

- 6-a. Audit, Finance and Enterprise Committee meetings held on March 3 and April 14, 2016.
- 6-b. Economic Development Advisory Board meeting held on May 3, 2016.
- 6-c. Historic Preservation Board meeting held on April 5 and Board retreat for April 16, 2016.

6-d. Early Childhood Education Task Force meeting held on April 15, 2016.

Councilmember Luna advised that item 6-b was incomplete.

Mayor Giles concurred and determined that item 6-b would be acknowledged at a later date.

It was moved by Vice Mayor Kavanaugh, seconded by Councilmember Luna, that receipt of the above-listed minutes, with the exception of item 6-b, be acknowledged.

Mayor Giles declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

7. Hear reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

Mayor Giles: Transitional Response Vehicle (TRV) ride-along
Tour of Mesa's Crime Lab

Councilmember Kavanaugh: Mayor's Youth Committee graduation

8. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

Assistant City Manager Kari Kent stated that the schedule of meetings is as follows:

Thursday, May 12, 2016 – Mendoza Field Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Monday, May 16, 2016, 5:15 p.m. – Council Study Session

Friday, May 19, 2016, 7:30 a.m. – Coffee with Councilmember Kavanaugh

In response to a question from Councilmember Thompson, Ms. Kent replied that an update on the House of Refuge will be added to the next Council Study Session agenda.

9. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 8:05 a.m.




JOHN GILES, MAYOR

ATTEST:


DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 12th day of May, 2016. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.


DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

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(attachment – 1)