

MEETING MINUTES
Office of Economic Development
Economic Development Advisory Board
57 E. 1st Street, Mesa, AZ 85201
Lower Level Council Chambers

Date: February 2, 2021 Time: 7:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Kasselmann, Chair
Rich Adams, Vice Chair
Brian Campbell
Deb Duvall
Matt Likens
Christopher Nickerson
Dominic Perry
Brad Wilson

EX-OFFICIO

Mayor John Giles
Chris Brady, City Manager
Sally Harrison
Jeffrey Pitcher
Jennifer Zonneveld

STAFF PRESENT

William Jabjiniak
Jaye O'Donnell
Lori Collins
Andrea Alicoate
Jacqueline Ganier
Maribeth Smith
Nick Juszczyk
Chris Molnar

MEMBERS ABSENT

Natascha Ovando-Karadsheh

GUESTS PRESENT

Councilmember Francisco Heredia
Councilmember Julie Spilsbury
Dr. Lori Berquam, Interim College President, MCC
Michael Voss, Career and Technical Education Dean
& VP of Academic Affairs, MCC
Leah Palmer, AzAMI Director, MCC
Diane Meza, MITI-EV Director, MCC
Kris Bliss, Interim Associate Dean, MCC
Carie Allen, Business Department Chair & Faculty, MCC
Chevelle Frantz, Residential Faculty, MCC

The meeting was conducted via Virtual Platform.

1. Chair's Call to Order

Chair Kasselmann called the Economic Development Advisory Board meeting to order at 7:32 a.m. He welcomed Mayor Giles and Councilmembers Spilsbury and Heredia to the meeting.

2. Items from Citizens Present – None.

3. Approval of Minutes from the January Board Meeting

Chair Kasselmann called for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 5, 2021 meeting.

Brian Campbell moved to approve the January 5, 2021 minutes as presented; seconded by Matt Likens. Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Kasselmann, Adams, Campbell, Duvall, Likens, Nickerson, Perry, Wilson
NAYS – None

Chair Kasselmann declared the motion carried by unanimous vote.

4. Draft Non-Discrimination Ordinance

Mayor John Giles advised that conversations on the topic of a Non-Discrimination Ordinance began over five years ago. It had been suggested to the City of Mesa by both civil rights advocates and the business community. Over the last five years, this topic has evolved and we have reviewed related Supreme Court cases as well as the experience of other communities. Large national corporations have policies that encourage equality and are asking whether Mesa is a welcoming and friendly community. This topic has been brought to the Human Relations Advisory Board and the Mesa Chamber of Commerce. The City is looking for input and recommendations from its advisory boards and stakeholders in the community. Mayor Giles introduced Andrea Alicoate with the Mesa Office of Diversity and Attorney Jacqueline Ganier with the City Attorney's Office.

Andrea Alicoate advised that back in 2013, the Human Relations Advisory Board worked with the ASU Morrison Institute on a statistically valid survey to get a pulse on Mesa regarding discrimination and intolerance within our city. They also held a conversation session which provided some anecdotal information. The board made recommendations to Council based on those results, including a Non-Discrimination Ordinance. Over the last few years, we looked at other communities that had similar ordinances, including Tempe, Tucson, Flagstaff, Sedona, Winslow, and Phoenix. The Tucson, Tempe, and Flagstaff ordinances were used as models for the language in Mesa's ordinance.

The purpose of the Non-Discrimination Ordinance is to provide equal access for all in obtaining goods, services, and housing, and to keep workplaces free from harassment and discrimination. The Ordinance will apply to all Mesa businesses and employers, including the City of Mesa leading by example with our employees, facilities, contractors, and vendors. There will be no requirements for businesses to create additional physical structures or restrooms. Exclusions from the Ordinance would include state agencies, public school districts including charter schools, churches and religious organizations, public accommodations that provide benefits, and speech and expressive activities protected under the First Amendment. These exclusions were based on our research on other communities and legal cases. For example, there was a case in Phoenix regarding a calligrapher who did custom orders. That case determined that the business owner was covered under the First Amendment exclusion due to the individual artistic expression involved in that business. The City will provide resources through a website to educate business owners on the Ordinance.

The implementation of this Ordinance will be through the City Manager's Office and the City Attorney's Office. Those departments will accept complaints and work with the community and business owners. Over the past five years, the City has held conversations with our counterparts who have ordinances. Most of the complaints received in other communities have resulted in education and mediation, rather than enforcement. Mesa will outline a window of 45 days in which to accept complaints. An investigation process will include both parties and will focus on education and mediation to resolve complaints. If enforcement is needed, a civil hearing officer will hear the case outside of the municipal court system. Similar to the City's code compliance, a first complaint does not necessarily lead to a violation. Tools and resources will be used to help remedy the issue.

BOARD QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Deb Duvall asked if anything in our ordinance varied significantly from those that were used as models. Ms. Alicoate stated our ordinance is very similar, although we have clarified some language that may have been vague. No major components of those model ordinances have been added or removed.

Dr. Duvall asked how City ordinances would apply to county islands? Ms. Alicoate advised that county islands are not under City jurisdiction. She sees complaints regarding ADA compliance and Title VI regarding federal civil rights. Most residents may not know the right avenue to submit a complaint. This will help to provide residents with the right tools to find the right avenue for their complaints.

Matt Likens asked about public schools being excluded. Ms. Alicoate explained that public schools have their own governing boards and their own policies in place which would apply to their facilities, contractors, and vendors. We work in partnership with the public school Equity Advisory Council.

Rich Adams asked if this would apply if someone didn't care for the art in a gallery or the particular books in a bookstore. Would this apply to the restrooms and locker rooms in a private health club like Mountainside Fitness? Ms. Alicoate stated Mountainside Fitness is a public place of accommodation and the Ordinance would apply to their place of business. Restroom usage will not be any different than it is today. An individual has the right to choose the restroom that they identify with. Mountainside Fitness would not need to retrofit their restrooms in any way nor would they need to assist anyone with identifying the restroom they need to use. In terms of books or art in a private facility, this Ordinance will not dictate the types of goods or services provided, only that everyone has equal access to receive those goods or services.

Mr. Adams asked where in the law does it state that he as an individual by his own self-determination can walk into the ladies' room in Mountainside Fitness. Attorney Ganier stated there is nothing written in federal or state law that says you have that right. For employment purposes, gender identity would be protected. The idea that individuals can go into the restroom they identify with is protected under federal case law and Title VII. For places of public accommodation, this Ordinance would be the vehicle in the City of Mesa that would prohibit discrimination against someone based on their gender identity. This recognizes that people are permitted to use the restroom they identify with. That does not change any criminal laws on the books. If someone used a restroom for nefarious or criminal purposes, they would be prosecuted. Ms. Alicoate stated this is the type of education we would provide to business owners. We asked our counterparts with existing ordinances about complaints they have received regarding restrooms. None had reported any such complaints. We are comfortable moving forward in this direction unless we receive specific complaints.

Dr. Duvall noted that public schools have their own district policies and procedures and they are also subject to state statutes and regulations. They are also under federal policy rules and regulations associated with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. There are multiple sources of regulation and procedures to protect the rights of all students. Attorney Ganier added that under Arizona case law, the school districts are considered in some cases to be political subdivisions of the state and a city would not be in the position to take enforcement action against the state. That is another reason for having the schools exempt.

Councilmember Spilsbury noted that the draft ordinance applies to small businesses with one or more employees. California's ordinance applies to businesses with five or more employees and in Utah, it applies to businesses with 15 or more employees. She asked why Mesa's ordinance would apply to businesses with one or more employees. Ms. Alicoate stated the intent of what we are trying to achieve is to ensure equal access for all within our community. It is a consideration to look at other communities such as those in California as well as nationally. Flagstaff's ordinance applies to businesses with 15 or more employees, although the remaining ordinances in Arizona apply to those with one or more employees. The intent is to achieve equality for all within our community to receive goods and services without fear of discrimination or harassment. Attorney Ganier advised that the ordinances in Tempe, Phoenix, and Tucson apply to businesses with one or more employees in order to cover all employers. We want to be consistent with our neighboring communities. We would focus on education before looking at formal enforcement actions. The goal would be to bring any issues into compliance through education.

Brian Campbell has worked with national organizations at the federal level on this issue. Has there been any discussion on the impact of the language on gender identity on insurance costs for employers related to coverage for gender transition surgery? Was there thought given to the ordinance serving as a

predicate in employment litigation for termination of an employee. Those are two issues that have been raised by opponents on the national level. Ms. Alicoate stated the ordinance would be applicable in terms of the hiring process for employment. It will not dictate the types of benefits an employer needs to hold within their insurance policies or provide to employees. Coverage for any type of elective procedures such as transition surgery would not be required or dictated through this ordinance. We are proposing through this ordinance that everyone should have the right to be able to find employment and that the hiring process cannot be discriminatory.

Mr. Campbell stated the concern raised by opponents is that an employee will be terminated because of the costs presented by the transition surgery. That is something we need to include in our presentation or be ready to respond to those concerns. If adverse employment action is taken, the plaintiff will point to the ordinance and claim they were terminated for a bad reason. How will we respond to those types of claims? Attorney Ganier stated whether a determination by the City would be admissible in a subsequent civil lawsuit will largely be governed by the judge that oversees that particular case. Mayor Giles advised that the ordinance would not give grounds to subsequent legal actions.

Mr. Campbell had reviewed that language in the ordinance and felt that needed to be emphasized in our presentations and perhaps strengthen that language. He referred to the Wagenseller cases on the reasons for terminating employment. Mayor Giles noted the US Supreme Court case of Bostock and Title VII. The federal bar has already been raised to that level and we are trying to catch up on employment and housing. This ordinance deals more with public accommodation.

Dominic Perry noted many of the large employers in our City may already have these pieces in place. In Mesa, which will stand above--the policies of the City or the internal policies of those corporations? Ms. Alicoate stated the ordinance will be the legal policy. As with any other policy, if the employer has an internal policy that supersedes or provides more benefit to their employees than the City ordinance, they have that opportunity. The City would only be involved in complaints that meet our minimum ordinance level.

Mr. Perry asked if an employee has gone through that process with their employer and did not like the outcome, would they then be able to file a complaint with the City? Ms. Alicoate stated most employer processes may extend beyond the complaint acceptance period outlined in our ordinance. Our main focus would be to educate both parties. We would look at the organization's policies and their internal investigation to determine whether there was just cause, and provide additional resources to help resolve the issue. The City ordinance would be the legal aspect that an individual could pursue. Mayor Giles added that if an employee chooses to initiate an EEOC complaint with an employer, they cannot also make a City of Mesa claim. If other legal remedies are pursued, use of the Mesa ordinance would not be allowed. Attorney Ganier advised that the proposed ordinance does have language that states it will not create a private cause of action. For anything that would be covered by another federal or state law currently in effect, we would direct individuals to file their complaints there. In addition, if an individual receives an unfavorable result from those other forums, they cannot then come back to Mesa looking for a different result. That is prohibited under the ordinance.

Mr. Perry asked if it would be possible to allow exemptions for companies that already have policies in place that were reviewed by the City of Mesa, similar to the school districts being exempt because they have their own internal processes? Jeffrey Pitcher stated it would be difficult for the City to be an arbiter of employment manuals. The City would not have the staff or the ability to do that and there would be a lot of employers offering their manual to the City. It is a good idea, although from a practical standpoint, it will not work. Ms. Alicoate has not seen an example of that in any other ordinance. There are over 330 municipalities with such an ordinance and we have reviewed a fair share. She appreciated the response to some of the nuances it would take to include that in our ordinance.

Mr. Campbell thanked Mayor Giles for his leadership and staff for their work on this topic. As someone who has advocated for this on a federal level for many years, he felt this was long overdue. It takes a lot of political will and courage to put this forward and he applauded those efforts.

MOTION: Brian Campbell moved that the Economic Development Advisory Board recommend adoption of the proposed Non-Discrimination Ordinance to City Council; seconded by Deb Duvall.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Kasselmann, Campbell, Duvall, Likens, Nickerson, Perry, Wilson

NAYS – Adams

Chair Kasselmann declared the motion carried by a 7-1 vote.

Chair Kasselmann appreciated the in-depth and well thought out series of questions. This is an important topic to the City and the business community. He thanked Mayor Giles and staff for bringing this forward.

Mayor Giles thanked the Board for their service to the community and appreciated their input.

5. Mesa Community College Workforce Development Programs

Chair Kasselmann welcomed Dr. Lori Berquam, Interim College President at Maricopa Community College. Dr. Berquam brings over 26 years of higher education experience to our City. She holds a PhD from Colorado State University, a Masters from the University of Wisconsin, and a BS degree from Truman State University in Missouri. The MCC team was introduced.

Dr. Berquam reviewed MCC's mission to create an inclusive vibrant learning community where everyone is supported to achieve success. We want to inspire, ensure access, and empower action. MCC values community and the team is excited to discuss partnering with the City of Mesa. MCC serves about 17,000 students, half of which are first-generation college students. The largest age group served is 20-24 years. MCC is also an HSI, a Hispanic Serving Institution, designated through a Title V grant. Twenty-one percent of MCC students are Pell Grant recipients. Fifty-six percent of students are women and forty-two percent are men.

CTE TRAINING IMPACT - CTE Dean Michael Voss noted that MCC is the largest community college within the Maricopa system with robust programming in Business, Information Technology, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Construction, Transportation, and Trades. Each year, we analyze the workforce data and gaps and shift resources where the economic need is greatest. This past year, we collaborated with three East Valley colleges, Chandler, Gilbert, and Scottsdale, to look at the total portfolio and discuss strategies.

The employer partnerships drive the growth, especially in Manufacturing, IT, and Construction. There is plenty of opportunity to continue the growth online, even during the pandemic. The Downtown Center location is focusing on short term IT skills training as well as a more permanent home for the Maricopa IT Institute. The Healthcare, Construction, Transportation, and Trades are at facility capacity.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CTE - The pandemic resulted in a reduction in capacity to provide safe student spacing at our facilities. As we shifted 90 percent of our portfolio online this fall, we reached max capacity for student interest in some areas that could go completely online, such as Administration of Justice, IT, and Business programs. Providing a safe learning environment is our top priority. A video was presented on the student experience in the Emergency Medical Services program.

AREAS OF GROWTH DURING THE PANDEMIC - Construction Trades and Management were up 30%; Veterinary Technology was up 34% driven by the robust dual enrollment partnerships with West-

MEC and EVIT; there was a lot of demand for Revit and Sketchup design software; and Real Estate and Small Business also saw increases. A new program in Amazon Web Services (Cloud) was launched during the pandemic.

ARIZONA ADVANCED MANUFACTURING INSTITUTE - Leah Palmer, AzAMI Director, advised that last year, MCC's Advanced Manufacturing Institute received the IEDC International Economic Development Award with the City of Mesa for their workforce programs. AzAMI was designed to provide a full-service continuum that spans from regional recruitment of K-12 to serving as a connector for employers and students with direct hires and internships to test drive the talent, certifications, and degrees. AzAMI's Manufacturing excellence is centered around programming, partnerships, and pipeline.

In the last year, AzAMI received federal, state, and private funding close to \$6 million, all supporting high-tech equipment, program development, scholarships, and internships. We have collaborated with the Arizona Chamber Manufacturing Sector, Arizona Commerce Authority, GPEC, and ASU. We are currently in a funding start-up with Rutgers University. Through our industry partners, including Boeing and Able Engineering, close to 348 students received industry certification in electrical wiring and a second boot camp was developed in composites. CMC Steel is going through their second expansion and are looking to grow from within. AzAMI is training their nationally-recruited supervisors with 30 credit hours in Advanced Technology, Automated Industry, Welding, and Machining. AzAMI serves as a direct link between employers and their next talent supply by mapping job descriptions, recruiting students, and holding on-site interviews.

Programs developed and enhanced over the last several years include Welding, Machining, Drafting, and 3D Printing. Automated Industrial Technology is now the statewide program in partnership with ACA, OEO, Pima, Casa Grande, Central Arizona College, and Estrella Community College. The demand and transferability of those skills is substantial for attraction efforts and manufacturing of the future. We are involved with over 20 manufacturing companies here in Mesa such as Marsh Aviation, Dexcom, MD Helicopter, and Lone Star Racing. Through pipeline, programming, and partnerships, AzAMI has maintained a footprint as an institute for all things manufacturing.

MARICOPA IT INSTITUTE – EAST VALLEY (MITI-EV) - Diane Meza, Director of MITI-EV, explained that as a regional IT institute, they help to fill the IT demand gap and respond to industry utilizing East Valley instructors, programs, assessments, and best practices. Those resources can be accessed from all four East Valley community colleges. Data shows a real need and an opportunity to increase our menu for training options and modalities. Mesa's Downtown Center, currently under construction, will become our regional IT Hub. The focus is on non-credit options that lead to credit and eliminating barriers to success through training modalities. We have created self-paced courses, online hybrid boot camps, and still have face-to-face offerings depending on learner and industry needs. PLA, Prior Learning Assessment, allows credit for industry certification or prior experience at no cost. We want to fill workforce needs by expanding our concurrent and dual enrollment programs, recruit instructional talent, hire, train, and sustain a diverse workforce, and target underserved populations.

Ms. Meza recognized the Mesa Chamber of Commerce and the City of Mesa for their partnerships which helped with several key accomplishments. An East Valley business consultant advised that some businesses don't even know how to get online to apply for the CARES money. We partnered with the Mesa Chamber of Commerce and East Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to provide laptops for students and entry-level computer courses for small businesses in English and Spanish. We offered Google IT Professional Certificate courses and the Amazon Web Services program which lead to industry certifications and employability. We created self-paced courses for veterans to seek Microsoft certifications. In just a few months, 137 non-credit students were registered for these trainings. We worked with Community Education Grants and a partner to create a techno-preneur experience. The first test pilot is an IOS App Design Center. The first project is a Suicide Prevention App for Mesa Chamber of Commerce and the community. We hope the App Design Center will provide apps to small businesses

that cannot afford it. Our students get the industry-facing experience and create apps and our small businesses can utilize those apps. This program also has scholarships and internships available for students. In response to the IT demand in Maricopa County, MITI-EV and AzAMI are joining to create several Python Certificate courses in data analytics, networking, cyber, and manufacturing.

Serving the underserved is very important to MITI-EV. The Girls Get IT event in 2019 was very successful. With COVID, we shifted to a virtual event and served 108 participants across Maricopa County and as far as Tucson and Sierra Vista. MITI-EV provides customized training to meet industry needs.

GREEN FLAG MESA – Carrie Allen, Business Department Chair at MCC, stated that Green Flag Mesa is a program and a physical space we provide for student entrepreneurs who are starting businesses and can use office space, facilities, and supplies. In partnership with the Mesa Chamber of Commerce, we are able to offer networking, advice, and seminars. It is a great place for a student starting a business to associate with experienced entrepreneurs. This year, we were fortunate to receive a \$50,000 grant from the Santander Foundation which provides funds to student entrepreneurs for basic business expenses.

RED MOUNTAIN VISIONING TEAM – Kris Bliss, Interim Associate Dean at Red Mountain, advised that the Red Mountain Visioning Team was assembled to create a center of excellence for education in health sciences based on the needs of the local community. We are focused on workforce and community needs, partnering with Mesa Public Schools on a teacher pipeline, and providing Phlebotomy classes to bolster our healthcare offerings at the Red Mountain campus.

HEALTHCARE TRAINING SPOTLIGHT - Dean Voss advised that MCC offers EMT, Dental Hygiene, Exercise Science, and Nursing programs. New programs launched in 2020 include Biomedical Equipment Technology in partnership with Banner, Advanced Paramedic certifications, and Phlebotomy in partnership with Gateway. Capacity in this area is fairly static. Healthcare is a major focus, particularly at the Red Mountain campus. We are looking to expand the current offerings and add several fast-track entry points and related trainings in Healthcare, from Home Health Aide to several Technician and LPN trainings. The East Valley colleges have come together on a proposal and are looking to gain some traction in the legislature possibly with the ACA. Some public funding investments would be helpful. Dean Voss hopes to bring this to a local campaign to recruit collaboration in order to have healthcare access for training in the East Valley. This is a portfolio gap for all four East Valley colleges.

COMMITMENT TO INDUSTRY – Dean Voss values MCC's relationships with industry partners and would like to develop more. Working with those partners, we can recruit a very diverse population that mirrors the population we serve so that every student going into all worlds of work looks like the community we serve. We want to expand the no-cost prior learning credits for industry recognized credentials. We are looking to reduce the cost of attendance through Inclusive Access digital textbooks or creating our own textbooks through Open Educational Resources. Both of those options will reduce or eliminate the cost of textbooks, which can often be more than the cost of tuition at MCC.

SUPPORT MESA STUDENTS – Our business community can support Mesa students by serving on advisory committees, sharing expertise as a guest lecturer, connecting with Career Services to test drive our talent through paid internships or hiring our graduates, or creating a scholarship. Hands-on learning can be supported through donating supplies and equipment. Partnerships can increase training capacity through facility expansion. All of these efforts will help MCC create a Healthcare Training Hub at Red Mountain.

SPACE NEEDS – Advanced Manufacturing and Welding is facility locked and in need of expansion. Labs run six days a week sun up to beyond sundown. This is the only Welding program in the county. CNC Machining and Advanced Manufacturing take a lot of space. We offer Construction Management online, although Construction Trades require space for electrical, plumbing, framing,

and HVAC. Automotive Technology needs four times the space to allow training for autonomous and hybrid vehicle technologies. Heavy Equipment and Diesel has a great partnership with Caterpillar at their facility. All heavy equipment dealers have expressed the same need for workforce and training. It takes a large facility similar to an aircraft hangar to allow for the proper rigging. We built a state-of-the-art greenhouse for the Agricultural Sciences program, although we also need instruction buildings. Through a gracious donation by a former veterinarian, we have a facility on Southern Avenue, although it has become outdated and too small for the Veterinary Technology program. The student demand is there through high school programs and EVIT, although we cannot take them to the next level without substantial investment.

MESA COLLEGE PROMISE – Dr. Berquam advised that in the fall of 2021 in partnership with the City of Mesa, MCC will institute the Mesa College Promise. It is the first Promise program in Arizona providing full funding of qualified Mesa high school graduates to attend MCC through a last dollar scholarship.

Dr. Berquam provided a list of key industry partners in the City of Mesa and throughout the East Valley. She asked how MCC can help the City of Mesa achieve its goals and how we can best partner together.

BOARD QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Brian Campbell, speaking as one of the largest consumers of veterinary services in the state on a concern shared by researchers in California, noted that those on the hiring end do not see that the demand is being produced for vet tech students. Researchers in California are pointing to a student loan or cost bubble tied to the vet tech services. What type of services is MCC looking at in terms of counseling these students as there is a great fear that there will not be the jobs these students are training for?

Dean Voss appreciated that feedback and acknowledged that the veterinary assisting area was becoming oversaturated. For advanced veterinary technology skills, there is really not much training capacity in the state. He does recognize that there is a mismatch between the income earning potential commensurate to the amount of training. They do try to counsel those students pursuing veterinary technology to not take other excess credits and we try to process them as quickly as possible. The demand we are seeing is at the lower level in the high schools. We are preparing for hundreds of students coming in with very limited slots.

Mr. Campbell felt it may be a matter of resource allocation. He strongly advised MCC to look closely at that sector and not see it as a growth sector. There is a lot of demand which helps with the bottom line from MCC's perspective, although from a long-term growth perspective, it is not positive for the skill sets we need for employers of quality jobs that we are pursuing here in Mesa.

Mr. Jabjiniak noted that our number one need today is around workforce. He thanked Dr. Berquam and the MCC staff for the detailed presentation. He has worked closely over the years with Ms. Palmer and Dean Voss and having those relationships is one of the reasons we have been successful, although there is more to do. The story we are telling is about the ability for us to deliver those relationships to the folks that are coming and looking at Mesa. He noted our Board Chair, Jim Kasselmann of Dexcom, has taken advantage of some of these services as well.

Chair Kasselmann noted Dexcom may have some lightly used CMC machines that are less than three years old that can be donated. He will reach out to Dean Voss. He appreciated Dr. Berquam, Dean Voss, and the MCC team for presenting to the Board.

6. Conversation Regarding Economic Development with Councilmember Heredia

Councilmember Heredia, serving District 3, noted the opportunities in west Mesa in terms of the location, the available workforce in this section of the Valley, as well as the transportation hubs. The pandemic has brought some challenges, and the City has come up with some great programming to help our residents and small businesses. We still have a lot of work to do to make sure folks are sustainable moving forward, ensuring that folks are available to enter the workforce as we lure more companies to Mesa. While the east side of Mesa is growing quite a bit, the west side does not have as much land to offer, although there are potential infill opportunities. The next evolution of the west side is to build density. The light rail corridor will bring in more people and rejuvenate activity as well as allow us to partner with industry and business partners to grow those opportunities for our residents. As MCC mentioned, the Mesa Promise Program is one of the tools to create programs that really provide for the City in future years. Before the pandemic, we worked on the Asian District Corridor along Dobson Road from Main Street almost to Southern Avenue. We have over 70 Asian businesses that have organically grown there over the last 10 to 12 years. We have some great companies like Dexcom, and the Union in Councilmember Freeman's district which adds more Class A office space. Small businesses are the heart and soul in west Mesa and making sure their engines are fully stacked for the future really provides an ongoing advantage for us.

Councilmember Heredia's vision for the next four years is to provide resources and add more transportation opportunities for people to get where they need to go for work, school, or dining out in the future. He chairs the Valley Metro Rail Board and there are discussions to add some transportation lines along Dobson Road to take people from Riverview to Southern Avenue where MCC is located, east to Country Club, and potentially downtown. That will create a hub of activity in those sections. West Mesa was hit hard by the recession in 2008 and we are looking at taking care of some of the blighted properties from the last 20 years. Along Alma School and Southern, there was a blighted property that was gated for about 16 years. We came to a compromise as a City to clean up that area and start building for the future. He is anxious to move forward with quality development in West Mesa to enhance the opportunities for our residents and businesses. What we do with Fiesta Mall is a big item and one of the top two questions he hears in every conversation. Fiesta Mall had five owners which slowly narrowed to one owner, which will work in our favor in creating one vision for that location. This year, he hopes to get some traction in moving forward in that area. He is focused on how to take advantage of those opportunities. The workforce, infill potential, building density, and diverse opportunities for folks will be critical for the next four years as we move towards building Mesa for the future.

Chair Kasselmann appreciated Councilmember Heredia joining the meeting and providing an update.

Director Jabjiniak felt Councilmember Heredia was right on track. We have a current project existing in the Valley looking to relocate and their number one site is in District 3. They ruled out south Mesa as an option because it was too far for their existing workforce. In terms of going denser and more vertical, he noted Banner is looking vertical with a five-story expansion. That is always welcome and that area will start to see more redevelopment and revitalization. Fiesta Mall is the big one and there is a continual dialogue there. Technically, there are still two owners with the option to go down to one. That is the point where we will see movement, hopefully later this year as Councilmember Heredia noted. Jaye O'Donnell reminded him that we need to start thinking about our marketing in the Asian District.

7. Director's Report

Director Jabjiniak introduced Councilwoman Julie Spilsbury, who will chair the Council Economic Development Committee. There will be a more in-depth discussion on that next month. She has been very involved in the community, especially around schools, and he looked forward to hearing how those business opportunities and volunteer experiences can be translated into economic development. He

remembered that Councilwoman Spilsbury and her husband owned a tree business. Councilwoman Spilsbury stated they had sold the tree business a year ago after being in business for 25 years.

Director Jabjiniak introduced Chris Molnar who has been with the City for 17 years and is taking over David Packard's spot. She will be a big help for us going forward as the new Management Assistant II. Nick Juszcak is our new Project Manager. He came out of the CBRE commercial real estate sector and did some work with site selectors as well. We are anxious to get him involved in a lot of projects. He will take over AZ Labs as we move Kelley Keffer more into the small business area.

A while ago, Maribeth Smith, Administrative Assistant, sent out to the group information on the #AZFreeToBe Campaign through GPEC. This is a very specific effort in which GPEC is targeting employers and employees in the California market with tech companies. With our growth, we need to make sure that we continue to have quality employees. When they are looking at greater Phoenix, we want to be able to push Mesa specific and talk about some of the great things going on here. He asked the Board when they are out hiking or see something from an employment standpoint to post with #AZFreeToBe. It tells the story about the quality of life here in Mesa. This marketing campaign will run through June and he will have that information resent to the Board.

8. Other Business

Chair Kasselmann thanked Mayor Giles, City Manager Brady, and Councilmembers Spilsbury and Heredia for joining the meeting. He appreciated the engagement from the Advisory Board.

The next EDAB meeting will be held on March 2, 2021, 7:30 a.m.

9. Adjournment

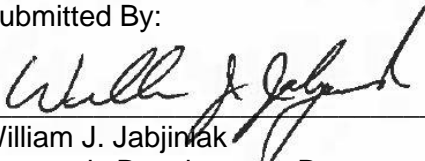
Brian Campbell moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Rich Adams. Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Kasselmann, Adams, Campbell, Duvall, Likens, Nickerson, Perry, Wilson

NAYS – None

The motion carried by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 a.m.

Submitted By:



William J. Jabjiniak
Economic Development Department Director