



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

June 4, 2024

The Economic Development Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met on the second floor of The Studios at 59 E 1st Street, on June 4, 2024, at 7:30 a.m.

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT

Brian Campbell
Richard Blake*
Kurt D. Ferstl
Michelle Genereux
Charles Gregory
Amanda Kay
Laura Snow

BOARDMEMBERS ABSENT

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Mayor Giles (Excused)
Ed Carr (Excused)
Jennifer Zonneveld (Excused)

STAFF PRESENT

Jaye O'Donnell
Maria Laughner
Kelley Keffer
Maribeth Smith
Jack Vincent

GUESTS

Richard Parison

(*Participated in the meeting through the use of video conference equipment)

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Vice Chair Michelle Genereux called the June 4, 2024, meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Board to order at 7:35 a.m.

2. Items from Citizens Present.

There were no items from citizens present.

3. Approval of Minutes from May 7, 2024, Economic Development Advisory Board meeting.

It was moved by Board Member Laura Snow, seconded by Board Member Kurt Ferstl, that the minutes from the May 7, 2024, Economic Development Advisory Board meeting be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Campbell-Blake-Ferstl-Genereux-Gregory-Kay-Snow

NAYS – None

Carried unanimously.

4. Election of Chair & Vice Chair for FY24-25.

Board Member Brian Campbell nominated Jennifer Zonneveld as Chair and Michelle Genereux as Vice Chair of the 2024/2025 Economic Development Advisory Board. Board Member Amanda Kay seconded the nomination.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Campbell-Blake-Ferstl-Genereux-Gregory-Kay-Snow

NAYS – None

Carried unanimously.

5. Hear a presentation and discuss the Arts & Economic Impact Study.

The Board welcomed Mesa’s Director of Arts and Culture Richard Parison. He shared the department’s vision of a thriving and engaged community where all people have a powerful sense of belonging in a world shaped by discovery, creativity, and imagination. The department’s mission is to enrich people’s lives through inclusive arts, cultural and science experiences in welcoming and creative environments.

Participation trendlines for Arts and Culture venues were shared from FY09-10 to FY22-23 reflecting attendance that surpassed pre-COVID levels. The i.d.e.a Museum was founded in 1978 as the Arizona Museum for Youth and rebranded in 2014. The museum was the first of its kind to incorporate fine arts and children. The Arizona Museum of Natural History was founded in 1977 to inspire wonder, respect, and understanding for the natural and cultural history of the Southwest and Arizona. The new Mesa Arts Center (MAC) opened in Spring 2005 and is the largest multidisciplinary arts center in the Southwest. It also offers the largest art studio in the Southwest. Thanks to a generous grant by Boeing, the Arts in Service program provides creative pathways, free of charge, for veterans and service members to use studio arts experiences in reaching their personal goals, whether those are finding a supportive community, stress relief, working toward overall health and wellness, or pursuing career interest in artmaking.

The newly released Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) is an economic and social impact study of the nation’s nonprofit arts and culture industry. Nonprofit arts and culture organizations in Mesa provide positive economic impact and improve community well-being. The economic impact of nonprofit sector employment includes jobs, personal income for residents, and tax revenue. Overall economic activity in 2022 was 35.3 million in spending by arts and culture organizations and audiences. Additionally, arts and culture drives commerce to local businesses and strengthens the visitor economy. 82.4% of nonlocal attendees reported their primary reason for visiting was to attend the performance, event, exhibit, venue or facility where they were surveyed.

Board Member Natascha Ovando-Karadsheh inquired about future growth capacity and economic drivers over the next 10 years.

Director Parison replied that they continually look at how they can adequately expand capacity utilizing current staff in the current economic climate. Their strategic plan lays out a pathway to continue expanding capacity because Mesa continues to grow its population, as does the Valley.

Economic Development Director Jaye O'Donnell thought the average amount spent per attendee, per event was conservative. She shared the Office of Economic Development is working to engage new businesses in Mesa to experience the richness of our community. The Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC) is focusing on a database of regional assets to lift that messaging during the site selection process.

Director Parison agreed that Mesa businesses may not be fully aware of the arts and culture assets available in their community. The Arts and Culture development and fundraising team are focused on engaging local businesses and their employees.

Director O'Donnell suggested businesses promote volunteer opportunities and utilize the Mesa Arts Center programming for appreciation events.

Board Member Ovando-Karadsheh suggested utilizing the arts and culture assets for employee retention and appreciation by buying tickets rather than typical gift cards.

Director Parison thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak with them and share how arts and culture enhances a community's economy.

6. Hear a presentation and discuss Mesa Business Builder @ The Studios.

Economic Development Project Manager Kelley Keffer oversees the small business and entrepreneurship initiatives and has been with the Office of Economic Development for 11.5 years. Today's meeting is being held in the brand-new Mesa Business Builder @ The Studios space which will offer resources and technology to small businesses in Mesa. Over the course of the past four years, nine different programs or resources have been developed that assist Mesa small businesses in increasing their competitiveness. Information and communication resources include the MesaBusinessBuilder.com website, The Business Advocate newsletter, the Mesa Business Builder (MBB) Resource Guide, and an MBB podcast. Education and training resources include Mesa HUUB, the MBB Small Business Assistance Program, and MBB Educates U which offers 14 certificate programs to small business clients at Mesa Community College. Specialty spaces include MBB @ The Studios and LaunchPoint.

MBB @ The Studios is the heart of Mesa's small business and entrepreneurship community. We strive to provide connectivity and access to resources and organizational partners for small businesses and entrepreneurs to improve their core business practices, grow and prosper. Assets and amenities available at MBB @ The Studios include one-on-one meeting spaces, conference rooms and event spaces, computer lab and software, technology and tech tools, VR/AR studio/screening room, podcast booth, sound equipment, and business equipment. Types of MBB programming include bridging the digital divide, finance and business operations planning, marketing, restaurant and retail specialty services, workforce development, training, skills development, website consulting and development, and computer literacy classes. We've scheduled 25 workshops between May 22 and the end of June at The Studios. A tour of The Studios space will be available at the conclusion of the meeting.

Board Member Brian Campbell expressed his appreciation for the assistance that has been developed for small businesses in Mesa in a short amount of time.

Vice Chair Genereux thanked Ms. Keffer for the presentation.

7. Discuss the administrative and legal significance of the formation of a subcommittee focused on retail recruitment opportunities.

Assistant City Attorney, Jack Vincent, provided Open Meeting Law guidelines related to the formation of a subcommittee.

Director O'Donnell shared that the retail strategy report will be presented to the City Council in August or September. After that was complete, she suggested the Board hear and discuss the retail strategy presentation prior to deciding upon the formation of a subcommittee.

Board Members Ovando-Karadsheh and Campbell agreed that having the whole Board hear the presentation would be helpful.

8. Vote on the formation of a subcommittee focused on developing retail recruitment recommendations within the City of Mesa and granting the Chair, in partnership with staff, the power to appoint members of the Economic Development Advisory Board to serve on that committee.

Vice Chair Genereux tabled the vote on the formation of a subcommittee focused on retail recruitment to a future meeting based on board discussion.

9. Request for board volunteers to participate on the retail recruitment subcommittee.

Vice Chair Genereux tabled the vote on the formation of a subcommittee focused on retail recruitment to a future meeting based on board discussion.

10. Economic Development Director updates.

Director Jaye O'Donnell shared an invitation to the City of Mesa and Mesa Chamber of Commerce Next Level Workforce Development Forum on June 20, featuring author and speaker Mark Perna. The forum will highlight fresh approaches to education, training, workforce development and their profound impact on our future at the community level. Ms. O'Donnell also shared that the JobConnectMesa.com website is live and onboarding meetings have begun with local employers.

Board Member Cave, Director O'Donnell, and Mayor Giles participated in GPEC's Executive Mission to Washington, DC, in May. Approximately 60 attendees met with federal agencies and non-profits. Ms. O'Donnell participated on the climate technology track, Mr. Cave the aerospace track, and Mayor Giles the infrastructure track. The mission included networking opportunities with regional contacts, information on grant opportunities, and exposure to what is happening at the national level.

Director O'Donnell recognized former Board Member Rich Adams for his years of service on the Board. Mr. Adams was unable to join us today, but he has served on the Board in numerous capacities since July 2008.

Director O'Donnell recognized Board Member Brian Campbell for his 19 years of service to the Economic Development Advisory Board as both a voting and ex-officio member. He has been instrumental in many initiatives over the years through his service on the GPEC and this Board.

Board Member Campbell thanked all the Board members and City leaders he had the pleasure of working with through the years.

Bill Jabjiniak, a Mesa resident and former economic development director, thanked Mr. Campbell for his service to the Board and his guidance through the years. He congratulated Mr. Campbell on his retirement.

Board Member Ovando-Karadsheh commented on what a pleasure it has been to serve on the Board with Mr. Campbell over the past 10 years. Mr. Campbell is an incredibly knowledgeable forward thinker who embodied a service mindset.

11. Introduction of new business to be discussed at a future meeting.

No new business was discussed.

12. Schedule of meetings.

The next Economic Development Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for August 6, 2024.

13. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Economic Development Advisory Board meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Submitted by:



Jaye O'Donnell
Economic Development Director