



MINUTES
Economic Development Commission
Electronic Meeting- WebEx
September 23, 2020
7:30 am

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice Chair Grant Tayrien called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

Commission Members present (electronically):

Grant Tayrien; Brent White; Chris Clark; Carson Brown; Jason Barney; Marc Valenzuela; Nancy Hormann; Jenna Kahl; Gordon Mortensen; Perry Berry; Perry Rea; Council Member Brown; Council Member Oliphant

Town Staff (electronically): Doreen Cott, Economic Development Director; Jennifer Lindley, Downtown Development Manager; Marissa Garnett, Economic Development Coordinator; Rob Sachs, Real Estate Coordinator; Bruce Gardner, Assistant Town Manager; Amy Shackelford, Business Systems and IT Training Analyst; Eric Swanson, Interim Planning Administrator; Brett Burningham, Development Services Director; Joy Maglione, Deputy Town Clerk

Absent Members: Steve Sossaman; Shane Randall, Chair; Warde Nichols; Brian McKean; Mark Schnepf; Derek Neighbors

Others: Chris Webb, Karla Moran

2. Items for Discussion and Possible Action

A. Consideration and possible approval of the August 26, 2020 minutes.

Motion to approve the August 26, 2020 minutes as presented.

1st: Carson Brown

2nd: Nancy Hormann

Vote: Approved unanimously

B. Presentation and discussion on objectives, thoughts and vision related to the development of an Economic Development Strategic Program of Work

Economic Development Director Doreen Cott introduced Del Boyette and Tracy Sharp of Boyette Strategic Advisors. They joined the meeting virtually to facilitate a discovery session for the Economic Development Strategic Program of Work. Ms. Sharp outlined the project goals and the schedule and said the plan for Queen Creek will focus on

increasing competitiveness over the next three years. She said we are in the Data Assessment phase and today's goal is to get stakeholder feedback from the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Boyette presented the following questions for the Commission:

Q: What is your top priority or outcome for this economic development plan?

Ms. Cott said there have been some major changes for the Town including recent annexations and State Route 24 and we are looking at our current plan to make sure it is still relevant. The Commission shared their comments:

- Core jobs in the Route 24 Corridor; opportunity for growth
- Create a variety of high quality career jobs (white collar, blue collar, service industry, professional, manufacturing, distribution) to attract people to stay in Queen Creek
- Identify what makes people choose Queen Creek over Mesa or other areas
- Create jobs and prepare students for jobs when they graduate
- Space for existing businesses to expand so the jobs stay in Queen Creek; focus on North Area Specific Plan area and Mesa Airport area
- High end core jobs with a specific target on location and job type

Q: Through the lens of your residents and businesses, what do you think they want to see addressed?

- Retail mix/variety (independent restaurants, boutique style retail)
- Night time entertainment and experiences (things to do)
- Executive suites and warehouse space
- Transportation improvements – relieve traffic on Ellsworth

Q: What are Queen Creek's competitive advantages for economic development?

- New and clean
- Agritainment; farm to table
- Ever growing roof tops and our demographics
- Good schools, family friendly, proximity to ASU Polytechnic
- Good planning and vision
- Annexation of State land
- Our plan for transportation and infrastructure
- Unique culture; openness

Q: What are greatest challenges facing Queen Creek's economic development efforts today?

- Transportation

- Mesa has a jumpstart for industrial
- Lack of existing buildings and availability
- Attracting businesses and shovel ready sites

Q: What are the top economic development opportunities for Queen Creek? Focusing on the next three years what do you see as top economic development opportunity today?

- Flex space along Germann to provide ancillary business
- Get more office space which is being asked for in today's market
- High intellect – opportunity for more educational facilities
- Tourism - We have a unique destination and opportunity to expand with the new hotel opening, the Box Canyon development and San Tan Mountains beauty
- Younger community with more rooftops
- Showcase our demographics. Educated workforce. Keep people here to work and shop
- Highlight local tourism, agritainment and equestrian community. Promote staycation opportunities
- Proximity to airport; good school choices for families; unique community partnerships with businesses and schools
- Traditional values merged with high tech jobs

Q: What are your thoughts on targeted business/industry sectors for QC? (We will research core jobs but want your ideas for these core jobs)

- The airport and ASU is an anchor for engineering, energy, transportation, distribution (Skybridge), or similar types of jobs
- Focus on things around us: Mortuary science (Chandler Gilbert Community College) and artificial intelligence (Intel)
- Secondary ancillary manufacturing in relation to airport, electronics, light manufacturing are doing well in town
- Technology (look at our bandwidth capacity)
- Industrial/ shipping with our access to rail and airport
- Manufacturing jobs from low skill assembly all the way to engineering and management. Low skilled manufacturing will bring high tech jobs
- Healthcare research, cancer care and other secondary medical fields. With Banner already located in Town Center get other buildings redeveloped

Q: Do you think the Town of Queen Creek should have a bigger focus on entrepreneurship /innovation?

- Yes, absolutely. Emphasis on campuses that we can draw on
- Gangplank is already doing this and is a good resource to leverage; school district already supports this

- Entrepreneurs generally start up wherever they are; important to have that landing spot for the second stage of start ups
- Affordable executive style private office space to support the second step
- Promote networking opportunities

Q: What do you think is the best use for the state-owned land? (Commercial, industrial, residential?)

Ms. Cott said we can help drive what it will look like and aim for a mixture of uses by creating a flexible land use plan allowing for development over many years.

Mr. Boyette asked if the town has any tax advantage incentives. Ms. Cott said development agreements can be considered as companies come in.

Commission feedback:

- Access to freeway to draw manufactures and other businesses to this corridor
- Protect employment uses in that area as it is a prime employment corridor
- Timeline is in the future, but we want to establish requirements that are already there.
- Create a career cluster inventory survey with businesses to see best uses and what they want to see.
- Mindful, forward thinking transportation plans and trends

Ms. Cott said she will share the land use conceptual plan and get a draft outline and updates on this area out to the Commission.

Q: What would you like to see happen in the Town Center?

- More shops; create more walkability; and conversion of old buildings
- Retail with residential above to create a 12-hour city and community gathering spots
- Create a healthy core to attract people to outlining areas
- Get the Town Center Plan jumpstarted; night time activities; live music, bands and public gatherings
- Walkability makes a desirable place; follow through with Town projects

Q: What would you like to see happen in Queen Creek from a tourism perspective?

- Children's activities such as museums and things to accompany agritainment for daytrips
- Running path, biking paths on washes. Hold half marathons and events
- Box Canyon has potential resort opportunities which can create more activities such as horseback riding

- Utilize downtown storefronts and a visitor center to help promote agritainment and daytrips
- Ms. Cott said that a new botanical garden near Horseshoe Park is open for tours. All plantings are edible and they will have a farmer's market
- Food truck expansion in other areas of Town (in washes). Highlight washes and trails

Q: With unlimited resources, what would you do as it relates to economic development in Queen Creek?

- Put infrastructure in place; more office space; and water features/lakes (similar to Tempe Town Lake)
- Destination resort to take advantage of tourism and hospitality
- Fast track development of Downtown Center space
- Continue expanding Parks and Recreation
- Smaller version of Kierland Commons in Town Center
- Industrial zoned areas fully shovel ready so customers can locate here immediately
- Car shows at Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Center

Q: What is one news headline would you like to read about Queen Creek in three years?

- A major employer locating here
- Major draw to Town Center; anchor tenant commits to Queen Creek
- Biotech destination
- Fast internet and bandwidth
- More independent restaurants opening making Queen Creek a destination spot to grab a drink, shop and gather
- Best family community with good schools in Valley
- Top of the list in entrepreneur growth

Ms. Cott said we are working with downtown developers for Town owned sites and the first big project will create momentum.

Commissioner Jason Barney said Queen Creek is already a headline in the development cycle in the Southeast Valley. In order to achieve headlines we need to have good land, a good location and it relies on landowners and developers to take a risk. It is important to have a good understanding on how these deals get built and financed.

Mr. Boyette said our goal is to have things that are realistic and can be accomplished based on research. He thanked the Commissioners for their feedback and said if you think of anything else it is never too late to provide additional input. Ms. Cott will send the PowerPoint presentation and contact information to everyone.

C. Presentation and overview on the Retail Market Analysis & Land Use Balance and Queen Creek Employment Analysis

This item was moved to next meeting.

D. Summary of current events – Reports from Chair, Commission Members and Economic Development staff.

Ms. Cott invited the Commission to attend the Small Business Economic Resiliency Conference on September 29-30. It is will be hosted virtually from 8-11 am by the city of Mesa and towns of Gilbert and Queen Creek in partnership with an economic development consulting firm. Ms. Cott said that Brian McKean, Old Ellsworth Brewery, will present on Tuesday. Ms. Cott will share the link for those wishing to attend.

5. Announcements

A. None.

6. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 am.

TOWN OF QUEEN CREEK

Shane Randall, Chair
Economic Development Commission

Prepared by:

Joy Maglione
Deputy Town Clerk

PASSED AND APPROVED ON: November 18, 2020