



## MINUTES

### Joint Meeting

### Economic Development Commission & Downtown Art & Placemaking Advisory Committee

San Tan Conference Room  
22358 S. Ellsworth Rd, Queen Creek  
October 25, 2023  
7:30 a.m.

#### 1. Call to Order and Introductions

Grant Tayrien called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Economic Development Commission Members present: Grant Tayrien; Chris Clark; Troy Young; Nancy Hormann; Marc Valenzuela; Jason Barney; Nate Knight; John Rea; Connor Schnepf; Derek Neighbors (Google Meet); Shane Randall; Perry Berry; Council Member McClure; Council Member Padilla

Economic Development Commission Members Absent: Brent White; Jenna Kahl

Downtown Art & Placemaking Advisory Committee Members Present: Whitney Tolle; Valerie Done, Patrick Camunez, Anita Lopez, Lisa Dalton, Derek Neighbors

Downtown Art & Placemaking Advisory Committee Members Absent: Brian McKean

Staff present: Doreen Cott, Economic Development Director; Jennifer Lindley, Downtown Development Manager; Marissa Garnett, Economic Development Coordinator; Erik Swanson, Planning Manager (Google Meet); Brett Burningham, Development Services Director (Google Meet); Amber Gough, Community Outreach Specialist (Google Meet); Joy Maglione, Deputy Town Clerk

Staff, commissioners and committee members conducted roundtable introductions.

Economic Development Director Doreen Cott introduced the two new EDC members, John Rea and Connor Schnepf, who will be replacing Perry Rea (Queen Creek Olive Mill) and Mark Schnepf (Schnepf Farms). Ms. Cott thanked Perry and Mark for their service over the years and thanked those who were recently reappointed for another term.

#### 2. Public Comment:

None.

**3. Items for Discussion and Possible Action**

A. Consideration and possible approval of the August 23, 2023 minutes

**Motion to approve the August 23, 2023 minutes as presented.**

**1<sup>st</sup>: Nancy Hormann**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Shane Randall**

**Vote: Approved unanimously**

B. Presentation and overview of the Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre (HPEC) Five Year Master Plan

[Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre: 2023-2028 Strategic Plan](#)

HPEC General Manager David Solum provided a brief history of his experience in the industry. He outlined the economic impact that HPEC brings to the community in regards to event invoices, secondary event revenue and consumer spending. He said that HPEC had events scheduled 50 weeks out of 52 weeks this past year.

Mr. Solum touched on the highlights of the 5-Year Strategic Plan:

- Update rates & fees
- Issue RFP for food and concessions; in-house liquor sales to increase sales
- RV improvements (will be open to the public with a 14-day maximum)
- Add RV dump stations (approved by Town Council)
- Install a new digital marquis sign (sponsorship program)
- Develop a Master Site Plan
- RFP for a steakhouse in front (open to the public)
- Develop a formal sponsorship program
- Close the gap (cost recovery efforts)
- Short term recommendation for a formal booking policy- do not book one-day shows prior to 6 months

Mr. Solum concluded with a plan to focus on growth in the community and the industry, expanding on events, increasing cost recovery and continuing to promote the outstanding reputation of the facility.

The Commission had questions regarding seating capacity of the venue and the new restaurant. Mr. Solum said the facility seats 2600 - 4000 depending on the type of event and the restaurant would seat approximately 400.

The Commission asked about the Apache Junction Event Center and how it is affecting us. Mr. Solum it is great for the area and is much needed for the industry. He said we are not competing and are working together, adding that we send one-day shows to AJ.

Commissioner Hormann asked how we are promoting local businesses to visitors. Mr. Solum said we promote the [visitqueencreekaz.com](http://visitqueencreekaz.com) website and we would like to do a local coupon book

C. Economic Forecast Presentation from the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC)

[GPEC Queen Creek Economic Development Presentation](#)

GPEC Senior Vice President Kristen Stephenson provided a virtual overview of the national and local economy and spoke about the tremendous growth in the Phoenix area. She addressed wage growth, which is double the U.S. growth due to our increasing population.

She provided information on the makeup of the local industry, with the largest industries being healthcare and moving away from consumption. She concluded with consumer sentiment, inflation, cost of living and housing prices and affordability.

D. ChatGPT Presentation from the Greater Phoenix Economic Council

GPEC Senior Data Scientist Albert Stanton gave a virtual presentation on generative AI. He discussed some consumer products such as ChatGPT and Bard and how it is used to increase workflow internally at GPEC and how people can use it to increase productivity. Examples include text generation, document summaries, idea generation, coding and research.

He discussed AI trends in economic development with the use of chatbots and internet enabled mass distribution and said the use of AI is increasing and the biggest risk is falling behind the competition.

The Commission briefly discussed the potential of using AI along with some of the risks.

E. Presentation and discussion on the draft recommendations for the Downtown Queen Creek Public Art & Placemaking Plan

[Queen Creek Art & Placemaking Draft Plan](#)

Downtown Development Manager Jennifer Lindley introduced Josh Lipp from Design Local to present virtually on the draft findings for the Art & Placemaking Plan.

Mr. Lipp discussed the strategic vision for the plan with a focus on community character. He outlined the five strategies addressed in the draft plan.

1. Tell the story of Queen Creek (past, present and future)
2. Build a walkable and bikeable downtown
3. Integrate public art
4. Contribute to Queen Creek's agritainment identity
5. Incorporate natural elements into public art and placemaking

Mr. Lipp showed several examples and depictions of methods used in other downtowns and concluded with the next steps to formalize the program.

The Commission commented that they liked the agritainment theme and suggested that we bring more character to Queen Creek and get back to our roots. They discussed the importance of having maintenance plans and an agreement in place with the artists in regards to any art pieces so there would be no issues when artwork is moved or replaced.

Director Doreen Cott said the next steps would be feedback from the Down Town Art & Placemaking Subcommittee and then feedback from Town Council.

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

Director Cott provided the following updates:

- The Pancake Breakfast at Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Center is on November 4
- Homeward Suites (north of Hampton Inn) is hoping to break ground in November
- We continue to work with LG and LG Energy Solutions concurrently
- Piefection is opening at Queen Creek & Ellsworth on Saturday and will feature a pie eating contest between Police and Fire
- John Ahumada moved to Maine and his position for Economic Development Specialist is open

Commissioner Perry Berry said the Business Partner Breakfast in on November 2. He said they successfully hosted the first faith based leadership meeting recently. A high school Career Day with panel speakers is scheduled for Saturday and he encouraged staff and commissioners to consider being on a panel. Love our Schools Day was held last Saturday featuring cleaning, painting and teacher appreciation.

#### **4. Announcements**

Chair Tayrien said the next quarterly meeting is in January 2024 and wished everyone happy holidays.

#### **5. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

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Grant Tayrien, Chair  
Economic Development Commission

ATTEST:

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Joy Maglione  
Deputy Town Clerk

I, Joy Maglione, do hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the foregoing Minutes are a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the October 25, 2023 Economic Development Commission. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and that a quorum was present.

Passed and approved on: January 24, 2024