



MINUTES

Economic Development Commission
San Tan Conference Room
22358 S. Ellsworth Rd, Queen Creek
January 24, 2024 | 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: Chair Grant Tayrien; Brent White; Chris Clark (Google Meet); Nancy Hormann; Vice Chair Marc Valenzuela (Google Meet); Jason Barney; Nate Knight (Google Meet); Jenna Kahl (Google Meet); John Rea; Shane Randall (Google Meet); Perry Berry; Connor Schnepf (Google Meet); Council Member Brown (Google Meet)

Economic Development Commission Members Absent: Council Member McClure; Derek Neighbors; Troy Young

Staff present: Doreen Cott, Economic Development Director; Jennifer Lindley, Downtown Development Manager; Marissa Garnett, Economic Development Coordinator; Joy Maglione, Deputy Town Clerk

Kelly Harris and a second staff member from East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) attended the meeting.

2. Public Comment:

None.

3. Items for Discussion and Possible Action

A. Consideration and possible approval of the October 25, 2023 minutes

Motion to approve the October 25, 2023 minutes as presented.

1st: Nancy Hormann

2nd: Perry Berry

Vote: Approved unanimously

B. Presentation and overview of the Town Center /Downtown Plan Update

[Town Center/Downtown Plan Update Presentation](#)

Downtown Development Manager Jennifer Lindley provided a brief history of the Town Center area and the previous Town Center Plan from 2017 developed by SWABACK Architects &

Planners. She said the Town Center Plan sets the vision, sets priorities and provides clarification on how the area should develop over time. Ms. Lindley said the 2017 plan recommended that the larger town center area be narrowed down into a downtown core and to create an overlay zoning in the Old Ellsworth and Ocotillo area.

Ms. Lindley said SWABACK was brought back to develop the Town Center/Downtown Core Update through 2029. She discussed the goals and recommendations outlined in the five-year plan (2024-2029) and reviewed the accomplishments the Town has completed from the 2017 Town Center Plan thus far.

She said the ongoing 2017 recommendations have been prioritized by high, moderate or low priority:

- **Higher priority:** evaluate new investment opportunities; establish a village green area; review and update downtown core design guidelines; evaluate future use of Founders Park; conduct a future parking analysis; phase out the Façade Improvement Program; evaluate the use of the Town Center Fund sales tax
- **Moderate priority:** explore shared trash options; pedestrian and bicycle connectivity study; evaluate when to issue RFP for remaining Town owned land; future property acquisitions; branding; beautification; analyze Downtown Core zoning; determine the need for a future “Downtown Task Force”
- **Low priority:** drainage plans; encourage the formalization of a Downtown Merchants Association; evaluate current and future special events; implement recommendations from the Downtown Arts & Placemaking Plan 2023

The Commission discussed the new LGE downtown project in regards to traffic impacts; ideas for the use of Founders Park; how to generate energy in the Old Ellsworth/Ocotillo area; and timing and representation in regards to a future merchant association.

C. Presentation and discussion on the Façade Improvement Program

Downtown Development Manager Jennifer Lindley gave a brief background of the Façade Improvement Program which was established in 2013 and she thanked the Commission for their work on this project over the years.

Ms. Lindley said the purpose of the program was to encourage improvements to the street-facing exteriors of commercial buildings in the Downtown Core and Ocotillo 11 Zoning districts. The town awarded over \$200K in funding and private contributions amounted to approximately \$800K, which was the intent of the program.

Ms. Lindley said today we are seeing more new construction in the area and we will be phasing out the remaining inquiries. She said the program will end on July 1, 2024, and new programs may be established on case-by-case basis.

D. Discussion on the Economic Development Summit

Economic Development Director Doreen Cott reviewed the details of the last Economic Development Summit held in April 2022 in the Community Chambers. She said it was sponsored by SRP and included a bus tour, an overview of the Town, a keynote speaker and refreshments and swag. There were 60 attendees, of which 39 attended the one-hour bus tour. Ms. Cott said overall it was well attended and received positive feedback.

Ms. Cott asked the Commission for feedback for the 2024 summit and the comments and discussions were as follows:

- Should we charge for the summit (even if a nominal fee)
- Target audience – development community/ get the right people in the room
- Possible topics: airport; highlight the major changes in Queen Creek/Mesa area
- Queen Creek's growth is a big topic now – how do we support the growth and business
- What's next in QC? We are now in a different position; leverage what we have; be more strategic in what we bring in
- Possibly an invite only list that is complementary and a fee for others
- Highlight our robust growth, the activity in Downtown, focus on art and culture; promote QC as a place where all the workers will want to live
- Discuss roadway improvements (CIP updates); highlight our massive accomplishments (all the improvements that are here now that were not here 2-4 years ago)
- Provide a drone shot of QC
- "Where we are / where we are going" (it has happened quickly)
- Discuss the positive partnerships and relationships with Mesa and QC on roadways and economic development
- Have other municipalities on the panel
- Keynote speaker -try to get Chris Camacho again
- Timing – April or May
- Discuss water issues (include Paul Gardner)

Ms. Cott thanked the Commission for the discussion and said she will keep them updated on the details of the summit.

E. Presentation and updates on projects in the development Pipeline

[Project Updates Presentation](#)

Economic Development Director Doreen Cott discussed the project history for the State Land development and how we acquired the land. She provided details on the \$5.5B Project Alpha (LG Energy Solutions) cylindrical battery manufacturer and their expansion to Project Gemini (LGEES) to produce pouch batteries. She said this is the largest single investment for a stand-alone battery manufacturing facility in the nation and will create thousands of jobs.

Ms. Cott discussed a new project in downtown Queen Creek on the 6.8-acre town owned site which will include multi-family, office, retail and restaurants.

Ms. Cott provided an update on park construction and completion dates, including Mansel Carter Oasis Park Phase II (Summer 2024); Frontier Family Park (Summer 2024); and the Recreation and Aquatic Center (Late 2024/25).

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

Commissioner Perry Berry, Queen Creek Unified School District (QCUSD) Superintendent, provided the following updates:

- School Choice Week is January 21-27
- QCUSD Realtor Lunch and Learn - April 12
- QCUSD Business Partner Breakfast - February 22
- KMB Elementary named as a top five gifted school in Arizona
- New Barney College Prep opening for 2024-2025 school year
- Two Crismon High School students were awarded a Congressional Honor for Big Sisters for Kids

4. Announcements

The next meeting is April 24, 2024.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 a.m.

Grant Tayrien, Chair
Economic Development Commission

ATTEST:

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 January 24, 2024 Economic Development Commission. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and that a quorum was present.