



## APPROVED MINUTES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING June 23, 2010, 7:30 a.m. San Tan Conference Room

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#### 1. **Call to order**

##### **Present:**

Vice Mayor Barnes	Town of Queen Creek
Rustyn Sherer, Vice Chairman	Queen Creek Chamber of Commerce
Jean Humphries	Arizona State University Polytechnic
Lee Ester	SRP
Jason Barney	Land Developer
David Valenzuela	Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport
Roseann Sweet	Queen Creek Resident
Steve Sossaman	Queen Creek Resident
Doreen Cott	Town of Queen Creek
Wayne Balmer	Town of Queen Creek
Kim Moyers	Town of Queen Creek
Carson Brown	W Holdings
Mark Schnepf	Schnepf Farms

##### **Absent:**

John Schroeder, Chairman	CGCC, Williams Campus
Dr. James Murlless	Queen Creek Unified School District

##### **Guests:**

Jeff Carlson	ParCap LLC
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The meeting was called to order at 7:41 a.m. by Vice Chairman Sherer.

#### 2. **Public Comment**

No public comment.

#### 3. **Items for Discussion**

##### **A. Consideration and possible approval of the May 26, 2010 minutes.**

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Sossaman and seconded by Commissioner Humphries to approve the minutes dated May 26, 2010. The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote (7-0).

**B. Discussion and possible action on plans for “ombudsman program” for the Town**

Committee was given the opportunity to read through the draft ombudsman program. Ms. Cott reiterated that the ombudsman program was meant to complement the Town’s existing process.

Commissioner Barney expressed concerns with two items in the draft. First, the draft seemed to focus mainly on schedule and timeline. He explained that many times developers have issues with the town codes, zoning, etc., and the program should provide an opportunity to identify problems as they arise. The second concern was the eligibility criteria. He suggested that the program provide a list of different criteria in order to include a variety of projects that will add value to the Town despite their size. He thought the current wording implied that the Town would only focus on larger projects needing expedited review. Commissioner Humphries suggested using qualifiers to clarify which projects would be eligible.

Ms. Cott mentioned that a Town Center project south of Ocotillo could be a good candidate for the ombudsman program with its special needs and conditions.

Commissioner Barney believes that the program would assist in bringing projects to the Town. Companies like to know they are wanted. The program will help projects through the process not try to work around or outside the Town’s code.

Commissioner Ester felt that this program would put the Economic Development Department in a position of control. Commissioner Barney stated that the Economic Development Department would be a conduit to other departments. Ms. Cott stated that the initial *Coordination Meeting* would determine the timeline that both parties could agree to as well as identify key contacts from the Town and the applicant’s team.

Commissioner Valenzuela suggested the purpose of the ombudsman program be highlighted in the beginning of the document to clarify its intent with the eligibility criteria of the program to follow.

Commissioner Humphries would like to see a marketing piece tailored for the program’s audience that includes the purpose and process/procedures making it user friendly.

Commissioner Sossaman asked Ms. Cott to give an example of how the program would keep a project on schedule. Ms. Cott stated phone calls would be made prior to deadlines, reminder calls the day of and project checklists would all be part of the constant communications between the Town and applicant. All expectations and responsibilities for each party will be clearly defined at the Coordination meeting.

Commissioner Sossaman explained that the Vestar project – Queen Creek Marketplace – initially had an issue with the number of parking spaces and signage allowed. Vestar went through the process to obtain the necessary variances. An Ombudsman Program should help to identify potential issues or obstacles and outline how to get from point A to B. The program should clearly define items that are outside the scope of what the Town is able to control, (issues that need to be resolved by outside agencies) or items that will need a variance from the Town. This will add time to the project’s timeline.

Commissioner Humphries suggested that the wording include “will make every effort to” in lieu of definitive statements such as “we will”. Commissioner Barney stated the burden should still remain on the applicant.

Ms. Balmer reminded Commission that there is limited staff and asked if there should be an additional fee for expediting a project. He also questioned if the existing system should be improved. Ms. Cott reiterated that the intent was not to “fix” the existing process but to complement the process and add a level of customer service for strategic economic development projects.

Vice Chairman Sherer suggested the draft be revised with the suggested improvements by the Commission and be brought forward for possible approval at the next EDC meeting.

### **C. Staff Update on the Business Incubator Feasibility Study**

Ms. Moyers stated that Foote Consulting had completed the interviews for the feasibility study and has met all the timelines identified. She stated the initial findings were favorable with the consultant giving a “go” verdict on pursuing an incubator program. The findings also suggested that an office business incubator would be the most compatible with Queen Creek’s needs.

The full study will be complete by June 30, 2010. Ms. Moyers will assemble the incubator sub-committee to review the document and bring forth potential next steps to the EDC at the next meeting.

### **D. Discussion on Work Program for FY 10/11**

Ms. Cott brought the FY09/10 work plan before the Commission for review and make recommendations for the FY 10/11 Work Plan.

- 1.) *Review all General Plan amendments for conformance with the Economic Development Strategic Plan.* Ms. Cott felt this was still a vital part of the EDC’s role. Commission agreed.
- 2.) *Consider amending the Economic Development Strategic Plan to include a sustainability philosophy across all of the targeted sectors or evaluate adding “sustainable industries” as a new targeted sector.* It was agreed upon by the Commission that an overarching sustainability philosophy was as ready in place for the Town and should remain.
- 3.) *Work with staff to drill down at least two targeted business sectors to more clearly define strategies to attract businesses within those sectors.* Ms. Cott mentioned that research has been conducted on the Aerospace/Aviation and the Health & Wellness sectors. This information will be shared with the EDC. Staff would like to identify niches within the targeted sectors that are appropriate for Queen Creek.
- 4.) *Work with staff to research opportunities/challenges associated with a small business Incubator.* Staff is currently working on feasibility study and will outline steps for next fiscal year.
- 5.) *Work with staff to formalize the program that was used to facilitate the Vestar Queen Creek Marketplace and WDP Cornerstone projects.* This item refers to the Ombudsman Program that is currently in progress. Staff will continue development of program.
- 6.) *Work with staff to develop plans for an Economic Development event or Economic Development Summit to promote economic development opportunities for Queen Creek.* An event committee is currently planning a signature multi-day event that will take place in March 2011 at Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Center. There will be a VIP Economic Development component that will include opportunities to showcase the community and bring in developers. Vice Mayor Barnes suggested inviting hoteliers to this event.
- 7.) *Continue to work with staff to refine the scope of work for a hotel/hospitality study.* This item was put on hold last year due to sluggish economic conditions. The Commission would like staff to be positioning the Town for a hotel when time is appropriate; collecting appropriate data and information related to hotel development. Commissioner Valenzuela mentioned that two more gates will be opening at Phx-Mesa Gateway Airport next year bringing in

- additional visitors. Commissioner Barney suggested having Robert Britton, Mesa CVB back in 6-9 months to report how the hotels are faring. Commission agreed.
- 8.) *Review City of Mesa's Strategic Plan (Gateway Area), receive updates on the Riggs Road Corridor, southeast portion of the community and San Tan Boulevard (county island) to measure how current development or development planned for these areas affects Queen Creek's Economic Strategy.* Staff completed the S.W.O.T. analysis of the area and developed short and long term goals. One key short term goal, updating the Waste Water Master Plan, is currently underway. This item will remain on Action Plan with "next steps" from the S.W.O.T. document.

Commissioner Sossaman suggested having educational updates at the EDC meetings periodically to keep abreast of what is happening throughout the state.

#### **E. Staff Update on the Economic Development Department for FY 10/11.**

Ms. Cott stated that HPEC will transition from Parks and Recreation to the Economic Development Department effective July 1. HPEC is an economic catalyst for the community and staff would like to maximize its economic impact on the Town. Town Council has appropriated over one million dollars for capital improvements including barn stalls, bleachers, and various other improvements to maximize its marketability. Tim Lynch the current General Manager at the Hardy Murphy Coliseum in Ardmore, OK has been hired as the new HPEC General Manager and will begin employment with the Town on August 16<sup>th</sup>. The Communications and Marketing Division is also transitioning to Economic Development. Town Council allocated money this fiscal year for the implementation of the new branding initiative for Queen Creek; this includes strategic items for Economic Development.

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

Commissioner Humphries stated that the ASU campus already has 8,091 students enrolled for the fall, up 20% from last year.

Commissioner Schnepf expressed the farm had a successful peach season with a couple thousand extra guests this year due to an article that was published in a Tucson newspaper. He added that planning for the 4th of July activities are underway and the added contributions from the Chamber of Commerce will make this year's event something to look forward to. He also mentioned several new events will be coming to Schnepf Farms next year.

Commissioner Valenzuela stated that the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport expansion is on track and the fire station is almost complete.

Ms. Moyers mentioned that due to the success of the "Shop Queen Creek for the Holiday" campaign it was decided to expand the program to implement a "BACK TO SCHOOL – Shop Queen Creek" program that will run from July 12 – August 14. The Town is partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and the Queen Creek Performing Arts Center. A publicity plan has been developed for the promotion and will be seen in many media venues.

Economic Development Commission MINUTES

June 23, 2010

Page 5 of 5

4. Adjournment

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Humphries and seconded by Commissioner Sweet, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote (7-0).

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

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John Schroeder, Chairman

*The Minutes dated June 23, 2010 were approved on August 25, 2010.*