



Minutes City Council's Technology, Economic & Community Development Committee

Community Economic Forum

May 27, 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council's Technology, Economic & Community Development Committee's Community Economic Forum held on Wednesday, May 27, 2009, at 5:30 p.m. in the Don Cassano Community Room, Tempe Transportation Center, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 200 East Fifth Street,, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Members Present:

Councilmember Onnie Shekerjian, Chair
Councilmember Corey D. Woods

Council Members Present:

Vice Mayor Shana Ellis

City Staff Present:

Shelley Hearn, Com Relations Mgr
Jan Hort, City Clerk
Charlie Meyer, City Manager
Sheri Wakefield-Saenz

Guests Present:

Alexis Bourdamis, Mood Swings Salon
Jennifer Bucich, Insight
Peter J. Burns, eFactory
Chris Conrey
Eric Emmert, Dorn Policy Group
Eddie Goitia, Monti's
David Harken
Denise Hart, Vestar/Tempe Marketplace
Barbara Khlasa, Rio Salado College
Steve Kiefer, Maricopa Community Colleges
Kathleen Lee, GPEC
Randy Levin, SunCor
Edward Phillips, Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine
Tara Plese, AZ Association of Community Health Centers
Martin Raml, Raml Real Estate & Auctions
Wendy Rogers
Beth Roth, Realtor

Paul Rudolph, eFactory
Randy Sanders
Jeff Sawner
Dave Swanson
Julian Wright, La Bocca Pizzeria

Councilmember Shekerjian called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Welcome

Councilmember Shekerjian welcomed the attendees and summarized that the Technology, Economic and Community Development Council Committee felt it was important to come to the community and ask for ideas. She introduced Vice Mayor Shana Ellis and Councilmember Corey Woods. She summarized the definitions of the different forms of government. The Committee would like to receive input on the role of government and how we can make sure the citizens are profitable and productive. The City recognizes and realizes that the quality of life in this community is directly related to the quality of the economy. After the data is collected tonight, the Committee will sort it, assemble it, and share those things already being done, those things that may not require many resources and could be started quickly, those that might require a lot of resources but might be good to pursue, those that might not be in their realm of being able to do, and those that might be put on the shelf for later. She had everyone introduce themselves.

Participant Brain Storming Session of Key Economic Issues: Workforce, Financial, Business Climate, Retail and Regulatory Issues (permitting, planning and signage)

Councilmember Shekerjian explained that everyone had a pad of sticky notes, and on each sticky note, an idea should be written of something the City could do to improve the economy and take it to the next level. Around the room are stations entitled: Workforce, Financial, Business Climate, Retail, Regulatory Issues and Other. Participants were asked to place their sticky notes under the appropriate topic. She further directed that after all the ideas have been posted, each participant would receive a green tag, a yellow tag and a red tag and prioritize the ideas by placing a green tag on the best idea, yellow for good ideas, and red being third choice. Staff will then organize the ideas and clarify the ideas. She summarized the categories.

- **Workforce**

Value Comment

12	Provide an economic incentive for local hiring i.e. ASU Grade etc to prevent "Brain Drain" Workforce. City of Tempe internships awarded to ASU students. Gives real world experience to students and maybe some will stay to be model students. Utilize non-paid credit only ASU interns. Teen Summer Program - jobs need to do - kids want to do - high schools. Offer more internship programs to help off set possible layoffs and attract local ASU/MCPc students to Tempe.
8	Locate grant/funding for workforce housing to fill up Centerpoint Towers
4	Support Funding increases in education - NOT CUTS

3	Tap existing talent in private sector to create mentorship/support program
1	Affordable housing component to Enterprise Zone
0	Small Biz Education - Programs that empower individuals to make profits pursuing their passionate endeavors.
0	Vacant Spaces (empty homes) - kids do basic lawn maintenance, upkeep
0	Financial incentive for "Tempe", "ASU" employees to purchase & live in Tempe
0	Develop/educate need groups into the workforce (disability, unemployed)
0	Gardening for elderly - 1 adult - kids does gardening for those who cannot afford it.
0	Initiate job shares with City staff positions
0	Encourage "snow birds" into part-time jobs or mentorships
0	Employers can take advantage of Rio Salado College's customized training/education programs delivered at the employer's on-site location.
0	Job Fairs - utilize jobing.com
0	Employers who value their employees training & educational pursuits reward employees by providing opportunities for career advancement
0	Create new partnerships for contract employees to network

- Financial

Value Comment

22	Private Bank Assets - Create loan pool with local banks to help business get financing in this climate
6	Recommend that the City of Tempe use local, Tempe Vendors in order to keep the dollars local and benefit from the tax revenue. www.buylocalaz.com - permission based marketing - local consumers - local business
4	Offer City guaranteed business loans
4	Inventory all rental housing product stock (non-ASU) within 1/2 mile of Mill Ave. - Current condos
3	Incentivize businesses to move to Tempe from surrounding areas. Tax credit, relocation
3	Microloans - for purpose of funding the education start-up costs for micro enterprise
2	Incentives for New Business - new business generates jobs and sales tax
2	Increase revenue with City partnerships - i.e. City "Sponsors"
1	Lower property taxes when possible
0	Create VC fund to support high tech start-ups
0	Adoption of micro lending i.e. Angels In Action
0	Do we have a City advisor re: Business loans?
0	Expand Econ Dev Department to work with small business
0	Expand Econ Development to be all inclusive across

0	Develop infrastructure - make capital improvement to Town Lake public areas (i.e. Beach Park) to attract revenue generating events for the City
0	Education of small business financing options i.e. Community Express
0	Better commercial recycling program for bottles

- **Business Climate**

Value	Comment
12	Start Up Now has held six Start Up Now workshops at the eFactory at 1095 W. Rio Salado Parkway, Suite 104. Since its first workshop on March 4, six businesses have been launched, and about two dozen people have been given new hope and the new opportunity of a new startup business. Start Up Now does not require assistance from the City of Tempe, although any help to build the public awareness needed to get people to know about - and take advantage of - this FREE workshop would surely be appreciated. Start Up Now workshops are not MLM. Not a sales pitch. Not a scam. Just entrepreneurs helping entrepreneurs. The United States was founded on the vitality of entrepreneurial innovation and perseverance. It will be that same spirit that lifts us above the many challenges we experience in our daily life in the current economy. Promote local unique business incentives for independent good business owners to open on Mill.
9	Form a partnership with property owners and realtors to identify vacant space in need of tenants, form business cooperatives with small start up companies to share administrative space and equipment (common copier, secretary, phone service, break room, lobby, etc.) to reduce overhead costs, work out arrangements with vacant building space to reduce rental rates for start up businesses willing to fill the space for 2-5 years. Work with existing tenants in buildings they can no longer afford, to negotiate with property owners for revised contracts to keep tenants vs. losing tenants and not being able to fill the space, maybe allowing shorter contract terms, or reduced utility costs, etc. Work with large building owners on auditing the buildings to assess ways to reduce overhead costs of maintenance, water consumption, reduction and promote solar equipment additions to reduce energy costs, etc. Use this down time to help rehabilitate vacant older buildings and get them ready for new uses. Maybe groups of smaller buildings (like the medical row on Southern) could solarize in a cooperative, putting photovoltaic on all of the smaller buildings and then share energy.

6	Clean streets in downtown. Reduce the negative impact of vagrants, transients, mentally ill, homeless, remove street vendors, and control live music. The reason I have kept my business in Tempe throughout all the years is because I love this City, this City is young and energetic, and this City represents the most vibrant community in the whole State. The City government has also been very good to me and my business. This forum is direct proof of their efforts. Now the fact that we are all facing a huge slow down in the economy brings out a great opportunity for developing business locally. I will certainly collaborate with any City government effort to build a stronger awareness about the wonderful things that Tempe has to offer. We are at the hearth of the metropolitan area. There is no better place to be. I think this City needs a radio program that can be promoted, called "All Things Tempe", this way we are creating a strong bond between citizens and local business. Airtime is almost free and the City government has the budget and the resources. Let's all collaborate. Let's all grow.
6	All businesses need to support/work with each other. Keep 'it in' Tempe
5	Create incubator space - in vacant properties - Bank Owned - Exchange sweat equity
3	Amphitheater Tourist Attraction- creates a world class attraction at Tempe Town Lake. River walk - Infrastructure for events
3	No Impact Fees - Tempe is landlocked
2	Facilitate development of research facilities at affordable rates.
2	Use incentives on a case-by-case basis (no blanket policy)
2	Grants - Read Tuesday May 26 Wall Street Journal - Success of Kalamazoo - Toledo to attract start-ups.
2	Create Networking Events
0	Tempe should encourage new high tech companies (both hardware and software). These companies should be characterized as platform technologies. For more clarification contact Gary F. Witting
0	Over regulated Town Lake fees/fences/permits - vendor fees and park permit fees too high for Town Lake
0	Police Enforcement Issues - Balance law enforcement activities - discourage disruptive behavior without being too heavy handed. Heavy handedness discourages people from frequenting restaurants & bars in Tempe.

0	Support companies that bring new dollars in - tax benefits
0	Facilitate upscale events - wine culinary events - Tempe is lacking this type of draw
0	Small business loans for independent business owners - encourage & promote independent businesses!
0	Unified "shop at home" "eat at home" promotion by City to eat and shop in Tempe.
0	Encourage financially viable business collaborations through the creation of a collaborative center bringing businesses together.
0	Contact in the City to info on spaces for lease
0	Metered parking rates double time this summer - seasonal?
0	Business climate: Only 5 AZ companies named to 2009 Fortune 500. Work with ASU (people resource) and state to lure major companies from CA (high tax state) to AZ. Large companies spread the wealth and attract more investment.
0	Consolidation & crass - marketing of & by local networking groups

- Retail

Value Comment

11	Start a weekly/bi-weekly "Farmers Market" on Mill Ave 9 months of year. Model San Luis Obispo, CA.
9	Loosen up the stringent sign ordinance Allow sandwich board signs for sidewalk More parking signs in downtown Tempe
6	Sell advertising graphics on vacant retail spaces
6	Since Tempe is near ASU promote more high tech and alternative energy companies to move to Tempe. These jobs typically pay more which means more support for local businesses.

5	Position created or enhanced to bring small business to Tempe as local advocate as opposed to going after national companies.
4	Lakeside restaurants and retail
4	One year sales tax abatement for new retail/restaurant
3	Use DTC assessments to offset rent costs
2	Strong enforcement for aggressive pan handling
2	Contact in the City to advise re: retail space availability & comps
0	Mill Ave businesses need walk in traffic. Mill also needs to bring certain types of businesses back. Make Mill Avenue car free. Keep all the east-west routes open but close north & south from 4th all the way to University. Make the entire north-south span a park-like area open only to pedestrians and bicycles. I've been working on Mill since 2000 and have watched it change quite a bit, I used to spend more time on Mill but the quality of businesses has declined so much so I rarely spend time on Mill outside of lunch during the work week. The mom & pop independent stores are what made Mill, now those are gone. Also missing are the great bars that Mill used to have, Beeloe's, Balboa Cafe, Ziggy's, Coconut Club, The Loft, Long Wong's etc. People need reasons to come to Mill. Figure out what the folks want and then give it to them. Lots of people were hopeful when the Brickyard came to town; the possibility of a grocer on Mill Ave was quite exciting. But what was realized, ASU using the majority of the space for classrooms, is not what brings business to Mill. Mill NEEDS a grocer, something like Trader Joe's or other small market style food store. If you don't want to go car free permanently, go car free once a week or something on the weekend. Other cities have done this with great success. Look at what New York, Miami, Sacramento, and other cities have done.
0	Encourage infill of vacant store fronts
0	Allow sidewalk extensions for businesses to retail on sidewalks
0	Graphics on vacant spaces
0	Subsidize parking vouchers for retailers to give to patrons

0	Encourage local businesses that offer unique service/goods
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- Regulatory Issues

Value	Comment
13	Bring back walking beat officer in downtown Tempe
12	Accelerate permit process without losing proper City guidelines City permits ASCAP/BML - Fees/permit reduced for live entertainment Relax cost of entertainment permits for businesses - encourage not discourage Entertainment Corridor along light rail by easing regulation Don't close major streets for construction at same time - McClintock/Rural
11	Allow for more creative signage solutions that allow for "art" in signs Relax temporary signage criteria to promote events, festivals, etc. Big banners, balloons, etc. Geographic appropriate sign code
10	Align the PAD & MU zoning process Zoning code update - shopping center & mixed use - PAD coupled with MU
6	Redo signage regulations for urban vs. suburban - encourage creativity
6	Incentivize permit process with City of Tempe for installation of solar panels onto commercial office buildings. In other words, "grease the skids".
6	I think you should try to partner with civic plaza in phoenix now that the light rail is in to get convention visitors to town - or advertise with them somehow. Work it in reverse also - advertise you can stay in Tempe and attend conventions, too. The entryway/gateway to Tempe should be the light rail stop at Mill. You also need to do something with the flour mill. And get more, more, parking. Also, don't give the store away to developers....give downtown mill business' tax breaks based on how long their shop is or has been open. Give them some incentive to stay rather than giving to a fly-by-night developer that just wants to turn a fast buck.

0	<p>The Light Rail has been a giant boost to the local economy. There are a few things that would assist customers to navigate the down town district.</p> <p>Workable user friendly location for the city approved way finding signs. Maintain and relocate news paper racks as they are an ugly blight as well as a physical obstruction on our sidewalks. Unregulated street vendors are taking away money from tax paying merchants as well as creating hang out areas for transient people. Is it possible to monitor the selling of items off the tree beds? Many Raised tree beds are currently unsightly; can all the trees have metal street level grates, or redesign the beds that need to be high for the trees root ball? This would really clean up the street look and make it more inviting to customers coming off the light rail. Are there any plans for public restrooms? Many merchants and customers are asking why the city has taken away convenient parking for the 4th to 5th street alley meter area and how is this affordable?</p>
0	Need more sensitivity in construction (road) noise - business interruption hours
0	Regulate Mill to reduce carnival - like atmosphere - control vending/music
0	Review & consolidate management of special events in the downtown & Town Lake areas, and develop long term strategy to maximize economic impact
0	Ease the red tape process for licensing tax, business, liquor

- Other

Value Comment

16	We need a Convention Center in downtown Tempe
10	Keep Mill all small, homegrown businesses. Avoid bringing too many chains. Keeps Tempe unique.
7	Modern Day Streetcar
4	Expand the Orbit system south of I-60.

3	Allow Business owners (non-resident) to serve on City Boards and Commissions.
0	Art - Promote more public works of art
0	Elementary school field trips to Mill Ave, Four Mill, Beach Park, Town Lake, etc.
0	Host more events like the Tempe Festival of Arts to attract people and encourage spending
0	Need a slogan/phrase "take it to Tempe"
0	0 cost - financial lottery for families allows families to spend \$ instead of being in debt
0	More brain-trust meetings like tonight
0	Create - employ Tempe Residents - employer supported
0	Turn empty commercial buildings into eFactory & eFactory Xpress facility
0	More events focused on food (like salsa competition)

Synopsis of Key Issues and Wrap-up

The priorities were summarized. The Committee will provide all attendees with the list of suggestions and any follow-up information which will include priorities and what is on the list that the City is already doing.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Prepared by: Jan Hort
Reviewed by: Shelley Hearn

Jan Hort
City Clerk