

JOHN F. COOK
MAYOR



JOYCE WILSON
CITY MANAGER

CITY COUNCIL
ANN MORGAN LILLY, DISTRICT 1
SUSANNAH M. BYRD, DISTRICT 2
EMMA ACOSTA, DISTRICT 3
CARL ROBINSON, DISTRICT 4
MICHEL NOE, DISTRICT 5
EDDIE HOLGUIN JR., DISTRICT 6
STEVE ORTEGA, DISTRICT 7
CORTNEY NILAND, DISTRICT 8

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
10th Floor Conference Room, City Hall
March 13, 2011

The City Council met at the above place and date. Meeting was called to order at 3:07 p.m. Mayor John Cook present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Ann Morgan Lilly, Susie Byrd, Emma Acosta, Carl Robinson, Michiel Noe and Eddie Holguin. Representatives Cortney Carlisle Niland and Steve Ortega had requested to be excused.

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AGENDA

Discussion and action on the Master Plan for the I-10 Corridor Aesthetic Improvement Project identified in the 2008 Comprehensive Mobility Plan. Focus area specified for the study: I-10 corridor from Hawkins Boulevard interchange on the east to the Executive Center Boulevard interchange on the west. [Museums and Cultural Affairs Department, Sean McGlynn, (915) 541-4898]

Mayor Cook thanked the Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority members for being present and he asked that City Manager Joyce Wilson introduce the meeting.

Ms. Wilson explained that previous presentations on this topic had been given, but noted this is the first one for the full City Council.

Ms. Wilson explained the funding for the project.

Mr. Sean McGlynn, Director, Museum and Cultural Affairs Department, explained the project is to educate and elevate our local artists and their art while beautifying the community.

Ms. Vicki Scuri, Artist, gave a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in City Clerk's office) on proposed aesthetic improvements to:

- ✓ Trowbridge, Paisano and Chelsea – being the largest grouping
- ✓ Cotton neighborhood—diverse, railroad, residential
- ✓ Airway, Hawkins, and Geronimo – retail
- ✓ 7/8 downtown bridges

The focus will be on Airway as the demonstration project.

Some of the aesthetics on the corridors will be:

Trees – the biggest “bang for the buck”
Textured bridges – tactile quality to the concrete is low maintenance and ages well
Each site will have its own color

The progression of the projects will be:

Airway

Downtown

Railroad Bridges

Hawkins

Executive

Then east to west, Geronimo, Trowbridge, Paisano, Chelsea, Copia, Piedras, and Cotton

Tucson, Arizona has maintained an aesthetic vision for streetscaping for approximately 20 years. They have committed to using native plants. In medians they have removed hardscaping and installed native plants that now have matured, creating a more appealing environment.

Representative Acosta thanked Ms. Scuri, Mr. Sean McGlynn, Ms. Scuri's interns and Ms Joyce Wilson, City Manager for working on this. She questioned what methods would they use to go out to the public? What is the process?

Ms. Scuri stated that all participants will have a say in how the projects are run: workshops, charrettes, one-on-one interviews, etc. She has used all of these methods. But she cautioned the Council that she does not see charrettes as a solution, but only as a brainstorming method.

Representative Acosta stated that Chelsea, right now, has only concrete and was wondering if we could do murals there.

Ms. Scuri stated that Chelsea has the best opportunity for landscaping; that murals are possible, but they require maintenance; staining of concrete is better in that it is longer lasting.

Representative Acosta stated that it will be 20 years before we get to Chelsea for the landscaping. For now the murals there would allow our community of muralists to express their talents while making the site better.

Ms. Scuri explained that murals have to be repainted every five to 10 years.

Representative Acosta asked that we get TxDOT engaged in this and show them this is what the community wants and that it is good for the community.

Ms. Scuri said that they have contacted TxDOT and asked them for their 20 year plan.

Representative Acosta would like the City to pursue TxDOT's involvement. She asked about the aesthetics on the Border Highway TxDOT construction project. She noted she has had trouble getting information even on sound walls. The aesthetics seem to be relegated to the sidelines or are not even being considered. She asked that the CRMMA Board consider aesthetics in the approval of any projects as an integral component, not as an afterthought.

Ms. Scuri said that pedestrian issues are also very important and they have been neglected. She explained that pedestrian access brings "buy-in" from the residents and a sense of ownership and identity.

Representative Noe asked if there is a reason the plan for improvements stops at Hawkins. His constituents will want to know.

Ms. Joyce Wilson, City Manager, stated that part of the rationale is that the newer areas of town have more aesthetics build into their access points to I-10 than in the urban core.

TxDOT has a project for the Spaghetti Bowl area and they have adapted that plan to complement Ms. Scuri's work.

Representative Noe stated that he would challenge anyone that Yarbrough and Lee Trevino have any aesthetics build in. The East side seems to be have been left out of the plan.

Mayor Cook stated that he thought that TxDOT has been focusing on aesthetics in the last few years: Redd Road, Spur 601, and the area out by Zaragosa.

Representative Byrd questioned, "Why start on Airway rather than downtown which is the City's focus for improvements?"

Ms. Joyce Wilson stated 1) We have a grant for the Airway exchange only and that money can be leveraged. 2) The large size of the downtown project(s) is such that the cost estimate is more than 10 million dollars. Airway is a good, more representative and manageable pilot for what a typical intersection will cost. TxDOT is interested in a joint funding plan going forward for improvements.

Representative Byrd stated she is very supportive of the efforts and of starting at Airway. She asked that the plan address the very skinny sidewalks on the bridges as they are a concern.

Ralph Adame, CRMMA told Representative Noe that they have no trouble working with TxDOT, but it is a question of finding funding. He told Representative Acosta that the CRMMA will start asking TXDOT about the aesthetics for projects.

Representative Robinson asked about bird droppings and if the material that is being used will be easy to wash off. Ms. Scuri explained there are ways to deter birds, but some will still come. She said that the installation of lines of prickly metal material can eliminate some perching sites. Also she stated that powder coating or marine grade paint is being considered due to its durability. She noted we are looking at 40 years of deferred maintenance on these sites.

Mayor Cook stated we will need a motion to approve proceeding with the Airway focus area as the first project.

Ms. Rosario Holguin, CRMMA Board Member stated they would work with TxDOT on aesthetics as the work proposed.

Jacob Rodriguez, Legislative Aide for Representative Niland stated that she asked him to express her full support for this project and those that follow.

Mayor Cook said that this is a four way partnership: TxDOT, the City of El Paso, CRMMA, and Keep El Paso Beautiful.

Representative Holguin questioned Representative Acosta that her motion authorized Airway only?

Representative Acosta explained that "Yes, this is only for Airway."

Representative Holguin stated that he does not have a problem with Airway, but he does have a problem that the other proposed sites are not fairly distributed around the city.

Motion:

Motion made by Representative Acosta, seconded by Representative Lilly to Approve proceeding with Airway focus areas as the first project:

AYES: Representatives Lilly, Acosta, Robinson, Noe and Holguin

NAYS; None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Representative Byrd

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Motion made by Representative Robinson, seconded by Representative Noe, and unanimously carried to adjourn this meeting at 4:16 p.m.
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APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

Richarda Duffy Momsen, City Clerk