

**THE WORK SESSION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
OF BENSON, ARIZONA HELD DECEMBER 17, 2007
AT CITY HALL AT 6:00 P.M.**

**MAYOR FENN
OPENED THE MEETING AT 6:00 P.M WITH
THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.**

**PRESENT WERE: MAYOR FENN, VICE MAYOR KING,
COUNCILMEMBERS LODZINSKI, McGOFFIN, (arriving at 6:40 p.m.)
SACCO, SUAGEE and TIPTON**

Invocation: Mayor Fenn introduced Reverend Dwayne Hinskey, Benson Church of our Savior who then gave the invocation.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

Discussion and possible
action regarding the Southeast
Arizona Economic Development
Group and support for economic
development in the City and the
region; possible discussion
concerning the Group's and the
City's objectives for economic
development:

Mayor Fenn opened this item for discussion. Mr. Larry Dempster, Southeast Arizona Economic Development Group (SAzEDG) then addressed Council with a resolution for Council to consider. Mr. Dempster stated the overall objective of SAzEDG is to bring businesses and jobs to Benson as well as the Southeastern Arizona area.

Councilmember Lodzinski then addressed Council stating he had been interested in Economic Development and had discussed opportunities for economic growth in Benson. Councilmember Lodzinski stated he had met with the Martin Roush, City Manager to see what could be done to stimulate existing businesses' growth. Councilmember Lodzinski also stated he could see SAzEDG working with the City for economic development, recognizing the differences that each entity can perform. Councilmember Lodzinski continued stating he would like to see Council work with SAzEDG to put a package together for prospective businesses and interested parties. Councilmember concluded stating Council should not act hastily when opportunities are presented.

George Scott, SAzEDG then stated a meeting regarding business retention was going to be held on December 18, 2007 and invited Council to attend. Mr. Scott stated one way SAzEDG could benefit the City would be to bring forward these entities that could contribute to economic development through presentations, classes, training, etc.

David DiPeso, SAzEDG then addressed Council with the process a developer normally follows when they are interested in Benson. Mr.

DiPeso stated there are many things a private economic development group can do to enhance economic development, such as accept land donations, give tax write-offs, apply for certain grants or seek other funding solutions that wouldn't necessarily be available to the City.

Mayor Fenn then stated the Council needs to decide what direction should be taken concerning economic development and possible businesses.

Councilmember Suagee then stated that is why she feels a subcommittee is necessary to determine what direction should be taken.

Councilmember Suagee stated she would be interested in businesses that don't negatively affect the environment.

Councilmember Sacco agreed stating that is why he would like to see hi-tech companies come to Benson.

Vice Mayor King then stated he felt the airport could be used to assist with economic development, as well as the proximity of the trains in the City. Vice Mayor King stated a possibility to utilize the trains would be warehouses for a distribution center.

David DiPeso stated with Sierra Vista's water problems, a lot of prospects will be looking to move out of Sierra Vista over the next five years.

Councilmember Suagee asked what relationship SAzEDG had with Cochise College and Mr. Scott answered stating they have been working with Cochise College on Asset Management for Benson, and are currently gathering the same information from other cities and towns in Cochise County. They will then put this information together to market to prospective developers. Mr. Scott then stated Cochise College has offered to set up classes and training if a large prospect comes to Benson.

Councilmember Tipton stated Council should look at all options for economic development and take the best direction, which may be with SAzEDG or another entity. Councilmember Tipton stated the subcommittee should help the Council decide what direction should be taken in economic development.

Councilmember Sacco then stated SAzEDG has the advantage of already knowing Benson and could get started right away.

Mr. Dempster then addressed Council stating SAzEDG was going to look for higher employers and stated this group was not only going to be reactive to prospects, but was going to seek out prospective businesses. Mr. Dempster stated he felt it was an advantage to market the county, and this would benefit all. Mr. Dempster then stated SAzEDG would work with other groups for economic development.

Vice Mayor King stated he would like to see Council and SAzEDG work together with open minds for the benefit of the City before leaving the meeting for personal reasons.

Mayor Fenn then addressed Council's comments stating economic development needs to be start somewhere and he hoped both the subcommittee and SAzEDG were successful in their efforts. Mayor Fenn then stated the proposed resolution would be for moral support and to promote cooperation with SAzEDG and feels this would be a benefit all in the City.

Councilmember Suagee stated she felt uneasy about conduction action at a work session.

Mr. Dempster stated that while a resolution wasn't necessary, SAzEDG would like to know Council would support them in their efforts.

Councilmember Sacco moved to approve the Resolution provided to Council. Seconded by Mayor Fenn. Motion passed 3-2 with Councilmembers McGoffin and Tipton voting nay and Councilmember Suagee abstaining.

Adjournment:

Councilmember McGoffin moved to adjourn at 7:05 P.M. Seconded by Councilmember Lodzinski. Motion passed 6-0.

Mark M. Fenn, Mayor

ATTEST:

Vicki L. Vivian, City Clerk