

**THE JOINT WORK SESSION
OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BENSON, ARIZONA
AND THE BENSON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
HELD OCTOBER 13, 2008 AT 6:00 P.M.
AT CITY HALL, 120 W. 6TH STREET, BENSON, ARIZONA**

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

**PRESENT WERE: MAYOR FENN,
COUNCILMEMBERS BONCQUET, LAMBERT, LODZINSKI, McGOFFIN, and SACCO
ABSENT WAS: VICE MAYOR KING**

**ALSO PRESENT FROM THE BENSON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
WERE: CHAIRMAN LODZINSKI
MEMBERS: LORI McGOFFIN, GEORGE SCOTT and DIANNE TIPTON
ABSENT WERE: JIM COX, ERNIE GRAVES, DAVID WELSH and DAVID WOODALL**

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion and possible direction concerning all aspects of the City of Benson Economic Development Strategic Plan

Mark Fenn invited Chairman of the Benson Economic Development Subcommittee John Lodzinski to address Council regarding this item. Chairman Lodzinski addressed Council stating the Benson Economic Development Subcommittee had developed the City of Benson Economic Development Strategic Plan to be used as a tool, was an assessment of what Benson has to offer, what Benson wants in relation to economic development and what to do to achieve those goals. Chairman Lodzinski then stated the Subcommittee would like to obtain Council comments, take the plan back to the subcommittee to incorporate those comments and bring a final plan back to Council for action. Chairman Lodzinski then stated the Subcommittee would dissolve and the City could then operate from the plan, until such time, it was determined the plan needed revision. Chairman Lodzinski stated the final plan would be on the City's website to give the City's assets, goals and plans.

Chairman Lodzinski then led the review of the plan. Chairman Lodzinski stated the City's unemployment rate could be inaccurate since the State used the last census and established a ratio with the County-wide unemployment rate and continued using the same ratio to determine the annual unemployment rate. Chairman Lodzinski stated the City's unemployment rate should change with the census to be performed in 2010.

Mayor Fenn asked Chairman Lodzinski if he would like for Council to comment during the review with Chairman Lodzinski indicating yes. Mayor Fenn then stated the construction sales tax may not attract development. Councilmember Lodzinski stated the construction sales tax could be amended to indicate it is a source of funding to be only used for capital projects, indicating the City was practicing sound financial discipline. Mayor Fenn then stated a comparison regarding impact fees could be added showing Benson was still lower than the adjacent communities.

Member George Scott stated the Southeast Arizona Economic Development Group had been working on gathering that information, contacting Bright Futures Consulting Group in Tucson and meeting with John Strobeck, who agreed to provide that information for them. Mr. Scott stated this information would show builders and developers the advantages of building in Benson

instead of Pima County. Mr. Scott stated the study and the marketing plan would need funding and the Southeast Arizona Economic Development Group could bring the project to Council to see if they would consider funding for the project.

Interim City Manager Glenn Nichols mentioned in the Economic Outlook Long Term Projection, the reference to Smith Ranch was deleted by the Subcommittee. Mr. Nichols then stated under the Airport Industrial Complex, the plan needed to be corrected to state "Aviation Drive" not "Airport Road" and under Union Pacific Holdings, the plan should read "Fourth Street" instead of "Fourth Avenue". Chairman Lodzinski then continued the review of the plan. Mayor Fenn then suggested removing the "lack of a better performing Chamber", changing "lack of a professional Fire Dept." to "lack of a full-time Fire Dept" and changing "lack of home improvement and evening shopping" to "lack of home improvement evening shopping" in the Weaknesses Section of the Community Capacity Assessment. After discussion, it was suggested to change "planned community for aviation" to "planned community and/or business park for aviation" under the Opportunities Section of the Community Capacity Assessment.

Chairman Lodzinski then continued the review of plan, stating the education section should be amended to drop the closed charter school and to add the private schools and their performance.

After concluding the review of the City of Benson Economic Development Strategic Plan, discussion was had on keeping the plan in focus and active. Chairman Lodzinski stated after a City Manager was established, a meeting could be held with some of the major businesses in town to gather opinions and comments to do an assessment to determine potential for growth and problems that may affect economic development. Chairman Lodzinski then stated these meetings could also be held with realtors, small businesses and the chamber members to gather the same information. Chairman Lodzinski stated the Council could establish or activate the Subcommittee again at a specific time in the future to update and review the plan if it were needed. Chairman Lodzinski then stated the communication between the City Manager and local businesses should be open so Council is aware of the business economy in the City. Mayor Fenn stated he felt it was critical to have Department Head buy-in on the plan, especially the Planning & Zoning Department and the Public Works Department for the plan to be successful.

Member George Scott then addressed Council stating the City of Benson Economic Development Strategic Plan, along with the Asset Inventory are a couple of the tools that the City will have to show prospective builders and developers that the City has a plan of what we want the City to look like and what direction we would like the City to go and will need to be revised every 6 months or every year. Mr. Scott then stated the Asset Inventory completed by Bob Nilson put Benson ahead of Sierra Vista and all the other cities and towns in Cochise County.

Mayor Fenn then thanked the Subcommittee for their work on this plan and stated a final draft will be brought to Council in the near future for Council action.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember McGoffin moved to adjourn at 6:37 p.m. Seconded by Councilmember Sacco. Motion passed 6-0.

Mark M. Fenn, Mayor

ATTEST:

Vicki L. Vivian, City Clerk