

Public Budget Forum
Monday, November 24, 1997
6:00 pm City-County Auditorium
Notes of the Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. Councilmembers present: Mayor Janet Terry, Mike Sutherland, Jack Scott and Gene Kinsey. Mayor Janet Terry welcomed those present, stated the purpose and introduced the City Manager Mark Achen.

City Manager Mark Achen gave a brief overview of the proposed budget. He summarized the slides as presented. He identified sales tax as the City's largest revenue, being 45% of the revenue. He referred to a graph representing the City's sales tax history in the last 7 years. Next he referred to the property tax collections and stated they are a small percentage of the City's revenue. He advised that the General Fund provides the funds for most City operations. He stated that there is discretion in expending these funds. The bulk of these revenues are taxes. Sales tax collections are a direct result of the local and regional economy.

There were no questions for the City Manager.

Public Comments

In the audience, besides City staff, were Ron Maupin, Karen Hayashi, Chris Barker, Bruce Bengé, Ed Chamberlain, Jim Leany, Doug Simmons, Linda Villa, Lonnie Duke, and Steve Jennings.

The Mayor invited the public to come forward and make comments.

Ron Maupin, 1429 Grand Avenue. Regarding Two Rivers Plaza. Had photo of old hotel that was torn down to build Two Rivers. Referring to the Growth Plan, strong core downtown. Arts and shopping. Doesn't make sense to build convention center on the outskirts of town. Two Rivers being used as a community center rather than a convention center. Need to upgrade - including teleconferencing. Central core slumbering. Take one percent from each budget to allow for upgrade downtown. Taxing district formed downtown to fix the streets in 1962. Consider having VCB taking over the convention center.

Jack Scott asked if the convention center should be self-sufficient. Ron said great idea but don't know of any other that is.

Karen Hayashi, chair of DDA, agrees with Ron. Twenty year investment in Two Rivers, urge CC to find a way to invest in and protect this community asset.

Bruce Bengé, also in favor of Two Rivers expansion. Used by entire community, not just a downtown interest.

Steve Jennings, merchant downtown, a lot of people investing resources in downtown and like Council to keep that in mind. Two Rivers could be a major asset. Las Vegas and Atlanta are the only two convention centers that pay for themselves.

Ed Chamberlain, in favor of expansion of Two Rivers Plaza. The subsidy for Two Rivers should not increase, use that same subsidy to provide greater services. DDA and City have invested in that area. Development dependent on upgrade of Two Rivers and of the appearance of the area.

Jim Leany, support of Two Rivers project. Sales tax is a huge issue, That's where the money is going to come from. Every city has expanding commercial districts but there is only one

downtown. Cities are judged by their downtown. I can foresee businesses generating more tax revenues once this area gets going. Lots of traffic generated.

Doug Simmons, 653 Round Hill, Enstroms Candies, some time since Two Rivers received any attention. Community growing, need to expand and enhance it now. Might need two centers at some time. He is committed to the downtown.

Linda Villa, 1134 Rood, distributed Riverside Task Force newsletter. Thanked Council for all the Riverside improvements. She represents committee for the realignment alternatives. Project in ten year plan, a flood dike starting in 2004. The alignment is as proposed by the committee. She supports that recommendation. Appreciates improvements made to the neighborhood.. Working on getting a community center in Riverside.

No other citizens present so conclude the meeting.

City Manager concluded by stating that additional comments can be received by Council and staff over the next couple of weeks.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.