

Transcription of Podcast Episode 393: Bryan Montgomery, Indio City Manager

SPEAKERS

Bryan Montgomery, Bob Firing

Note: This transcription was computer-generated and may contain typographical errors.

Bob Firing 00:00

Good afternoon Shadow Hills. Well, the world seems to have discovered Indio. Things are popping around here. And I did a podcast with Bryan Montgomery, our city manager, a couple of months ago. But so much has happened, that I think it's time to bring you all up to date. So Bryan is back, Brian, welcome to the podcast.

Bryan Montgomery 00:25

Thank you, Bob.

Bob Firing 00:27

And so let's start with some old news first. You know, we've got Pulte going in with a 1500 or so home development right next to us. Have there been any developments there in the last couple of months?

Bryan Montgomery 00:46

I know they're just wrapping up, they record their final map with the county and are working on with us in conjunction with the city of Indio. The issue related to the electrical substation that's required for that area to provide some, some redundancy and service in the area. So we've been working on that diligently. And, and I believe they're, they're just working on their whole marketing plan and, and getting ready to do their initial construction work. So well, we haven't seen any of those permits, yet. They are now approved and able to proceed with those.

Bob Firing 01:22

And just for a timeframe. I mean, there's quite a bit of work that needs to be done. I mean, I think it's going to be at least a year before we see any sticks going up there. Right?

Bryan Montgomery 01:33

Yes, I think that's true. And there is as you know, I've talked in the past of a lack of electrical infrastructure and various areas in the community throughout the Coachella Valley. And that alone will be some delay for them. While they can do some initial earthwork, getting some streets and some initial models up and so forth, the overall construction and development and rollout of the whole site is going to take just at least a couple of years just for the power infrastructure to arrive. So that you're right, it's, you know, the approval takes quite a bit of time and the approval happens. And then there's this waiting period, while the design and civil engineering work is behind the scenes being put together. And so you're probably right, I'd be surprised if maybe by the end of the year, they would better speak to this

obviously than I but probably by the end of the year, they could be out there and start doing some of their initial grading and work. That's, I say the end of the year, that's 2024.

Bob Firing 02:43

Okay, and the other major thorn in our side out here is the Coachella Valley Water District Project, which is got things all torn up over it 40th and Jefferson, are you involved in that at all and didn't have any idea what's going on?

Bryan Montgomery 03:02

Well, we do strive to be informed of what they're doing. And, and from time to time, I've had to suggest some changes and some different dust control measures and so forth. But unfortunately, we do not have any jurisdiction over the project. The Water District is a separate entity, Coachella Valley Water District has their own governing board their own management structure, their own rules or regulations. And some of their regulations also come from, from even the federal government. So they operate independently and don't need our permission. For really anything that's done there. The project is exceptional is important for the whole community and it will be flood control safety issue that we need in that area. So we're very supportive. But it's on a day to day basis. We're just not we're not involved and nor do we have any real impact be quite honest on how they're going about the process. I know they've been trying to coordinate with the schools and they've talked to the folks there Shadow Hills and try to inform everybody of what's going on. But to your question, no, the city is not in charge the project and really has minimal influence over them. An example might be even a school district within a city that may operate you know, the city just doesn't have any operational jurisdictional control over how the school operates or what they do on their site. I know it's for a typical resident that's frustrating. It may sound like we're passing the buck but it's just the reality of how it is.

Bob Firing 04:40

Well, we are moving along. We the Circle K has opened at Varner and Jefferson. And do you anticipate any other development in nodes corner lots in the near future?

Bryan Montgomery 04:58

Yes, I do. And I And there continues to be interest. I think they were waiting as you and I maybe spoke last time for more rooftops. But now that the Pulte project has been approved, knowing that those rooftops will be coming in the retailers will be much more excited about looking at those other parcels on those corners all commercial around that Varner Jefferson area. So much like you see, at other interchanges, whether it be Washington or even Monroe that's developing further, and Jackson, you'll see that happening there at Jefferson. So it's a matter of time and the confidence that these retailers need that those homes and consumers are really going to be there for them. I would expect some sort of small grocery, there.

Bob Firing 05:47

Our residents are quite pleased about that.

Bryan Montgomery 05:50

Yeah, I would I think that's just inevitable with all of the homes there are Talavera. What's existing, and then another 1500 homes, very convenient off the interchange as well, we have you know, 10s of 1000s of cars that pass I-10 every day, and we pull them off at Jackson and Monroe and Jefferson would be another opportunity for sure. Okay, but as well as the other businesses that will be around that intersection.

Bob Firing 06:19

Okay and just one more I notice we've got a there's a big new auto center going in on Varner Road, as you go up toward Washington Street. How do you know how many auto centers are there now and how many more there room for?

Bryan Montgomery 06:37

There is room, a few vacant lots there. For, say three or four more. The one under construction right now is a Honda Unicars. So Honda is there now. And this would be a larger superstore with pre owned vehicles, and storage for their new vehicles as well. So well, I know inventory has been low. Recently, due to different issues and supply chain, all of these retail or these auto dealers are finally getting a larger allocation of vehicles. And in most places, they store some of them off site and bring them out as needed. So that Honda site will be for pre owned as well as some storage and service as well for Honda. So it's a fairly large building. And there is a parcel to the immediate west of that I believe, and then two or three more to answer your question.

Bob Firing 07:37

This is becoming a very major auto center location.

Bryan Montgomery 07:43

It is.

Bob Firing 07:45

Okay, so let's move on to the big new development. You had mentioned that someone had assembled the all the property along Varner Road between Jefferson and Monroe. And they are, what are what are they planning there?

Bryan Montgomery 08:05

It's a true mixed use development in that there are plans for some housing, as well as some retail as you get closer to Monroe and Avenue 42. And then some logistics business park buildings are also planned. It's a 200 acre site. So you can see why they're able to do this mix with the retail closer to Monroe, housing buffering along 42, and then up against the freeway, this logistics structures because there'll be multiple structures in the plan. So they have shown us some tentative layout of what they would like to do. It is allowed in that area to construct all that they're planning how they're going through their environmental documents right now and their studies that are required by the state. And I think we expect some sort of presentation during the year next year. This is another one two points, things take longer than maybe anyone would like them to take. They also need some electrical infrastructure there and they are aware of that and doing their planning. So it's one of those unique developments that has

a little bit of everything. And I think it is important that we provide some job opportunities, which of those logistics sites, it's a ripe spot for more commercial. As you have In-N-Out and Raising Canes, new facilities are going in on the east side of Monroe at that location. There's room for more on the other side. And then housing is always an issue. So they haven't shown us exactly what their housing prototype is. But whether it be some townhomes along there and some other you know, different sizes of housing, buffering along 42 We certainly need that as well. So that's the plan that on that large site.

Bob Furring 09:58

And is there a timetable? On the In-N-Out and Raising Canes as far as you know?

Bryan Montgomery 10:04

Yes, I believe all that during the next year, you know, doing some preliminary dirt work now I believe it's fenced off.

Bob Furring 10:12

And that's sort of by the Quick Quack carwash, right?

Bryan Montgomery 10:16

Yeah, that's yeah, right there to the immediate west of the carwash is where these two would go. So right as you really come off of the eastbound ramp of I-10. There, Monroe, it's to the right, heading north. They both would be into there and there was actually room for others in there as well. We've heard some other retailers be interested to from, from Panera to Sumo Dog. I know a fitness centers plan there as well. So I'm not sure the exact time and I should find that out. But over the course of the next year, I'm sure those will be under construction.

Bob Furring 10:55

And there's still some big pads down by where the Walmart is. And east of there is, is there any activity there? Or is that still waiting for developments.

Bryan Montgomery 11:11

We hear some things. Actually another hotel is a potential there. And there's some other uses that have been discussed, those as you move that direction are primarily a business park related. But those are critical to help provide jobs closer to where people live. And we look forward to those jobs center type structures that were there planned in there. So you're right there six or seven lots in there that are available for that type of use. And we hear rumblings from time to time and you know, every once in a while, they'll just come out of the blue and see if we're going to do it now. So I would expect that over the next year as well. You know, it's we like to be on the cutting edge of knowing exactly what's going on. But sometimes we can talk with people for two, three years and then from one day to the next. They bring in their application to actually build so we expect that along better to there is some growth within that commercial center as you get closer to Jackson new Handels ice cream and the Pollo Loco is in their new there's also another spot next to handles it's available for another retail spot. And I might be jumping ahead of you but just at last night's city council meeting moving further east on 42 in Jackson near the city golf course. A Chick Fil A, Dutch Brothers, and a sit down restaurant as well as one other restaurant hasn't been identified were approved by city council so Chick Fil A's right now probably the

most popular quiz quick serve restaurant in the country and they selected that spot dude, all that's going on there.

Bob Firing 12:56

That's great.

Bryan Montgomery 12:58

It'll mean some good, good revenue for the community as well as some more jobs each one of these plays the retailers are required to pay more overtime, these are becoming jobs that compete with housekeeping and landscaping and so forth and provide other opportunities to our residents.

Bob Firing 13:19

Great. Okay. And just is there anything else that's in the offing where the Winco or across the street where that where the big Target used to be. Anything in there?

Bryan Montgomery 13:35

Yeah, that's on that side is where the handles have just opened up and there is a hotel there, it's under construction that should wrap up and open early next year. near the Winco on the other side, we of course Texas Roadhouse is now open, wildly popular, they're pretty early. We suggest to folks if you if you log in online to set your reservation, then they give you a quick text and you show up within 10 minutes you're in so people are learning that to get in there. There is a there are two retail spots there that have submitted for a Tillys and a Skechers. Skechers are the shoes and Tillys is kind of a mix of clothing and other knickknacks type of things. So those are planned right there next to Five Below on that site. And more recently, and many know that have Tesla's primarily but there's a large expansion there of the charging stations for Tesla at that location.

Bob Firing 14:45

And while most of our residents are primarily interested in what's going on north of the freeway, there's still there's still a lot of development going on in downtown Indio. The farmers market is going strong on Saturdays right?

Bryan Montgomery 14:59

Yeah, so that's Saturday morning from 10 to two. Friday nights, we have our food truck Fridays. So on the same site here, this is on Towne and Bliss near City Hall. Just this past week, Friday night for food truck Fridays, we had our tree lighting ceremony and we have over 3000 people here for that event. And for the food trucks, so that will continue as well as the Farmers Market on Saturday, we have a couple of restaurants now opening up downtown Victoria's has just opened up here within the last month or so. There's a tap house, a brewery, two other restaurants all under construction, here downtown, as well as a downtown stage a location where we can hold different community events and performances, concerts. And we're just waiting on some electrical gear for that. But that's only a couple of months away from being complete. And that's in addition to the College of the Desert buildings that are well under construction, as well as a new city hall and library. So the old library is now closed and it's under demolition effect. If you hear that behind me any banging that's part of that demolition of the old library. And the temporary library has been set up that will open on January 2. That's on Oasis close

to Miles. There'll be there temporarily while the new libraries being built. And the city hall, the new city hall will go where the library sat. And then eventually we'll have to take down the old city hall where I'm at now. It's about a two year project but we just received the bids. They came in very well and we're just going through the demolition right now on the library.

Bob Firing 16:48

And we're starting to see some nice art murals around.

Bryan Montgomery 16:54

Yes, you know, we have a lot going on relative to these murals. One just was unveiled under the underpass at Jackson Street. Roughly at summer again, I got very attractive, bright colors. We're working on a parking lot project that will be underneath that underpass that will provide additional parking for the downtown businesses. We also have a very meaningful mural underway now on the Loma Linda Health Center building. Young girl some years ago passed away from cancer. Our name was Desi and this murals been dedicated to her and has a lot of meaning to it. And it's underway. As we speak, it will have a unique feature in that with your phone. You can hold your phone up and login and it can be an animated mural. Oh, cool. So it will it will be something neat. Also next to the tap house right now there's another mural that's been being prepped, so to speak, it should be done in the next couple of months. Right here on Miles. So a lot of new murals, other artwork that we've taken that we've received from the Coachella music festival. There were some large dogs at the festival two years ago, those will be placed at our new dog park at miles Avenue Park, which is under construction. And then Power Trip, which is the Motley Crew and Guns and Roses at all event had a large saguaro cactus that was lit up as part of that concert. And that will come downtown as some additional art. So what's going on the art front as well.

Bob Firing 18:40

And we touched on this last time, but there's continues to be a lot of chatter around this big new apartment project, which is being built down about 111 and Jefferson would I mean, this is in the city of Indio, but you don't really have any control of that, right?

Bryan Montgomery 19:02

Yes, you know, to support affordable housing throughout the state, the legislature is has taken essentially all local control away from cities. Because as you can imagine, a lot of folks don't want that for whatever reasons near their homes. And so they fight it they push on the local city council, the local city council are saying no. So the state just took the head of that authority away. It is a project we know that housing is needed is it's a project that has some controversy just because it's a vertical four story project. It's on the other side of Jefferson, so it almost feels like it's on the luckiest side but it is within the city limits of Indio. It's a location that met all of the state requirements. They receive state funding and some other financing. And we were able to review what it looked like and had some control over that, but very little so at this point I think we're certainly supportive and anxious to see them build to provide nearly 400 housing units to folks in the valley, we understand that there are something like 10,000 names on the list to go in. So it gives you some idea of the demand and they will quickly fill up and provide space for a lot of the workers right there in La Quinta and here where they may be working retail or housekeeping. We may even see some teachers, firefighters and police officers in there, the

average median income for some of those units is much higher than people realize. So this isn't the old tenement houses that you saw in Chicago in the 50s and 60s. This is this is something much more modern and available to all kinds of residents to neighbors and sons and daughters, others are looking to get their own housing before they can move on to something else.

Bob Firing 20:58

Well, that covers all the things on my list, Brian, is there anything that I left?

Bryan Montgomery 21:04

Oh, there is a lot more going on. We really appreciate the community support as we try to take action to even beautify the community more and do things that help bring attention to the great city that we are. We started a program called Indio Lindo, "lindo" in Spanish means beautiful and so working to keep and do beautiful and finding projects. So if any of your listeners have ideas of where we can focus and help beautify, we have some funding and other partners that can help us look at areas and if people like to volunteer to paint, pick up trash, do other projects. We have a program in place now to help make that happen. So that would be the only add. I appreciate the opportunity Bob.

Bob Firing 21:51

Well, thank you so much for taking the time and our residents appreciate it. And I look forward to seeing this all come to fruition.

Bryan Montgomery 22:01

Sounds great. Thank you.

Bob Firing 22:03

So I will let you go. Thank you Bryan and to the audience. Until next time, bye-bye.