

# Transcription of Podcast Episode 408: 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, we are back with a another interview with Bryan Montgomery, the City Manager of the city of Indio. There's so much going on around here that he has agreed to a quarterly update on all the things that are happening that would be of interest to you. And so I'll bring them on now, Bryan, welcome to the podcast.

### **Bryan Montgomery 00:28**

Thank you, Bob.

### **Bob Firing 00:30**

So before we get into Indio, we have a current events issue that everybody should know about. Who is Abi Carter? And, why should everyone here care about her?

### **Bryan Montgomery 00:45**

Well, she's just a wonderful product of Indio. She's a young woman that grew up here, family was here in Indio, and she is becoming a star. She has such a beautiful voice and such great talent has been playing various venues, singing and playing the piano, she plays instruments as well understand, and made it to American Idol, and won the platinum ticket as many has seen online. And we have a concert planned as we're calling it a send off concert, but it's to help support her and let the community rally behind her as she moves forward in the American Idol contest. And so this coming Saturday, March 23, at 6pm there's a free concert here in the downtown. The streets are Bliss and Towne. There's a large piece of grass there where we hold our food truck Fridays and our farmers market. And on that grass, we'll set up a stage and hopefully have hundreds if not thousands of people to come and listen to her sing. She will be performing the single that she wrote herself and she'll later have that for sale or others before the concert at five o'clock for those that may want to be kind of get to know her a little bit better and take a photo with her so far, she is raising some funds to help in her journey. And so at the locations on the corner of Towne and Miles. Avenida Music is the band that has a great facility there to receive those that may want to come around five o'clock before the concert, get to know her, that's a VIP type reception. But the rest of the concert is free six o'clock in the downtown to support Abi, who again, most everyone I hope is seen if not go online and YouTube her name. And you'll hear her beautiful voice and we look forward to what she'll sing on TV here in the coming weeks.

### **Bob Firing 02:49**

Yeah, we're going to include that when we drop this episode. And yeah, it's very special that we've got a local young lady who is going to be a star. And it's pretty exciting to be in there at the beginning of it.

Well, so moving on, let's start with the closest and most interesting part for our residents and that is the new Pulte Desert Retreat. The last time we spoke there was an issue with power. What's the status now?

**Bryan Montgomery 03:31**

We believe that has been resolved and that the city of Indio as well as IID partnering with Pulte will provide a substation area. It's near Ave 40 there, proximately at Burr street. That substation is planned to have two large transformers and why that's of interest not just for the development of the Pulte but for everyone in the area. This will create some significant redundancy and resiliency to the system. And the substations take quite a while only because the Transformers a key component of these substations are about a two to two and a half year supply chain delay. So I say it's been resolved in that we've ordered those transformers substations being designed and planned, but it would be a couple of years before it would be installed. But it's a benefit to everyone. We're actually working on four other locations, three total or four total three other locations of substations that will help relieve some of the strain system throughout the city of Indio. So it's a partnership with IID, city of Indio as well as other developers who are going to pay their fair share and then the rest of the community has to benefit from this resiliency and redundancy in these substations that will be scattered throughout the city.

**Bob Firing 04:57**

And, can Pulte start construction before this power station is built?

**Bryan Montgomery 05:04**

Yes, my understanding, well, certainly they can begin the land work and utility work as things work through on the substation part. But I also understand that it is indicated that a handful of homes there is enough power available for something like 50 or 60 homes. So they may, I'm not sure exactly sure when are they going to start, but they may start some model homes and so forth, even before the substation is installed, because they are allowed. There is some capacity for a handful of homes. But the grading I understand where some of the dirt work, we call it or the utility work should begin later this year.

**Bob Firing 05:48**

I see. Okay, so we're still six to nine months away from seeing any progress over there.

**Bryan Montgomery 05:57**

Yes. And then the full scale development and of course, waiting for some of this other substation capacities, at least a couple of years away.

**Bob Firing 06:03**

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. And so we've got the Circle K open at Jefferson and Varner. You have mentioned in the past that we may we likely to see a small grocery store in that area. Any progress on that?

**Bryan Montgomery 06:25**

We have had inquiries from different brochures and other retailers. For all of those corners, there was the three retail corners and nothing's been finalized, as far as I'm aware of these are private property.

So we don't always know until after a deal was done, so to speak. But we've had a lot of interest at that corner. And I think part of that is the announcement of the number of homes Pulte is planning the development along that corridor we are already have Talavera as well as of course Sun City there Shadow Hills, a lot of rooftops that will help drive that commercial as well as the I-10 traffic, you know, 10s of 1000s of cars passing every day that could also pull off and benefit from for most retailers. So, you know, I without giving any names or any specifics, I think there will be some announcements, say over the next, I would say by the end of the year, selectivity about location.

**Bob Firing 07:30**

Okay. And last time we use mentioned that one developer had assembled all the land along Varner road between Jefferson and Monroe, have they put together any substantial plan to you yet?

**Bryan Montgomery 07:52**

They have, in fact, they will be on the upcoming Planning Commission meeting to present more of a study session, it's not an approval discussion. But basically, the let the Planning Commission, as you may know, is a group of citizens that are advisory to the city council, they will give you a first crack at what they're proposing. It's a mixed use of retail, residential, mostly multifamily, and some business park uses. So it's almost 200 acres there between Monroe and as you get towards the canal, roughly Madison, and they have a good conceptual plan. Those are interested we'll have that up on our planning commission agenda on our website. It certainly could be modified, particularly if they receive input in this study session from the planning commission that guides them to one decision or another. But the plan is a fairly flexible multi use commercial, residential and business park plan. And I would think they're doing their environmental work right now. I think they'll be ready to present formally by the end of the year as well. So it's, it's something that once approved, assuming that it is they'll be able to market and see what users are available. We understand from them that there's significant interest in the commercial corner right there on Monroe and 42 right now. They just don't have their plan approved. So they can't find any leases. They also need to build a substation to help handle all of that growth. And so they are not even partnering specifically with the city they're going to just build knowing that they need the full capacity of a substation their plan is to build one right on site.

**Bob Firing 09:42**

Okay, and then at 42nd at Varner and Monroe rather, I did the In-N-Out Burger and Raising Canes are moving along. We see the dirt move in there. Hey, has there been anybody announced that's gonna go into that area?

**Bryan Montgomery 10:03**

My recollection is that Sumo Dog, which is also on the new commercial, newer, expanded commercial center on Jefferson and 50th. If you haven't been down that way there, there's a lot going on with new restaurants down on that south west corner of the community, but Sumo Dog is there, but also looking at a location near Raising Canes and In-N- Out, I believe those are the first three that has signed and constructions underway there. There are other pads available and spoke with that developer the other day, and he's getting significant interest and some other activity there. So we would expect again, I would say within a handful of months that we'll hear more and more, particularly as those get further

along in construction, retailers do tend to follow their peers. And so when someone like going In-N-Out or Raising Canes lands, others tend to fall.

**Bob Firing 10:59**

I see. And so they're still they're huge pads available where the Walmart is. Is there anything substantial that's happened there?

**Bryan Montgomery 11:11**

Yeah, we've heard of a kind of a couple of mid-size boxes of retail boxes that have been looking, perhaps even another hotel. But none of that's been announced yet. And I don't I don't have those details. Other than again, speaking the other day, he was very excited about the fact that more and more contacting him and his team, as they see others, filling up those pads that are out there. So I would expect, we also understand that Walmart is looking at a fuel station out in front as well, that's becoming more and more common kind of the Costco model or some of the grocery stores where there's a fuel component. And Walmart is jumping into that. Yeah, so I think that will continue. I know, folks, I hear it often as new gas stations, we have a new one going in on Monroe and Dr. Carreon, a Tower Mart. But our numbers continue to show, believe it or not, that we have significant leakage, retail leakage, not gasoline leakage. But folks purchasing their fuel outside of the community. And certainly supply will help drive down the costs. And what we want due to the tax implications, we want people to purchase their fuel here and all of the retail purchases in the community because then the sales tax dollars stay in the community, rather than filling up at Costco or in Palm Desert, looking to other locations. So a new fueling station there at Walmart, assuming that does take place would be significant tax revenue and convenience. And my guess is it would be a very cost competitive price.

**Bob Firing 13:01**

Yeah, well, that's good. And it's worth mentioning, I think the people who are buying their gas at Costco in La Quinta you're giving your tax revenue to the city of La Quinta. You know, it can't cost that much more to you know, gas up at the Circle K's that are right here on the corner, and you don't have to wait. And then you then the tax revenue stays within the city and that it's that money that finances the improvements that we all want.

**Bryan Montgomery 13:35**

The old adage of shop local it keeps your sales tax dollars here helps employ people here actually helps fuel the property tax base. It's more convenient to residents. There's just so much to gain when we shop locally.

**Bob Firing 13:48**

So let's move down to Jackson Street Jackson and 42nd lots is going on why don't we just in case people didn't hear the previous podcast, why don't why don't you go over all the things that are happening down in that area?

**Bryan Montgomery 14:05**

Well, you're right in fact I hope I don't forget something but on the northeast corner of 42 in Jackson presently there is an AMPM there and AutoZone but approved as a Dutch Brothers Coffee as well as

Chick fil A on that site. There is another pad or two for some other probably more sit down restaurants. So the Chick fil A was popular quick serve and in the country. Another significant tax driver which is important. They're going through all their plans submitted again, have approval and would start their groundwork I would believe later this summer early fall. Also the city municipal golf course the lights is at that location and we are rebuilding the clubhouse there's a post office there as well as the clubhouse we'll be setting up something temporary while we rebuild and provide a true amenity there with a nice place to eat and drink and, of course play around a golf even in the evening because we have lights. So that project on the northeast corner is taking place. On the south east, sorry, the southwest corner we have Handles Ice Cream, that has now been open for a while. It's a great place. Great ice cream Jersey Mike's is going in next to it on that site also is very recently as a Pollo Loco and now there's a hotel that's also nearing completion on that side. Across the street toward Home Depot. So the southeast corner of Jackson and 42 we have both Tilly's and Skechers that are planned to be built next to the Five Below. These are two very popular retailers particularly for younger folks. Of course, we know Texas Roadhouse has been hoping now for a handful of months very popular, as well as a number of other restaurants and inline stores there in that center. So a lot of activity there on the north west corner. That's where Walgreens in some commercial centers, they're now probably my favorite place to eat is Unique Bite, is right there. So I invite people to eat there. But also there'll be one of our cannabis locations, the City Council approved some months back, five retail licenses in that center will be one of the cannabis locations. So as you said, all kinds of activity right there on that corner, as well on Monroe. But at Jackson, it's a significant amount of retail activity.

**Bob Furring 16:48**

Wow, that is we got a lot going on here. And so although this is of less interest to the residents, let's go on the other side of the freeway and talk about what's going on in downtown.

**Bryan Montgomery 17:03**

Yes, the College of the Desert opened up one of their newer buildings, the Childcare Development building. Their second to high, high rise building is probably 80% complete at this point. So folks, we'll see that construction going on, as well as the new library new City Hall, we'd have a temporary location for a library over on Oasis, as we're building the new one here, roughly in the same location or close by to where it was previously. City Hall will also be rebuilt and the existing building will come down. We're building a stage we're calling it the Center Stage. It's on the corner of Smurr and Miles, we'll have all kinds of our of our activities and concerts. It's probably 90% complete. So it's another month or so. Opening up is Indio Tap House, it is open now. So also on miles not far from the stage. The Tap House is open has been very popular across the street is a Creperie Gabino's. And they're set to open here, there's a couple of weeks as well as another restaurant next to the tap house called a Calicut. So these things that we've been talking about for several months are now opening up and bringing a lot of folks downtown. In addition to the different concerts that we have, including that be part of this Saturday. But we have our food truck Fridays or farmers market. The Rotary Club had the festival, the local creatives art show, as you would know, Bob downtown, but those are the type of events that we want more and more of as we bring people downtown, another restaurant just down the way on Miles, Victoria's is open now to some great success as people are again, returning to downtown. It used to be the hub of things and we're in the midst of recreating that. So we hope people come downtown and try it out to the

Tap House would be a great opportunity to start maybe right after Abi Carter's concert to slide over there to get a drink.

**Bob Firing** 19:03

Yeah. Is there gonna be student housing bill down where the campus is located?

**Bryan Montgomery** 19:12

Yeah, thank you. I knew I would forget something. So there is a an apartment complex that's under construction right now. That was 30 units. Not specifically student housing, but it's right across from the College of the Desert so very likely could help serve some of our students. Just up the road north of that is a proximately 70 unit apartment complex. It'll have retail office on the ground floor. And then up above will be these the 70 units. So yes, housing is a part of reinvigorating revitalizing the downtown so people can live and walk and eat and enjoy. And that's happening right now as we speak.

**Bob Firing** 19:57

So what else the we had touched before on these low and moderate income apartment projects. One is at just the other side of highway 111 on Jefferson. And then you mentioned there were some others that were being built out by the food bank. And they, they're moving ahead?

**Bryan Montgomery** 20:24

Yes, there, well, the certainly the one on Jefferson is they're probably at 80%, complete as well. So Jefferson on highway 111, almost feels like you're in La Quinta. But those high rise are our again, nearing completion. Another was approved on highway 111. It's somewhat east of there, kind of closer to Monroe. Also one on 44 and Golf Center Parkway, trying to jog my memory on the other one that you mentioned. But we do get a number of these inquiries, it's becoming more and more popular, obviously, with some state and federal funding to provide these attainable, affordable housing units. The County of Riverside owns a piece of property behind their workforce center on Monroe. And they are also working with an attainable housing developer to try to help develop some units there. So again, we know how expensive housing is, and the folks that serve us at these retail centers, at the golf courses, housekeeping hospitality, even our teachers and some of our early entry firefighters and so forth are having a hard time finding a place to live. And these facilities that are being built are to help serve them and as they serve us.

**Bob Firing** 21:43

Good. One, two other things occurred to me before I let you go. And that is the one is warehousing. Why when should talk a bit about why warehousing is good for the city, and where they might be located.

**Bryan Montgomery** 22:03

Yeah, and the term if it's just warehousing, that probably is not a winner for most communities, depending on the number of employees that are involved. But these logistics business parks centers, where you do have, you know, dozens of employees, if not hundreds, within these facilities, likely pay a wage that's three or four or \$5 more an hour than the Golf Course labor, hospitality labor that I spoke to previously. So it will be a means of elevating wages for all those and helping it be more attainable,



obviously to purchase and rent, housing. So these logistics centers have some drawbacks, but have been proven to be significant employers, particularly if they're just a few dollars above the current wage, it tends to lift, lift the water and lift the boat for everyone. And that's the main driver, there is some significant sales tax and property tax that comes from those as well. But in my mind, the most significant are just the jobs. The Valley has a shortage of jobs, and the jobs that are available are lower wage, and it's hard for folks to get ahead. So we need a bit of wage competition in my opinion. And these logistics centers provide that.

**Bob Firing** 23:21

I see. Okay, and then the last thing that occurs to me is that, you know, that is Goldenvoice. Was it because Coachella and occasionally Stagecoach are, you know, really what the, the how the world knows about us. But and they certainly bring a lot of people in, do, do they contribute to our economic base?

**Bryan Montgomery** 23:47

They do. And in two ways, there's some significant indirect impacts. So it may not be revenue directly that comes to us, but 10s of millions of dollars are spent in this in this community and surrounding communities. As these visitors come and, you know, the lodging, the food, the drink, the gasoline, everything that they do to help support the businesses, including the short term rentals from hospitality standpoint, is significant revenue to our residents that builds wealth that helps them again, in turn, purchase goods and services and keeps a significant amount of that money here. Goldenvoice does also pay per-ticket value to the city. This is the direct revenue. It's providing a few million dollars a year and while that sounds like a lot of money, it's not a huge part of our budget. Our general fund budget is well over 100 million so let's call it less than 5% of our general fund revenue. I say that because many folks till it hits a significant amount of the city's general fund revenue. It's not. The most signal To get revenue we have is the sales tax. And certainly that is fueled by these visitors. The direct revenue to the cities less than 5% of our, our general fund. But the rest of the impact is much, much larger. I've seen numbers of couple 100 million as an impact of these hundreds of 1000s of people that dropped in and dropped their money in the valley.

**Bob Firing** 25:24

Well, good. That's good to know. And who knows. What's the status by the way of the Indio Fashion Mall?

**Bryan Montgomery** 25:35

Yeah, it is up for sale. And we understand that then the number of retailers interested looking at different concepts there. Some would tear down some of the older buildings there that are not very good shape, but would reuse some, but really don't have any more updates than that other than that the owner is looking to sell for the property be redeveloped.

**Bob Firing** 25:59

Okay, well, thank you for taking the time to update us all on what's going on in the city. There's a lot going on in the city, it's a very exciting place to live in. And thank you for taking the time to tell us about it.

**Bryan Montgomery** 26:17

Thank you, Bob. I appreciate it.

**Bob Firing** 26:19

Okay, and for the audience, thank you for your attention. Until next time, bye-bye.