



CITY OF RIDGECREST
100 West California Avenue
Ridgecrest, California 93555-4054

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Council Conference Room
Thursday, July 5, 2007 5:30 pm

MINUTES

Members: Chair Steve Morgan, Chip Holloway, Jerry Taylor, Nellavan Jeglum

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5.30 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was moved by Member Jeglum and seconded by Vice-Chair Taylor to approve the Agenda. The agenda was approved as submitted.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was moved by Chair Morgan and seconded by Vice-Chair Taylor to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved as submitted.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

5. GPAC

City Planner Matthew Alexander provided copies of Workshop Agendas and Group Exercise worksheets generated by Matrix Consulting and noted that according to the timeline/project milestones set, GPAC was pretty much on target.

Planner Alexander noted that the next meeting would be held on 24th July at which time the consultants would provide the completed Map Atlas. He further noted that a special GPAC meeting to facilitate an extended discussion between GPAC, interested members of the public and Matrix Consulting would be held on 7th August, 2007 (this meeting date has since been reviewed and will be scheduled for either 21st August, 27th August or 29th August).

Vice-Chair Taylor (Chairman of GPAC) went on to say that sub-committees had been established (1) being Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation (2) Military Sustainability and (3) Land Use and Circulation. He advised that these three sub-committees were meeting to discuss more specifically the issues for the three categories and that these groups were proceeding well with good participation.

Chair Morgan inquired if any minutes were being produced from the sub-committee meetings. Planner Alexander advised that minutes were taken at GPAC meetings and that these included bullet point lists of the summary provided by sub-committee chairman/woman after each meeting.

Chair Morgan asked for discussion as to how best get information regarding GPAC to the public and Vice-Chair Taylor responded stating that the GPAC meetings were televised and that GPAC was receiving coverage via the local newspapers. He explained that as the sub-committee meetings were held simultaneously in separate locations they were not being televised.

Chair Morgan then asked if there was any information regarding GPAC on the City's website and Planner Alexander advised that there is a link to the Matrix Consulting website. Chair Morgan asked if the City was obligated to provide a computer at City Hall for interested members of the public to access these websites and Public Services Director Jim McRea

said that as the library had 5 computers and the Senior Center had 2 he did not think this was a necessity.

Chair Morgan stated that given there was sensitivity and interest in regards to the General Plan he thought that GPAC should be “pumping” the information out a little more intensely. Vice-Chair Taylor gave an undertaking to look at how GPAC might improve the dissemination of information and in particular he advised he would report back to the Community Development Committee.

6. BOWMAN CORRIDOR

Planner Alexander referred the Committee to City Council Resolution 06-52 (copy of which is attached) regarding development of the Bowman Corridor and noted that the Wal-Mart Development had put more pressure on the city to come up with a plan because Wal-Mart will be undertaking significant excavation within the project area in order to procure the fill necessary for their facility.

Planner Alexander stated that whilst 240 linear feet sounds considerable – given the infrastructure needs associated with the Wal-Mart Development there would not be a lot of space left over for the Bowman Project. He advised he thought it would be best to have Dan Lare of Dan Lare Planners (who have been contracted for the project) present three different plans to GPAC for their consideration.

Chair Morgan enquired if Planner Alexander was working with engineering on the conceptual plans and Planner Alexander responded affirmatively.

Mayor Holloway noted that a key word of the City Council resolution was “consider” versus “require”.

Chair Morgan asked for clarification from Planner Alexander regarding his statement about space left for the Bowman Project stating “so I am clear – there is enough room for a four lane road” but not much leftover? Planner Alexander responded affirmatively and stating when referring to the types of plans that might be devised for the area “it depends on how creative you are”. Economic Development Project Manager Gary Parsons noted that there was also a need to fit a bike path in.

Public Services Director, Jim McRea stated that in terms of the entire project the Wal-Mart portion was only a small part. Chair Morgan responded stating that regardless he still wanted to look at the entire project so as to avoid errors such as those made in the past.

Planner Alexander said he had spoken with an Engineer from Helt Engineering earlier in the day and had been told there has been a concept developed known as “rest stops”. Public Services Director Jim McRea noted he was aware of it and that funds in the amount of \$199,104 had been approved via a grant in July of 2005.

Mayor Holloway asked if staff were coordinating with the water district on the project and Mr. McRea advised they were.

Andy Kilikauskas commented that as a member of GPAC and a member of the Parks and Recreation sub-committee he felt this project was an opportunity to set a precedent – he stated “we need to do a better job than we did with the current Wal-Mart”.

William Howard of 1109 Mayo commented that in his 60 years of being in Ridgecrest he believed that most people left town due to the extreme weather not because there is a ditch in town draining water. He stated that we still always have to be practical and reasonable.

7. BLM LANDS EXCESS

Chair Morgan asked Mr. McRea if there was any excess land of interest to the city and Mr. McRea responded in the negative. Chair Morgan then asked if it was staff’s opinion that we should not continue with this dialogue. Mr. McRea advised that staff would continue dialogue but that any land of interest would have to be annexed. He further advised that of the excess lands there were not enough contiguous large chunks – only some small parcels which would be of interest.

8. CODE ENFORCEMENT

Code Enforcement Officer Bob Smith commented on the Wal-Mart project before providing his report to members stating that there were not enough receptacles to gather trash on the Wal-Mart lot where wind picks up packaging left behind by customers loading large goods into their vehicles. He noted that trash was picked up by the desert winds and taken straight to the Bowman fence. He stated that he felt the community should adopt a responsible attitude to the disposal of such trash.

Mayor Holloway expanded stating that receptacles for trash collection in the facility where Taco Del Mar is located are inadequate and caused problems as when trash is collected there is already another "pile" ready for collection.

Mr. Smith provided a copy of the latest Code Enforcement Monthly report noting that the report now included more detail on properties being investigated – indicating the hundred block of an address without stating the actual addresses. Planner Alexander asked if it was Code Enforcement policy or a state law that this information not be made public noting that he had been in other communities where addresses were published. Bob Smith responded stating that whilst it was not State Law his policy was to not publish as this created ill-feeling in the community.

Chair Morgan asked if members of the public under the Freedom of Information Act could request copies of notices given out by Code Enforcement and Mr. McRea advised that this would be possible under that Act.

Chair Morgan then asked how difficult it would be to update the Community Development Committee on properties that were within the final 30 days of the process. Mr. Smith advised that when he notified the Planning commission of a Pre-Abatement hearing he could also notice the Community Development Committee.

Member Jeglum asked Mr. Smith if he could provide his report in a line by line format rather than a synopsis. Mr. Smith obligated to do so.

Member Jeglum inquired the progress of the abatement of the property located at 701N. Sanders Street which had recently been before the Planning Commission for a Pre-Abatement hearing. Mr. Smith advised that as per his recent email to Commissioners he had given the family a 24 day extension to abate the property as they had applied for a loan to do so. Mr. Smith noted that he would be reviewing progress on 15th July.

William Howard of 1099 Mayo suggested that addresses of those properties being investigated should be published stating that he had seen an uneven distribution of Code Enforcement in the City. Mr. Smith explained that 90% of Code Enforcement is generated from complaints he received and that the other 10% were initiated by him. He further explained that he spent his days going from case to case and call to call and could not drive around the City inspecting each property for breaches of code. He asked Mr. Howard if he would like to lodge a complaint in which case Mr. Smith said he would make an immediate investigation.

Debate continued and Chair Morgan and Mr. McRea suggested that Mr. Howard contact Mr. Smith at another time to discuss any complaint he may have.

Given that during the debate Mr. Howard had particular concern in regards to over-sized vehicles, Chair Morgan obligated to bring this Ordinance to the attention of the City Council in his next report.

9. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP GRANT

Mr. McRea provided a draft application process and application form. He advised that when last used the grant was split 60/40 between Community Development and Parks and Recreation and noted that the Quality of Life Committee were not due to meet again until September.

Chair Morgan asked if Mr. McRea would like the Committee to review and comment and Mr. McRea responded affirmatively. Chair Morgan asked if Mr. McRea would like to include specific wording on Community Development versus Parks and Recreation and Mr. McRea advised this would not be necessary – general guidelines only would be needed.

Chair Morgan stated he would like to see timeline deadlines – he did not want the grant to become a ‘crutch’ where businesses apply for the grant year after year. Vice-Chair Taylor agreed stating “there are people who line up at the trough every year.”

Mr. McRea clarified that whilst it was not the real purpose of the grant there were instances where funds were set aside and organizations then repaid those funds out of proceeds and that in other instances projects needed some years to develop.

Mr. McRea went on to say that at the next meeting the Committee could discuss the proposed cycle for the funds.

10. SIGN ORDINANCE

Due to time constraints this item was deferred for special meeting on 26th July, 2007.

Planner Alexander distributed handouts of the sign ordinance for review by Committee Members prior to next meeting. Chair Morgan asked if additional copies could be made available in the Community Development Department and Planner Alexander obligated to make those copies available.

Planner Alexander noted that the major thrust for review of the Sign Ordinance was the difficulty of interpreting the Ordinance. Chair Morgan asked if there was a case study on another city which had a simple, easy to read Ordinance. Mr. McRea responded that there was not.

11. DIRECTOR’S REPORT/UPDATES

Public Services Director, Jim McRea advised that staff was close to issuing a Certificate of Completion for the Draft E.I.R. for Wal-Mart and that would trigger hearings for September and October.

Mayor Holloway asked when staff would advise what actions would be taken for the frontage of the Business Park. Mr. McRea explained there were complexities (and gave details on those complexities), that advice was forthcoming and that the oleanders would be removed.

12. COMMENTS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

13. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS / NEXT MEETING

Chair Morgan suggested that the two topics covered in Item 11. should be noted as future agenda items.

14. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 6.46 p.m.