



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

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
Council Conference Room  
Thursday, August 2, 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 5.25 p.m.

Present: Chair Steve Morgan, Mayor Chip Holloway, Member Nellavan Jeglum  
Absent: Member Jerry Taylor.

Staff Present: Assistant City Manager Mike Avery, Public Services Director Jim McRea, City Planner Matthew Alexander, Economic Development Project Manager Gary Parsons, Administrative Secretary Danielle Valentine

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was moved by Member Jeglum and seconded by Mayor Holloway to approve the Agenda. The agenda was approved as submitted.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was moved by Chair Morgan and seconded by Mayor Holloway to approve the minutes. The minutes of July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007 were approved as submitted. The minutes of Special Meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> July were approved as submitted.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

None.

**5. BOWMAN CORRIDOR**

Jim McRea, Public Services Director referred to previous meetings of the Community Development Department, the Infrastructure Committee and GPAC and indicated that a draft E.I.R. for the Wal-Mart Project had been circulated for public comment and was open for such for 45 days. Mr. McRea provided a synopsis of the E.I.R. including a listing of off-site improvements and a rough project milestone outline. Mr. McRea advised that City Planner Matthew Alexander will be the project coordinator and Gary Parsons the point of contact for the project.

Jim Fallgatter of 207W. Cobblestone Lane asked for clarification of the yellow lines on the off-site Improvements Figure 11-4 (included in the synopsis). Economic Development Project Manager responded stating that the yellow lines were indicative of parameters which had grown out of discussions with Wal-Mart since 2005. Mr. Fallgatter asked if the City would get a chance to sit down and bargain with Wal-Mart. Mr. McRea responded stating that the E.I.R. was a draft, if there were minor changes it would not have to go back to circulation. He further indicated that there were 9 items, in regards improvements, which had been discussed and 19 items which had come through in the proposal.

Mr. Fallgatter then spoke to the Committee about his belief that the Wal-Mart project was a major opportunity for the city. He expressed a desire that the City should be very studied in their activities with Wal-Mart and asked for an indication of an amount which would be "right" to ask Wal-Mart to commit to off-site improvements. Mr. McRea responded saying that by the end of August staff would be in a position to say to Wal-Mart "these are the mitigation and off-site improvements and commented that Wal-Mart was not the "tooth fairy".

There was further discussion regarding preparations for negotiations with Wal-Mart including Mr. Parsons indicating the importance of being able to make a connection between improvements being requested of Wal-Mart and the development being undertaken by Wal-Mart.

Mr. Fallgatter then asked if staff had taken a look at what other City's had done. Mr. Alexander noted that Wal-Mart had set aside land for the Bowman Channel. Mr. McRea noted as a for instance that staff had asked Wal-Mart to pay for the entire Bowman Intersection. Mr. McRea explained that the infrastructure concerns would be discussed by the Infrastructure Committee and that this Committee's concerns lay with the Economic Development aspects of the project. He further explained that plans would come before the Planning Commission.

Mr. Alexander distributed photo of a Rite-Aid development in Shafter and made comparisons between the Shafter development and the Ridgecrest development. Mr. Parsons responded stating that what we have now at Rite-Aid is a result of negotiation. He explained that negotiations were contingent upon a starting point and stated that the Rite-Aid development now being constructed was a lot different to what was originally proposed by the developer.

As a point of order Mr. McRea then asked that discussions be about the project rather than the ability of staff.

Chair Morgan asked staff to lead the Committee in discussions about the specifics of the off-site improvements and referred to the previous Committee meeting when staff had indicated that there may not be enough room for the proposed recreational plans for the Bowman Channel. He asked staff why they were not asking for room to enact the proposed plans. There was discussion back and forth regarding the impacting of taking easement for drainage along the Bowman Channel.

Member Jeglum then stated that she felt it important that staff were planning for the whole drainage channel. There was discussion regarding the funding required to develop the entire channel, what parameters were indicative of the entire channel and who should pay for the entire channel development and a lack of funds available for said development.

Chair Morgan asked staff to comment on the area needed for development plans. Mr. Parsons explained that up until this point staff had been looking at the basics and had now entered a second phase of looking at aesthetics to improve the channel – he gave an example of trading off parking spaces via a variance for the land needed for channel improvement. Mr. Fallgatter commented that Mr. Parsons point was the “wonderful thing about where we are at” and spoke about this phase being an opportunity for Ridgecrest.

Member Jeglum commented that the biggest question she had was if there was another rain like there was in 1985 would everything spoken about in the plans “go away”. Mr. McRea responded indicating that approximately every seven years there would be a need for repairs and stated that the biggest issue was that the development plans went as far as Sunland therefore he had concern for the residents fronting Gateway.

Chair Morgan then summarized stating that we should not make the mistake assuming an alignment between allowing a developer to dig out the fill with an improved channel.

Planner Alexander briefed the Committee on the last GPAC meeting which had included a presentation from Dan Lare (consultant hired to assist with Bowman Channel plans) talking about what is “do-able” and encouraging members to “think outside the box” including introducing the concept of a roundabout.

Planner Alexander then provided members with a handout of photos of a roundabout in Oregon. This prompted discussion back and forth about the merits or otherwise of roundabouts and there was mixed opinion. Mr. McRea summarized stating that the concept would be considered by Committees and staff and ultimately a decision would be made.

Planner Alexander then went on to brief members on his previous presentation to the Planning Commission in regards to proposing changing development restrictions to allow

concepts such as narrower streets pointing out that his research had indicated this caused no safety concerns. Police Chief Mike Avery questioned Planner Alexander's research and made the statement that narrower streets are not safer unless speed bumps are put in – such as in Heritage Village. Mr. McRea noted that the State of California required that streets be 40 feet wide.

Planner Alexander told the Committee that the Planning Commission had been presented with an example of green development and xeriscape development and had voted in favor of xeriscape development. He indicated Mr. Lare would be designing something to show what could be done in the one mile corridor between Norma and Sunland streets.

Mr. Parsons asked that it also be considered that Wal-Mart would be able to seek reimbursement from the land owners for improvements costs along the channel and therefore those property owners who would be affected needed to be involved in the planning.

Chair Morgan asked if staff had asked engineering staff to put numbers together indicating a cost estimate for putting a roundabout in. Mr. McRea responded stating there had been a general discussion but a cost estimate had not yet been done. He explained that Wal-Mart had proposed culverts under the road where there are sewer, gas and water lines - at this stage this thought was conceptual and no designs had been made.

Planner Alexander told the committee that traffic signals were expensive to install. Mr. McRea concurred and indicated that the cost for traffic signals at the Bowman intersection would be in excess of \$600,000. Chair Morgan noted that the City would need to get the property owners to agree.

Planner Alexander then asked if the Committee was giving direction to staff to take the roundabout seriously. Member Jeglum responded stating that they could not give such direction at this conceptual stage. Mr. McRea confirmed that this decision was not one to be made by the Community Development Committee or the Planning Commission. Mr. Parsons then advised that the Wal-Mart engineers were currently reviewing the concept but had not come back to him with any feedback. Mr. McRea further explained that staff were waiting on 3 different sketches from Wal-Mart engineers.

Mayor Holloway asked if it was possible to request Engineering consider eliminating the intersection of College Heights and China Lake Boulevard and this prompted discussion back and forth.

Chair Morgan asked staff if during discussions with Wal-Mart they had foreseen any problems. Mr. Parsons replied that Wal-Mart had spent a lot of money to date and therefore had made an investment commitment but at the same time he could not foresee the effect of any major changes.

Mr. Fallgatter raised the idea of asking Wal-Mart to change their plans so that the front entrance was more likely to enable linear traffic flow. Discussion followed as to the merits or otherwise.

**6. CODE ENFORCEMENT UPDATE ON 700 BLOCK N SANDERS STREET**

Public Services Director Jim McRea reported that the property had been cleaned and graded. Further he advised that he had asked Code Enforcement Officer, Bob Smith to indicate in his next Monthly report how many days it took to get the property through the abatement process.

**7. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP GRANT**

This agenda item was deferred until next meeting.

8. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT/UDPATES**  
None.
9. **COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
None.
10. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/NEXT MEETING**  
Community Partnership Grant.
11. **ADJOURN**  
The meeting was adjourned at 6.50 p.m.