



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

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Council Conference Room
Thursday, October 4, 2007 3:00 pm

MINUTES

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 p.m.

Present: Chair Steve Morgan, Mayor Chip Holloway, Member Nellavan Jeglum

Absent: Member Jerry Taylor (arrived late).

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

AYES: Holloway, Jeglum, Morgan

Absent: Taylor

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was moved by Mayor Holloway and seconded by Chair Morgan to approve the minutes. The minutes of August 2, 2007 were approved as submitted.

AYES: Holloway, Jeglum, Morgan

Absent: Taylor

Items were not discussed in numerical order. Agenda items were introduced by Chair Morgan to facilitate late arrival of Member Taylor.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None. Chair Morgan held this item over for any comments later in the meeting.

At the end of the meeting, Jim Fallgatter of 207W. Cobblestone Lane, asked which Committee was reviewing the comments in regards to the Wal-Mart Draft E.I.R. He explained he was interested in the City's comments. Mr. Parsons responded saying that the City did not provide a written comment as part of the process, rather that staff made comments throughout the entire process of development.

Mr. McRea explained the process of Public Comment versus City comment to Mr. Fallgatter and why the City could not partake in the Public Comment portion of the process.

Mr. Fallgatter said he was very interested in the orientation of the building and Chair Morgan explained that the orientation was set as a result of the Church location and a fill-dirt issue explaining that there would be a noise issue for the Church because of where the trucks pulling in to deliver products to the store.

There was further discussion back and forth in regards to the merits or otherwise of the building's orientation.

5. BOWMAN CORRIDOR UPDATE

Jim McRea told the Committee that staff had met with the Wal-Mart Engineers on the day prior and that the outcome of those discussions would be put before the Infrastructure Committee next scheduled to meet on 9th October, 2007. He indicated that the engineers had created enough hydrology and flow line but that staff needed to take a look at plans to see if it was achievable within the space allowed for the project.

Gary Parsons noted that Wal-Mart had now indicated they planned to develop all the way to Forest Knoll and not stop at Sunland. He pointed out that the trick would be to integrate the structural design and the landscape architecture plans.

Chair Morgan noted that the plan included a roundabout and therefore confirmed understanding that staff had spoken to Wal-Mart in regards the proposed roundabout. Mr. McRea responded affirmatively and noted that staff would be looking at the roundabout designs but noted that one of the roundabout designs was not recommended and the other would not work (according to Wal-Mart Engineer).

Chair Morgan asked if staff was still taking the approach that it may be economically reasonable for Wal-Mart to make further developments in order to gain access to the dirt from the channel. Mr. McRea indicated that the Attorney had stated that the City could create a reimbursement agreement that in summary said if an individual's property fronted on the drainage channel and they therefore received the advantages of the development they would be required to pay a certain \$ per square foot fee.

Mr. Parsons asked it to be noted that the project would have back-fill requirements and Mr. McRea said that the plan included two 9 x 10 culverts onto China Lake Boulevard and four under Bowman Road as well as 10 30' pipes under Sunland. Mr. Parsons then went on to say that the economic impact question we would be left with was "Do we want future developers to carry on the design?" Mr. McRea stated that was why Dan Lare's (contracted Landscape Architect) plan was interesting and represented a concept design.

Member Taylor asked if the City would retain the water to the west and Mr. McRea indicated that some but not all would be retained. Mr. McRea summarized stating that using the plan put forward by Wal-Mart Engineers, those residents affected would not get any more water from the drainage overflow but there was a chance it would be minimized.

6. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP GRANT

Chair Morgan opened by stating that it was his understanding that no committee members had sent any feedback to staff in regards to the draft grant documentation distributed in the July 5th, 2007 meeting.

Mr. McRea stated that the Council had not yet defined the project or when they would like to finalize details. He introduced Mr. Bob Peoples who was in attendance along with Mr. Bob Campbell representing the China Lake Museum Foundation. Mr. McRea explained that the Museum Foundation had approached the Committee in June of 2007 hoping to secure funds to assist with their Billboard located on the intersection of Highway 395 and Highway 14.

Mr. Peoples told the Committee that this was an opportunity for the City and the Museum Foundation to partner. He said the Museum Foundation had previously received funding from the Kern County Board of Trade but this funding was no longer available and although the next year's fee was due Mr. Peoples had gained an extension on the due date based on the fact that the Museum Foundation was talking with the City. He explained that the Foundation needed \$6,000 for the annual lease and \$1,600 to re-design the sign to include an acknowledgement to the City.

Mr. Parsons said "so you are asking the City for \$7,600 and Mr. Peoples responded affirmatively. Mr. McRea explained that whilst the Committee and the Council was working through the process of defining the Community Partnership Grant this did not meet with the timelines of the Museum.

Mr. McRea went on to say that the sign increased economic development and “heads and beds”. He said that the City could not assist using redevelopment monies nor could monies in the general fund be allocated for use on the 395 Highway.

Mayor Holloway gave a brief history on the development of the Community Partnership Grant and stated that the \$60,000 allocated for this Committee to disperse was for the purpose of economic development saying that “the whole purpose is to increase “heads and beds”. There was further discussion between Mayor Holloway, Mr. McRea and Mr. Parsons in regards defining the terms of the Grant.

Chair Morgan summarized asking if the staff could provide a new draft of the Grant outline and Mr. McRea committed to providing such. Chair Morgan then asked if the planned wording of the new draft would accommodate Mr. Peoples request and Mr. McRea responded in the affirmative.

Member Jeglum stated that it was her opinion that there was a need to document the increased T.O.T. generated by the sign. Mr. Peoples responded stating that he had done that and found that 10% of visitors to the Museum came as a result of seeing the sign.

Chair Morgan asked for a motion and this was provided by Mayor Holloway and seconded by Member Taylor. All four Committee members voted in favor of providing funds in the amount of \$7,600 to the China Lake Museum Foundation for one year lease and re-design of sign to accommodate recognition to the City.

Jim Fallgatter of 207 W. Cobblestone Lane, made comment that he “loved” the sign and that he believed it had to be “pulling” people in to Ridgecrest.

Chair Morgan asked if the Committee needed to get Council’s approval for the Grant. City Manager, Harvey Rose said that it was the understanding of staff that approval could happen at a Committee level.

Member Taylor stated that he thought the Committee needed to see the new artwork before it was approved. Mr. Peoples committed to send to staff when it was ready and Mr. McRea committed to circulating it to the Committee.

As a final comment Mayor Holloway pointed out that when drafting the new wording of the Grant it was important to be aware of the possibility of one organization soliciting both the Community Development Committee and the Quality of Life Committee for simultaneous funding.

7. GPAC UPDATE

Member Taylor advised the Committee that he felt the process was proceeding well. He commented that there was not a great deal of community involvement and that the next meeting was due to be held late October. He noted that the Committee was on track and that he had “no real complaints”. He said the meetings were being televised and he was “grateful for that”.

Chair Morgan asked if community involvement had lessened and Mr. Taylor responded in the affirmative noting it was almost non-existent. Mr. McRea disagreed saying that people are watching as he had received some comments. Chair Morgan asked if Mr. Taylor believed that the City should be re-emphasizing the importance of the GPAC meetings to reinstate interest. Mr. Taylor noted that some “milestones” were “coming up” and he believed they would generate interest. Planner Alexander noted that the Matrix Consulting Group (who have been contracted to assist with the General Plan update) had contacted him regarding a joint Planning Commission and City Council meeting. Mr. McRea advised that another blueprint was due for distribution and it was his belief this would generate interest and discussion.

There was general discussion regarding dialogue between Kern County and the City – in regards to sharing information so that the specific plan of the County and the General Plan of the city “meshed”.

Mayor Holloway said he liked the concept of “formed zoning” – “multiple use zoning”. He explained he had attended a session on that topic when he was in Sacramento for the California League of Cities Conference. Chair Morgan asked if GPAC was looking into this topic and Mr. McRea and Planner Alexander responded in the negative.

Chair Morgan asked Member Jeglum if she had any comments in regards the GPAC process. Member Jeglum said that she felt the Committee was “spinning our wheels too much”. She said, “We’re not starting from ground zero, we’re working with the current General Plan.” Member Jeglum went on to say that she felt that plans were way too loose and needed to be better defined. She said that ideas were being put forward as if the GPAC was able to start from scratch and build a new General Plan. It was her opinion that it would be more beneficial to start with the current General Plan and build ideas around it.

Mr. McRea explained that the difference between a new General Plan and a revised General Plan was a funding one and that funds were not available to generate a new General Plan.

Planner Alexander stated that it was his opinion that Matrix Consulting had done exactly what they were supposed to do. Mayor Holloway asked if the Committee was looking at plans relative to population and Planner Alexander said they were and it was a major concern in that there are too many restrictions – citing as an example the “love affair” the community has with low density housing. Chair Morgan asked if there was consideration for population growth and Planner Alexander said there was an allowance of 20,000 persons.

Chair Morgan stated that there was an expectation from Council that the Committee would provide updates throughout the process.

8. IWMB UPDATE

Mr. McRea briefed the Committee on his meeting with the Integrated Waste Management Board on the 19th September in regards to an issuance of a Compliance Order. He explained that a Local Assistance Plan (L.A.P.) will be finalized by January of 2008 and the City will have until January of 2010 to have the plan implemented.

Mr. McRea referred to the table labeled “Program/Staff Analysis” on page three of the handout he provided. He explained that the L.A.P. will include a mandatory pick-up which would increase resident’s costs by \$15/month and therefore he believed be met with some resistance. Mr. McRea further noted that IWMB did not recognize some of the City’s recycling efforts in their analysis – for instance that the City uses recycled road base and that a residential drop-off program is in place. Mr. McRea noted that the IWMB was also proposing a commercial on-site program which would increase costs to the business community which in his opinion would not be met well.

He went on to say that the figures reported by the IWMB were skewed because of the Base taking waste to the Dump. He explained that IWMB wanted a school program and expected the City to tell the Schools to implement this .

Member Jeglum asked who made up the Board and Mr. McRea responded stating that members were appointed. City Manager Harvey Rose stated that members were appointed from the Trash Collection Industry and others are politicians.

Chair Morgan asked staff to request IWMB to issue the Compliance Order in time for the Order to come before the City Council and be approved prior to the January 2008 deadline for approval. Chair Morgan went on to say that he believed that the order should be implemented smartly and the City should only agree to what they could realistically achieve.

Member Jeglum asked if the IWMB had considered the remoteness of the City and the fact that the City does not have access to recycling facilities.

9. DIRECTOR'S REPORTS/UPDATE

Public Services Director Jim McRea briefed the Committee telling them that the Marriott construction was moving along and construction was targeted to be completed early Easter. He stated that Wal-Mart construction should commence in early 2008 and Rite Aid may not open until the first of the year 2008 even though construction is currently on time. Mr. McRea advised that staff were working on negotiations for the Business Park.

Member Taylor asked if there was back-fill for Rite Aid. Mr. Parsons responded stating there was but he could not talk about it.

Chair Morgan asked if there could be further data available on sign ordinance for the next meeting and Mr. McRea responded in the affirmative.

Mr. McRea advised that D.R. Horton was still looking at developing, however they had not set a time frame nor specified a market but he wished to clarify that they had not "run away".

10. COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/NEXT MEETING

Planner Alexander advised that the Ridgecrest Cares Committee would like to give an update and it was agreed this could happen at the next meeting.

12. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 4.30 p.m.