



MINUTES

Town Center Committee

Queen Creek Incubator

22308 S. Ellsworth Rd, Queen Creek, AZ

December 12, 2012

8:00 am

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Webb at 8:07 am. The following people were in attendance:

Committee Members: Chair Chris Webb, Deb Wood, Marquis Scott, Vice Chair Bill Smith, Jason Buche, Monica O'Toole, Barbara Khalsa

Town Staff: Doreen Cott, Economic Development Director; Kim Moyers, Economic Development Specialist; Joy Maglione, Town Clerk Assistant; Wayne Balmer, Planning Manager

Absent Members: Council Member Barnes, Council Member Oliphant, Nancy Diab, Larry Hoel, Shane Randall

Guests: None

2. Introductions & Announcements.

None

3. Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

4. Items for Discussion and Possible Action

A. Consideration and possible approval of the October 10, 2012 minutes

Motion: Bill Smith

2nd: Monica O'Toole

To approve the October 10, 2012 minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Discussion and possible recommendation on the 2012 Major General Plan Amendments

Wayne Balmer, Planning Manager, stated that six general plan amendments had been filed: four text amendments were real estate related and two were design related. He reviewed the general plan amendment process that includes schedules, open houses, public meetings, website and social media posts and mailings. He provided an overview on the two amendments that were related to the Town Center as follows:

Major General Plan Amendment GPA12-052:

Mr. Balmer explained that this is a staff initiated request to add text modifications to the General Plan that would update the Town Center Plan. The changes would encourage higher density, pursue commuter rail options and promote pedestrian/transit oriented design in the Town Center and would incorporate some of the findings in the ULI Study and ASU Capstone Project. Mr. Balmer stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval.

Motion: Barbara Khalsa

2nd: Bill Smith

Motion to recommend approval of General Plan Amendment 12-052 as proposed.

Motion carried unanimously.

Major General Plan Amendment GPA12-049 – Queen Creek Station:

Chair Chris Webb abstained from discussion on this item.

Mr. Balmer reviewed details of the original approved 2007 Queen Creek Station General Plan Amendment which included realigned Queen Creek and Ellsworth Road with commercial and mixed use land changes.

Mr. Balmer then showed the proposed new amendment and said the various properties previously included in the 2007 Queen Creek Station Major General Plan Amendment have now been transferred. Fulton Homes has filed a request to amend the approved plan on behalf of all the current owners. The changes include no road realignments to Ellsworth and Queen Creek Roads / (alignments stay original); reduced the proposed mixed-use designation to approximately 100 acres; and reconfigure the single family residential areas to accommodate a density of 3-5 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). Mr. Balmer gave details of commercial trends around the valley and how the commercial changes might affect the Town Center development.

Mr. Balmer stated staff's recommendation was to increase density up to 3 du/ac and the Planning and Zoning Commission's recommendation was to approve the Transportation and Circulation Element amendment as requested; density of up to 3 du/ac west of Ellsworth Road and the retention of 30 acres of Employment A at the northeast corner of "Queen Creek Parkway" and Ellsworth Road. Mr. Balmer also reviewed the Transportation Advisory Committee's recommendation to realign Queen Creek Road to line up with "Queen Creek Parkway" at its present north/south alignment of Ellsworth Road as shown on the 2007 plan.

The Town Center Committee commented that they support the additional residential in the area and increasing densities and to encourage further development within the existing Town Center.

C. Discussion and possible recommendation on ADOT Passenger Rail Study

Mr. Balmer stated that this item was on the agenda for the last Town Center Committee meeting that got canceled. It has since been taken to Council for action therefore the presentation is purely informational.

The ADOT Passenger Rail Corridor Study is evaluating transportation options to connect downtown Phoenix to downtown Tucson. A letter was sent to ADOT from the Mayor of Queen Creek on behalf of the Town that highlighted comments and input from committees, public and the Town Council regarding the ADOT Passenger Rail Corridor Study and also the MAG Commuter Rail Study from 2010. The Town supports the yellow and teal alternatives which both include stops in Queen Creek. The Town's preference was based on its' proximity to Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport; highest ridership potential for a broad section of the East Valley and the findings of the MAG commuter rail study for future commuter rail possibilities.

Mr. Balmer noted that currently there is no funding available for these projects but having a station in Queen Creek would be optimal for the Town Center and would likely promote economic development opportunities.

D. Discussion and possible approval of amendments to the Town Center Committee by-laws

Kim Moyers, Economic Development Specialist, distributed draft by-laws of the Queen Creek Town Center Committee. She outlined the following proposed changes to the by-laws:

- Council members will be changed to Ex-officio/Liaison (non-voting) members of the committee and will not be counted toward the quorum
- Removal of "Planning & Zoning Representative" as a "designated seat"
- Number of members on the committee shall consist of at least 11 members (instead of 13) and maximum number of members not to exceed 17 (instead of 19)

Motion: Monica O'Toole 2nd: Barbara Khalsa

Motion to approve the changes to the Town Center Committee by-laws.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Discussion and possible action on the reconsideration of prior Façade Improvement application

Chairman Webb presented information on the prior application for Mountain View Funeral Home which was approved for painting and landscaping improvements but denied signage improvements. At the request of the applicant, the Committee was asked to reconsider the signage request.

Ms. Moyers reviewed other signage projects that have been approved through the program. Ms. Moyers stated that Town staff was asked to review the program details as it applies to signs and in their opinion there is no difference detailed in the program criteria between new business signage and replacing existing signage. As written, the eligible criteria only states "signage".

Deb Wood said that a new tenant needs new signage to open for business. It is not an improvement to the façade but the cost of opening a business. She said there is a clear distinction from this and a business that has a sign that needs repair or renovation.

Committee members reviewed the purpose and mission of the program as written. There was discussion on the intent of the program and whether it was intended to pay for signs for a new business and the criteria between new and existing businesses.

Chairman Web agreed that the intent and current language may not be aligned and advised the committee to consider modifications of the program criteria to be more specific.

Chairman Webb asked what the price for the signage was. Ms. Moyers replied that the signage was \$13,000 and the reimbursement amount would be \$6500.

Doreen Cott, Economic Development Director, added that this is a pilot program and there is a learning curve on new issues that arise. She suggested that an appeal process be considered in the future.

Motion: Deb Wood 2nd: Jason Buche

Motion to uphold the previous recommendation for Mountain View Funeral Home and not approve funding for signage.

(Marquis Scott abstained from voting on this item).

Comments/discussion on motion:

- The original rules were not clear in this case; it does say that exterior signage is included.
- The committee does not have to accept the entire package of an application and the applicants are aware of this.
- Concern that a precedent may be set by allowing this.
- Spirit of the law vs. letter of the law. May not be the intent of the program, but the wording as written may allow for it.
- The intent of the program is also for an economic tool to generate new business.

Vote: 2-4. Motion failed.

Further discussion took place regarding criteria and eligibility as written at the time of the application and the intent of the program.

Vice Chair Smith asked for clarification on commercial properties and residential properties that are re-designated as commercial.

It was noted that previous approvals were for signage improvements for existing businesses not for new signage for new businesses or new owners.

Vice Chair Smith said another purpose of the program is to encourage new business to come to Queen Creek.

Motion: Monica O'Toole 2nd: Barbara Khalsa

Motion to reconsider the application for Mountain View Funeral Home and approve the signage as submitted based on the current criteria at the time of the application.

Vote: 4-2. Motion passed.

F. Discussion and possible action on the Façade Improvement Criteria

This item was continued to the January meeting.

G. Summary of current events – Reports from Chair, Committee Members and Economic Development staff

Ms. Moyers stated that the QC Incubator is holding a series of open houses and they have two new businesses participating in the program.

5. **Announcements**

None

6. **Adjournment**

Motion: Marquis Scott 2nd: Bill Smith

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 am

TOWN OF QUEEN CREEK

Chris Webb, Town Center Committee Chair

Prepared by:

Joy Maglione
Town Clerk Assistant

Passed and approved on January 9, 2013.