



MINUTES

TOWN CENTER COMMITTEE MEETING

March 24, 2009 7:30 a.m.

San Tan Conference Room

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 a.m. At roll call the following people were in attendance:

Committee Members:

Cynthia Buffington
Chris Webb
Nancy Diab
Brian Frakes
Jason Gad
Randy Green
Steve Ingram
Monica Munoz
Toni Valenzuela

Town Staff:

Doreen Cott, Economic Development Director
Kim Moyers, Economic Development Mgmt. Asst.
Craig Barnes, Council Member
Wayne Balmer, Planning Manager
Fred Brittingham, Principal Planner
Dick Schaner, Transportation Director
Michael Pacelli, Assistant Public Works Director
Tom Narva, Sr. Project Manager, CIP
Laura Moats, Community Dev. Assistant
Council Member Mortensen arrived at 8 a.m.

Absent:

Ryan Desmond
Marvin Smith, Jr.

Others Present:

Kevin Roberts, P.E. - Dibble Engineering
Duane Dana, P.E. - Dibble Engineering
Lori Tuchman, EPG
David L. Wilson, EPG

2. Introductions

Ms. Cott introduced Kevin Roberts and Duane Dana of Dibble Engineering and Lori Tuchman and David Wilson of EPG.

3. Public Comment: *Members of the public may address the Committee on items not on the printed agenda.* There were no public comments.

4. Items for Discussion and Possible Action

A. Consideration and possible approval of the February 24, 2009 Minutes:

Motion: Toni Valenzuela 2nd: Nancy Diab

**To approve the February 24, 2009 Meeting Minutes, as presented.
All ayes. Motion carried.**

B. Consideration and possible approval of Chair and Vice-Chair for Town Center Committee:

Ms. Cott opened the nominations for Vice-Chair. Council Member Barnes nominated Chris Webb. Cynthia Buffington nominated Toni Valenzuela. Each accepted their respective nominations.

On a voice-vote, there were 7 votes for Chris Webb and 3 votes for Toni Valenzuela.

Motion: Cynthia Buffington 2nd: Steve Ingram

**To elect Chris Webb as Vice-Chair of the Town Center Committee.
All ayes. Motion carried.**

Ms. Cott opened the nominations for the position of Chair. Council Member Barnes nominated Nancy Diab. Toni Valenzuela nominated Cynthia Buffington. Each accepted their respective nominations.

On a voice vote, there were 4 votes for Nancy and 6 votes for Cynthia.

Motion: Toni Valenzuela 2nd: Jason Gad

**To elect Cynthia Buffington as Chair of the Town Center Committee.
All ayes. Motion carried.**

C. Consideration and possible approval of the Committee Work Program and Key Result Areas:

Ms. Cott noted the Work Plan has been revised as follows:

- Meeting numbers changed to **Key Result Areas** (KRAs); and,
- The Amenities Element has been moved up in the schedule, to be addressed before the **Transportation System**.

Motion: Toni Valenzuela 2nd: Cynthia Buffington

To approve the revised Work Plan, as presented. All ayes. Motion carried.

D. Presentation and Discussion of Dibble Engineering Design Concept Report

Kevin Roberts, P.E., Vice-President of Dibble Engineering, stated he would review the Roadway Design Development portion of the project, representing the *function* of the roadways, and Lori Tuchman of EPG would review the Aesthetic Design Development portion of the project, representing *form*. Kevin stated Dibble was hired to do the Design Concept Report (DCR) for Town Center Area. The Design Concept Report was finalized and presented to Council in February, 2008. Since the DCR was developed, Dibble has entered into a contract with the Town to design a small portion of Ellsworth Road (30% plans submitted). Dibble is currently waiting for direction from the Town on its wishes and desires on how this area needs to function and what form (aesthetics, pavement treatment, color schemes, vegetation, streetscape, landscape) it should take.

STUDY AREA

Mr. Roberts outlined the Study Area for the DCR, which is Ellsworth Road from Barnes Parkway to the north (north connector to Ellsworth Loop Road) south to the Queen Creek wash (south connector to Ellsworth Loop Road) and Ocotillo Road, between Ellsworth Loop Road and the Cornerstone Development (Walmart). Termination points were selected based on improvements made with the Ellsworth Loop project.

DCR DEVELOPMENT AND FEEDBACK PROCESS

Mr. Roberts illustrated the timeline for development of the DCR, noting there was a public input process for several of the presentations:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| February 23, 2007 | Presentation to Town Planning and Engineering Staff |
| April 18, 2007 | Presentation to Town Council (Work Study Session) |
| May 9, 2007 | Presentation to Planning & Zoning Commission |
| May 16, 2007 | Presentation to Town Council |
| August 1, 2007 | Joint Presentation to P&Z and Town Council |

ROADWAY FUNCTION

Mr. Roberts pointed out and provided an illustration for each of the 3 distinct 'Reaches' of Roadway and the function of each:

- ❖ Ellsworth Road North Reach (North of Heritage Lane)
 - 4 travel lanes
 - Bike lanes
 - Median
- ❖ Ellsworth Road South Reach (South of Heritage Lane)
 - 2 travel lanes
 - Bike lanes
 - Median
- ❖ Ocotillo Road Reach
 - 4 travel lanes
 - Bike lanes
 - Median

Mr. Roberts noted the reason for using Heritage as a breakpoint was a result of group consensus among the Town Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Planning & Engineering staff. This consensus included making the entryway to the true Town Center more of a pedestrian friendly corridor. The area of roadway north of Heritage is more conducive to vehicular traffic, since it consists of mainly large commercial areas.

Mr. Roberts explained the strategy for proposing four lanes of traffic on Ocotillo Road, in order to improve east/west traffic flow through town. Dibble Engineering continues to gather feedback and suggested changes from the Town on this proposal.

Toni Valenzuela asked if the DCR was shown to Town Center businesses and residents. Mr. Roberts responded Dibble interacted with the public during public sessions of Town Council and Planning & Zoning Commission meetings, as well as General Plan open houses. Ms. Cott clarified the DCR was based on the Town Center Plan and Elements within that plan, which went through a very extensive process that included public outreach.

Mr. Roberts stated to its credit, during this process the Town was attempting to keep up with rapid development along the corridor

Ms. Valenzuela stated her opinion that the DCR was rushed, leaving businesses no opportunity to provide comments.

Mr. Roberts responded Dibble Engineering was directed to go on hold before presenting the plan to the public. Ms. Cott added the plan was put on hold knowing that the new Town Center Committee would be formed. In addition, TAC has provided input and made recommendations that have been approved by the Town Council. Mr. Roberts stated as a design team, Dibble is interested in knowing what citizens and businesses want this corridor to look like. He commended the Town for forming this Town Center Committee to provide comment on the plan. He noted, aesthetically, the public should have a lot of input as to streetscape to make it function the way businesses want it to function, while ensuring it's safe for vehicular traffic as well as pedestrians.

Returning to the roadway exhibits, Mr. Roberts stated the areas behind the street curbs are areas that EPG is under contract to design, including the streetscape, pedestrian walkways, and landscaping. Regarding the Ellsworth Road South Reach, near the intersection at Duncan Street, Mr. Roberts stated as a result of input from property owners along Ellsworth Road, Town staff will provide an opportunity for on-street parking along Ellsworth Road. As such, the proposed roadway shifts to the west to allow room for on-street parking on the east side of Ellsworth Road. This is typical layout for the south reach of Ellsworth Road.

Ms. Valenzuela asked if there will be on-street parking on the west side of Ellsworth Road and if property would be taken for this purpose. Mr. Roberts responded no parking is proposed on the west side of the road, with the exception the parking spaces immediately in front of Town Hall. Additional discussion followed regarding the amount of right-of-way being acquired by the Town, which is a total of 110-feet.

Nancy Diab asked if different types of parking spaces have been considered, such as pull-in instead of parallel, stating that it seems like accidents are more likely with parallel spots. Mr. Roberts responded that many different options have been considered, including parallel parking along the center of the road, which is seen in rare cases. The Planning & Zoning Commission and Town Council were not receptive to this. Mr. Roberts noted that parallel parking takes the least amount of width. Nose-in parking creates hazards for backing out into traffic and is wider. It was ultimately decided parallel parking would be a good compromise.

Mr. Roberts introduced Lori Tuchman of EPG, stating she would provide the Aesthetic/form portion of the presentation. Ms. Cott clarified that additional in-depth discussion on the Amenity Element of the Town Center Plan will be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

Ms. Tuchman provided background on how the information gathered on the roadway design development was integrated into the DCR to create the Aesthetic Design Development portion of the DCR. From information gathered, EPG came up with proposals for the Ellsworth Road Design and Character, as well as Town Center amenities, including pocket parks, a town hall gathering place and a southern gateway plaza.

Data collection showed that the Town could be characterized as agricultural, equestrian and homestead. In addition, the Town is quickly transitioning into greater commercial/retail opportunities, along with residential and development surrounding the new library. In order to respond to this rapid commercial activity, the Town has begun implementing its own corridor improvements, such as streetlights, landscaping, water features, and paving elements.

Based on original design submittals and feedback received, Design Elements were submitted to the Town in February and April, 2007 identifying key areas important to downtown area as follows:

February submittal DESIGN ELEMENTS:

1. Entry/Gateway feature at Heritage Lane/Ellsworth Road intersection
2. Decorative landscaping and crosswalk at Ellsworth/Ocotillo roads intersection
3. Small park at northwest corner of Ellsworth/Ocotillo roads intersection
4. Southern Gateway Plaza
5. Site furnishings: traditional/modern
6. Plant Materials: traditional/desert

Town Feedback on the February submittal included:

1. Island or football was a big hit, as was the arch concept. The Town wants both elements to be included at the north and south end of the project.
2. Use "Urban Landscaping" design with shade trees in grates and planters.
3. Intersection of Ocotillo/Ellsworth roads should include a horseshoe design with shoe feet pointing north.
4. Develop a couple of crosswalk pattern designs in addition to the brick one shown on the plans.
5. Some sort of monument or spire is warranted in the northwest corner of the Ellsworth/Ocotillo roads intersection. Town asked for additional suggestions.
6. Town did not care for the color horse blanket idea.
7. Street furniture should be unique, such as horse bench shown on site furnishings display board. Suggestions were made for trash cans containing the Town logo and unique bicycle racks.

The April submittal incorporated feedback received from the February design submittal, and included the following DESIGN ELEMENTS:

1. Two entry gateway features (Heritage Lane/Ellsworth roads intersection; north of Queen Creek Wash)
2. Additional "island" adjacent to the new library
3. Horseshoe pattern in Ellsworth/Ocotillo roads intersection
4. Town Hall gathering place
5. Site furnishings: traditional/unique
6. Plant materials: Urban landscaping

Feedback received from the Planning & Zoning Commission included:

1. Commission seemed to dislike all of the proposed horseshoe design alternatives; two issues raised during this discussion included: Maintenance and Legacy.
2. Commission was in favor of some sort of monument feature at the north and south ends of the "south reach" of Ellsworth Road. Gateways or Archways were discussed as possibilities, but not necessarily a "must".
3. Avoid "dating" the design.
4. Eliminate the equestrian trail system.

All of the feedback was compiled into two options: *Alternative 1*, which is old town agricultural and linear; and *Alternative 2*, which is patterned after the Queen Creek wash and is more curvilinear with meandering sidewalks and uses more textures. Ms. Tuchman illustrated the exhibits for Heritage Lane/Ellsworth Road plantings, wall structures, paving options, pocket lots, and site furnishings.

Dibble is now looking for feedback, questions and/or comments regarding these design alternatives that can help them and EPG move forward with the portion of Ellsworth Road, north of Ocotillo Road. Town Assistant Public Works Director Michael Pacelli suggested all comments be consolidated within this committee and sent to Dibble as one recommendation. Mr. Roberts informed the Committee the Town has a copy of the DCR produced by Dibble Engineering, including all text and exhibits that have been presented to the Town Council up to this point.

Ms. Valenzuela stated that as a businessperson who is speaking independently of the Town Center Committee, Town Staff and the Committee need to be more conscious of how this will affect Town Center businesses and residents. She suggested Dibble hold a public meeting, giving the Town Center community an opportunity to be involved in this process. Ms. Cott responded the DCR process outlined by Mr. Roberts has been extensive and has gone through public participation.

Mr. Roberts clarified the DCR process by stating the Town Center Plan was adopted in 2005, and was the starting point for the DCR. The DCR is not a contract or construction plans. The intent of the DCR is to elaborate on the comments made on the Town Center Plan. A certain segment of that plan has a design contract in place. He reiterated the purpose of the DCR is to guide in general terms.

Council Member Mortensen added the purpose of the Town Center Committee is to take everything done during the public process and the design concept phase, combined with staff input and solidify it into something with which to move forward. He stated that by reviewing the KRAs, the Committee will have time to do this. He emphasized this Committee is made up of Town Center business owners so that they have the opportunity to put thoughts on the table. He offered reassurance that this will be a public process.

- E. Discussion on the Multimodal Circulation System Element of the Town Center Plan
This discussion was deferred until after Item F.

F. Discussion on the Town Center Design Concept and Access Management Plan

Planning Manager Balmer gave a presentation on the Town Center Street Design Concept and Access Management Plan as recommended by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) to Town Council on February 5, 2009.

Taking into consideration the traffic and design issues that came out of the 2005 Town Center Plan, the TAC looked at what types of improvements would be necessary to make the Town Center area unique in terms of how it will look behind the actual street.

Mr. Balmer pointed out the commercial areas located throughout town on the Town's Land Use Map, stating the Town would like to see most of its commercial focused in one area, not on every corner. The goal is to make the major commercial component of Town Center unique.

Mr. Balmer outlined the 15 different commercial areas throughout town, including proposed commercial/retail which has not yet been developed. He stated one of the issues to be decided is whether or not the Town Center area should be expanded.

Mr. Balmer discussed the Town Center street system, noting the Ellsworth Loop bypass alleviated a lot of congestion on Ellsworth Road, however, it created the issue of how to get "main street"-type business through town, without making other surrounding development suffer. The new road system addresses this by the creation of additional roads, such as Heritage Loop Road, Victoria Lane, Duncan Street, and Maya. In addition, this system promotes the idea of a pedestrian friendly area that makes it easy to get from one point to another within Town Center.

TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES

Mr. Balmer outlined the following Transportation Challenges, noting the Council is looking at how to balance all of these transportation challenges with future growth:

- Providing access to existing businesses in the Town Center
- Preparing to meet the transportation needs of the new and proposed development in the Town Center:
 - 2.1 million square feet of retail and restaurants
 - 24-screen theater
 - 440 apartments

- The Town Center is served by only three arterial streets – Rittenhouse, Ocotillo and Ellsworth
- Traffic safety concerns will increase as traffic volume increases
- Five-mile retail service market for new retail projects
- Capital improvement funding and coordination
- Increasing Pinal County traffic

Mr. Balmer then discussed the issue of medians and how the Town has mapped its median priorities. He illustrated three separate maps, each showing where raised and flush medians have been planned in Town Center and where raised medians have been changed to flush medians.

Discussion followed on the left-turn traffic volume at Rittenhouse and Ellsworth roads, compared to traffic that goes north past the railroad tracks. Assistant Director of Public Works Michael Pacelli provided information concerning traffic volumes and traffic signal communications.

Discussion also included the transition spots for the pedestrian friendly area and vehicular large commercial area.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Mr. Balmer noted the implementation steps of the Access Management Plan, as recommended by the TAC, include:

- Raised median Segment Four (on map) should be removed as soon as possible
- New standards to be used for all new projects in Town Center
- Previously approved street projects should proceed, with modification, if needed
- Projects to be done by the Town will be part of future Capital Improvement Programs
- New street improvements may be done individually, or grouped at best
- These standards should be reviewed in the future as circumstances change

Ms. Cott stated the pdf copy of Dibble's presentation will be provided for the Committee. The TAC presentation given by Mr. Balmer was previously provided to the Committee in their binders. Ms. Cott stated she'll bring back discussion points for the next meeting and will work with staff to invite all TCC business owners for a public meeting on the next design.

Principal Planner Fred Brittingham noted that future discussion should include land uses. This discussion has not yet occurred, but is important to tying together traffic and streets. Ms. Cott agreed.

Mortensen noted the areas that have been heavily discussed versus areas that have not yet been discussed, such as land uses, etc., stating he feels today's discussion has been beneficial. The group will have the chance to come back to other specific areas; today's meeting provided a broad overview of several different aspects that will lay the foundation for more specific discussion in the future. He noted the importance of not reinventing the wheel, since a lot of public input has already taken place and decisions have already been made at this point, such as the General Plan, and some areas of the design concepts that are ready to begin construction. He noted it is important not to move backwards.

5. **Announcements**

HOMEWORK ITEMS:

Ms. Cott restated she will copy the Dibble presentation; if anyone needs additional copies of the TAC report, they should let staff know. Doreen will work with staff to conduct a public meeting with businesses. In addition, for the next meeting Doreen will provide some type of update on the multi-modal element that encompasses everything the Committee has heard.

6. **Adjournment**

**Motion: Cynthia Buffington 2nd: Council Member Mortensen
To adjourn. All ayes. Motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Moats, Community Development Assistant

Passed and approved this 28th day of April, 2009.

Doreen Cott, Economic Development Director

Cynthia Buffington, Chair