



MINUTES

TOWN CENTER COMMITTEE MEETING

November 24, 2009 7:30 a.m.

San Tan Conference Room

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Webb at 7:36 a.m. At roll call the following people were in attendance:

Committee Members:

Cynthia Buffington
Chris Webb
Jason Gad
Toni Valenzuela
Ryan Desmond
Nancy Diab
Monica Munoz
Marvin Smith, Jr.
Council Member Barnes

Town Staff:

Doreen Cott, Economic Dev. Director
Kim Moyers, Management Assistant
Laura Moats, Community Dev. Assistant
Wayne Balmer, Planning Manager

Others Present:

Richard Dyer, Independent Newspapers
Brittany Stacey, student at Mesquite H.S.

Absent:

Randy Green
Brian Frakes
Steve Ingram
Vice Mayor Mortensen

2. Introductions

- 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 October 27, 2009 Minutes:

**Motion: Jason Gad 2nd: Nancy Diab
To approve the October 27, 2009 Meeting Minutes, as presented.**

Vote: All ayes. Motion carried unanimously (7-0)

- B. Discussion and Possible Action on Definitions for Mixed Use for the Land Use Element

Ms. Cott noted the two options provided are based on discussion from the October meeting. Ryan Desmond asked for clarification on the proposed changes. Vice-Chairman Webb referred to the end of the third paragraph, stating language was added to both options. Mr. Gad noted the first option targeted 60% as goal on each type of Mixed Use, whereas the second option does not place a limit or restriction on each type of mixed use. He favors having some kind of target, but would like to see a different word used to ensure it shows a suggested target to imply this is a guide or recommended amount. He does not favor excluding any type of developers from making specific applications that may be beneficial to Town Center. Mr. Webb clarified there would not be a 60% limit, it would be a limit on the combination of uses. Mr. Webb stated he would prefer no limit or restrictions in order to avoid discouraging potential developers. He reminded the group of the last discussion at which time the Committee talked about avoiding projects that were extreme in one direction or another (uses). Chairperson Buffington stated Council can always override staff's recommendation, and the definition is merely a guideline. Some members of the Committee stated the definition is worded more like a restriction than a recommendation or guide. Chairperson Buffington stated Council can vote at their discretion. Ryan Desmond stated a prospective developer would understand by reading the definition that, although a specific target amount is listed, Council can make the ultimate decision. He added for the right project, the Planning & Zoning Commission can make a recommendation and

Council can make a decision at its will. Mr. Desmond stated the issue is two-fold because ordinarily, if the discussion was about language that applied to the entire town, this language would not be applicable; however, in this case, it is a well-defined, very specific geographical area with very few undeveloped parcels left. Mr. Desmond stated he feels the first option would give the Town a little more leverage in approving proposed mixed use projects. Without this, there is not much leverage for the Town, and it would put the Town in a more challenging situation. He feels including a limit will steer projects to be a more balanced mix of uses. Ultimately, he feels this language works in this particular case, especially since Council has the power to overrule.

Mr. Smith stated he feels the 60% is too close to 50%; therefore, it should be higher, possibly 70%. It should either be equal parts of non-residential and residential or 75% as a target. Mr. Webb agreed with Mr. Smith. Mr. Desmond suggested limiting each commercial use to no more than 50%, but imposing an aggregate of no more than 75% (or any other number the group agrees with).

Chairperson Buffington questioned if a percentage would be better than 'fair and equitable balance'. Mr. Webb questioned the effectiveness of implementing a percentage if Council can override it. Chairperson Buffington responded it would set a standard. Mr. Gad stated it is important to include a percentage for residential because "Town Center Mixed Use" is too broad. He suggested using the terms, "should target" or "ideally uses". Ms. Cott stated from a staff perspective, it would be nice to have some guidance when talking to developers. Ms. Diab noted it is for this reason that she agrees the phrase should say "suggested" or "recommended".

Discussion continued on the pros and cons of implementing a standard percentage, and whether a percentage should be put in place for each of the three uses, or as an aggregate amount.

Mr. Gad pointed out in order to facilitate the development of a true mixed use project, the ratio between residential and non-residential should be balanced and/or no one use should form the majority of the total project area.

Mr. Balmer offered to compile proposed language for a formal motion on the Mixed Use definition. The group moved on to discussion of the second paragraph under Option 1 of the Proposed Mixed Use Definitions". Ms. Cott stated Steve Ingram had previously suggested the inclusion of the underlined portion, which reads, "*The land use percentages described above will not apply to the conversion of existing structures. Existing structures can be converted to any single type of alternative use allowed within the Mixed Use classification*". The group agreed to retain this language.

Mr. Webb referred to the Proposed Mixed Use Purpose Statement on page two and asked if there were any comments or discussion on this item. He clarified each zoning category has a purpose statement, which is the goal of each particular zoning district. He suggested the Committee re-read the statement to ensure it is still consistent. Mr. Desmond questioned which category "civic uses" would fall under. Mr. Balmer responded they would be grouped with libraries, schools and post offices. Mr. Desmond asked how a civic use would be viewed in relation to percentages. Mr. Balmer stated it would be deducted from the total area, and would not limit a developer from coming in and hitting their percentages. Mr. Webb asked if "institutional" and "civic" are the same. Mr. Balmer responded an institution is like a school or church versus civic as uses mentioned above.

Mr. Balmer restated the definition for "Town Center Mixed Use" with a quantifiable standard as agreed to by the Committee as follows: to facilitate development of a true mixed use project, the proposal should include a combination of commercial, office and residential. Each use could occupy 50% of the total, but the combination could not exceed 75%.

Motion: Ryan Desmond 2nd: Nancy Diab

To recommend approval of Option 1 of the Proposed Town Center Mixed Use Definition, with changes as read aloud by Planning Manager Balmer (noted above).

Vote: **All ayes. Motion carried (9-0).**

Discussion followed on the Proposed Mixed Use Zoning Purpose Statement. Chairperson Buffington questioned the use of the word, "encourage" in the sentence reading, "The MU District promotes integration of commercial and residential uses in an environment that encourages pedestrian and non-

motorized alternatives, and to provide a menu of employment and housing options. She noted the purpose of the Town Center is to be pedestrian-friendly. Monica Munoz noted there are some developments that were built without sidewalks. Discussion followed on the term 'encourages' versus 'must be'.

Chairperson Buffington asked if everyone was comfortable that 'must be' be put in the language. Ms. Munoz agreed that sidewalks should be part of Town Center developments, and this should not be an option.

After discussion, the Committee concurred with changing the sentence to read: **The MU district promotes integration of commercial and residential uses in an environment that is pedestrian-friendly and encourages non-motorized alternatives, and provides a menu of employment and housing options.**

Motion: Nancy Diab **Second:** Toni Valenzuela

To approve the Proposed Mixed Use Zoning Purpose Statement as presented, with the change to the third sentence as discussed and noted above.

Vote: **All ayes. Motion carried (9-0).**

Ms. Cott noted the next scheduled meeting is the week of Christmas (December 22). It was the consensus of the Committee to cancel the December meeting and resume the regular meeting schedule in January.

Ms. Cott stated the next item for Committee consideration is the last section of the Town Center Plan. She noted staff will come back with an Executive Summary, including the Table of Contents and all Elements for final review by the Committee. This will be followed by review of the Redevelopment Plan. Ms. Cott asked everyone to read through Redevelopment Plan before the January meeting.

Nancy Diab left the meeting at 8:23 a.m.

C. Discussion and Possible Action on Implementation Strategy

Ms. Cott stated she has categorized the action items in the revised Implementation Strategy by Element. Ms. Cott reviewed the current

Implementation Matrix and removed all items which have been accomplished. She stated that the revised Town Center Plan will reference all of the accomplishments that have been made.

Ms. Cott requested input, particularly regarding the “different partners and stakeholders” involved. She asked for input on whether or not to put these in priority order. Ms. Cott added that when she brings the finished Town Center Plan to Council, she can recommend a continuation of the Town Center Committee in a different form, such as an “Implementation” Committee where the group could work on implementation items and prioritization of these items. This could be accomplished through a yearly action plan.

In response to a comment by Jason Gad, Ms. Cott stated there are many items for implementation that staff can work on internally such as budget policies. Mr. Desmond stated for purposes of the document, the degree of difficulty in implementing the items is not an issue.

Ms. Moyers used the first item as an example to clarify that although the action is “Research best practices...”, there are many items that would be included in completing the research, so this would be addressed under a work program of the Town Center Committee.

Discussion took place on the action item: “Develop density bonus policies to include exchanges of land for open space/pocket parks and pedestrian walkways between developments (fine tune transfer of development rights ordinance). Mr. Balmer stated this may not be applicable in this context, as it is not a goal the Committee can set for itself. Mr. Balmer suggested the standing committee could “as-needed” make recommendations on land uses the Committee has been discussing, which would give the Committee a voice in the implementation. This recommendation would not replace the function of the Planning & Zoning Commission; however, the Town Center Committee could make recommendations to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Mr. Gad recommended if there’s no implied priority in the matrix, then for readability, items should be grouped within Elements by their specific budget impact. Therefore, all low impact items would be grouped together within their specific Element category. The Committee agreed to list the Elements showing low-to-high budget impacts within elements.

Motion: Cynthia Buffington 2nd: Ryan Desmond

To approve the Implementation Strategy and Matrix as written, including the additional revision of quantifying budget impacts within each category from low to high.

Vote: **All ayes. Motion carried 8-0.**

D. Plus/Delta Review of the Meeting

The Committee commented on how well Vice-Chairman Webb ran the meeting.

5. Announcements

The December meeting has been canceled. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 26, 2010 at 7:30 a.m. in the San Tan Conference Room of the Development Services Building.

6. Adjournment

Motion: Toni Valenzuela 2nd: Ryan Desmond

To adjourn.

Vote: **All ayes. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).**

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Moats, Community Development Assistant

Cynthia Buffington, Chairperson

I, Laura Moats, do hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the foregoing Minutes are a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the November 24, 2009 Town Center Committee Meeting. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 24th day of November, 2009

Passed and Approved this day of, 2009.