



## DRAFT MINUTES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING March 24, 2010, 7:30 a.m. San Tan Conference Room

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#### 1. Call to order

##### **Present:**

Council Member Barnes	Town of Queen Creek
John Schroeder, Chairman	CGCC, Williams Campus
Rustyn Sherer, Vice Chairman	Queen Creek Chamber of Commerce
Jean Humphries	Arizona State University Polytechnic
Lee Ester	SRP
Jason Barney	Land Developer
Carson Brown	W Holdings
David Valenzuela	Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport
Dr. James Murlless	Queen Creek Unified School District
Roseann Sweet	Queen Creek Resident
Steve Sossaman	Queen Creek Resident
Doreen Cott	Town of Queen Creek
Wayne Balmer	Town of Queen Creek

##### **Absent:**

Vice Mayor Mortensen	Town of Queen Creek
Mark Schnepf	Schnepf Farms
Kim Moyers	Town of Queen Creek

##### **Guests:**

Ralph Pew	Pew & Lake
Tyler Wright	Pew & Lake

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m.

##### **Public Comment**

No public comment.

#### 2. Consideration and possible approval of the February 24, 2010 minutes.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Sossaman and seconded by Commissioner Humphries to approve the minutes dated February 24, 2010 with minor revisions as discussed. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

#### 3. Discussion and possible action on the Town Center Committee's recommended updates to the Town Center Plan.

Economic Development Director Doreen Cott gave an overview of the Town Center Committee's recommended updates to the Town Center Plan. Ms. Cott stated that staff is requesting the Commission's approval of the recommendations before presenting to the Town Council next month. The Town Center Committee has recommended combining the two mixed use designations of commercial and retail. Other recommendations include boundary changes, sidewalk design, landscape palette, site furnishings, decorative traffic signals and street lights.

Commissioner Sossaman asked where the funding for the decorative elements will come from.

Ms. Cott stated that it may come from the quarter percent sales tax from Queen Creek Marketplace and Cornerstone. The funds may be used for items like maintenance and programs and must be used in the Town Center.

Ms. Cott presented the zoning map that includes the current zoning that exists in the Town Center. Ms. Cott also presented the graphic that details the Committee's recommended boundary changes for the Town Center area.

Ms. Cott provided the Commission with the Proposed Mixed Use Definition. The Town Center Committee included quantifiable standards to ensure a balance of uses; commercial, office and residential.

Recommended updates will be presented to Town Council on April 7<sup>th</sup>. If council approves the updates, staff will initiate a general plan amendment so the General Plan and the Town Center Plan are consistent.

Commissioner Sossaman asked if we have definitions of commercial and office and what the difference is. Ms. Cott answered that commercial is retail in this instance.

Ms. Cott indicated that the definition is limited specifically to Town Center. Planning Manager Wayne Balmer indicated that there is a definition for mixed use projects for other, larger areas in Town.

Chairman Schroeder stated that the last phrase in the definition that reads "...the combination of the two of the three could not exceed 75%" and if it read "any two" the formula would be clearer.

Mr. Pew stated that when you attempt to quantify percentages in mixed use categories or other areas that it can be difficult to implement. The Town can rely on the numbers and have developers meet those standards or do something special and deviate from it.

Mr. Balmer stated that the smaller redevelopment projects cannot meet the percentage standards; the Town Center Committee's recommended mixed use definition recognizes this issue.

Mr. Balmer stated that Town Council and Planning Commission have the ability to look at a PAD request and make a decision on whether or not it meets the goals of the Town. The issue is how to balance the flexibility and guidelines to ensure a mixed use project is developed.

Commissioner Sossaman asked how the Town can ensure that a developer doesn't build a multi-family project on 50% of the parcel and then leave the remainder undeveloped. This is always a risk especially when percentages are assigned.

Commissioner Humphries and Chairman Schroeder made suggestions to change the wording of the definition.

Mr. Pew stated that mixed use projects on the same property are the most difficult to pull off and develop. Mr. Pew's suggestion would be for mixed uses to develop performance based zoning standards. As long as developers meet the standards and develop the components, the Town can find ways to implement the project.

Commissioner Humphries asked if the recommended definition allows the flexibility that the Town wants and if Town Council has the ability to approve it.

Mr. Balmer said that this issue was discussed at the Town Center Committee meetings and the question of how much latitude or flexibility is appropriate. Town Council will have flexibility but guidelines are important to ensure what is envisioned for the area develops.

Commissioner Sossaman stated that when a developer comes in and has the first Technical Review meeting, the guidelines will be presented and they will have no latitude due to the inclusion of percentages. Town staff reviews projects based on Town adopted standards and policies.

Council Member Barnes indicated that the Committee wanted flexibility but also wanted to have guidelines to ensure a mixture of uses.

Commissioner Sossaman said that projects need to work both economically and demographically.

Chairman Schroeder indicated that Town Center is mostly retail now and if a developer decides to build a project with 50% more retail the additional shops could saturate the area; he is concerned with this risk.

Commissioner Barney indicated that one of the Commission's objectives is to seek ways to spur growth in the retail sector. New development in the Town Center is a catalyst for other employment projects in Town.

Ms. Cott said that the S.W.O.T. results focused on business attraction in the Town Center – mixed use allows for different types of development including employment/office uses.

Commissioner Sossaman and Commissioner Humphries made suggestions for changes to the mixed use verbiage.

Chairman Schroeder suggested putting the burden on the applicants to design a project with a mixture of uses.

Ms. Cott indicated that the intent of the definition is to be used as a guideline.

Commissioner Sweet stated that the wording includes "could and should" not "must".

Ms. Cott asked the Commission for a Motion on the Town Center Committee's recommended updates to the Town Center Plan including the Mixed Use definition. She also indicated that the intent is that the definitions include all three (3) of the mixed uses.

Extensive discussion was made to the verbiage on the definition with examples of projects done in the East Valley.

A **MOTION** was made Commissioner Humphries and seconded by Commissioner Sossaman to approve the recommended updates to the Town Center Plan with a recommended change to the Proposed "Mixed Use" Definition, to read "To facilitate development of a true mixed use project, proposals are intended to include a combination of all three (3) uses; commercial, office and

residential. Applicant's proposals must demonstrate sustainability and reasonable economic viability". In addition, change "Definitions" to "Guidelines". Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

#### 4. Discussion and possible action on General Plan Amendment GP09-58, Barney Farms.

Planning Manager Wayne Balmer gave a presentation to the Commission on the Barney Farms GPA - .

- A general plan amendment that would change 257 acres from Employment A to primarily residential uses.
- The companion GPA to come later

If approved, the Town will have a partner twilling to implement the connection between Signal Butte and Meridian Road. The Town will still acquire the ROW at appraised value and construct the road with public funds, unless the future zoning case further stipulates dedications and road improvements.

*Five (5) Core issues for the Commission to consider:*

- Transportation improvements
- Park reconfiguration
- Economic Development options
- Land Use changes
- Aircraft over flight issues

Mr. Balmer reviewed the Parks and Recreation Advisory Council and Transportation Advisory Council's concerns and recommendations.

Mr. Balmer also explained that Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport has concerns related to residential development in the overflight area:

- Half of this project is in Airport Overflight Area (AOA) II – requiring notification to homeowners and special sound-attenuating construction.
- PMGA recommends denial of the request, because of the overflight issue. The latest available information suggests that none of the other airport partners have ever processed a rezoning in the AOA I or AOA II.

Commissioner Sossaman asked if the Town is working with the applicant on a development agreement to bring the issues together. Mr. Balmer stated that development agreement discussions are underway.

Commissioner Sossaman asked if there is retail included in the plan. Ms. Cott indicated that there are 20 acres of commercial on the northwest corner of Queen Creek and Meridian.

Commissioner Sossaman asked if 20 acres is sustainable to support the additional residential. Mr. Balmer stated that Queen Creek Marketplace and Cornerstone may see the benefit. Mr. Balmer indicated that the Town would like to see a balance of sustainability.

Commissioner Sossaman stated that residential development costs the Town money and retail brings in additional sales tax. Shovel ready, employment sites are much further out than residential and retail development. Traffic patterns show that people won't travel much out of their way and there is concerned that this area is sustainable.

Mr. Balmer indicated that the road will bring traffic in and out of Pinal County.

Ms. Cott clarified the corners of Queen Creek, Meridian and Signal Butte show commercial use in the General Plan.

Mr. Ralph Pew of Pew & Lake gave a brief presentation on behalf of the Barney Family who are owners and applicants of the proposed General Plan Amendment site. He cited that the Barney Family is supportive of economic development in the northern tier of the Town and owns the vast majority of the land. The Town has an opportunity to move forward with the transportation corridor and make the area more competitive for new development. By adopting the general plan amendment it allows the dedication of the Signal Butte/Meridian alignment as part as the zoning case. Development agreement discussions are underway and will set forth the mechanism to assure the dedication for the remainder of the road. He emphasized that the Town is not giving up employment land but rather changing the zoning to allow different types of economic development to occur. By adopting the general plan amendment and allowing the zoning proposal, it puts in motion the opportunity for the Barney Family to go forward with the project. The Airport Authority reaffirms the objection to residential uses in the area. The airport does not object to the roadway configuration if the amendment is approved by the Town, and that the park is a suitable use for this area. Mr. Pew concluded by asking for support from the Commission on the General Plan Amendment.

Commissioner Brown stated that the original configuration of the park did not allow for good access. A park beautifies the Town and makes it better. He said that the Commission has talked about having more mixed use in the Town and will need more people to fill retail and employment centers. He supports the amendment.

Commissioner Sossaman asked if the park impact fees provide for infrastructure and improvements to the park. Mr. Balmer indicated yes.

Mr. Balmer indicated that the challenge is that the improvements to the park site have a funding mechanism as opposed to the road improvement.

Council Member Barnes asked if there will be a school location to support the new residential. Will the park need to be bigger because there is more residential?

Mr. Balmer indicated that there will be no school site. There may be additional acres for a park somewhere else in Town.

Vice Chairman Sherer emphasized that the transportation realignment is very compelling.

Commissioner Sossaman stated that the transportation realignment opens up the whole area.

Chairman Schroeder's statement is that the transportation realignment is huge. He is pleased to see the park move under the overflight area.

Commissioner Humphries stated that it provides more accessibility to the park and Town's residents.

Chairman Schroeder asked for a statement to the council on this proposal.

A **MOTION** to recommend approval of the General Plan Amendment GP09-58, Barney Farms was made by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Humphries.

**Discussion:**

Commissioner Valenzuela emphasized that the airport prefers not to see residential within this area and if residential is approved he wants to make sure there are mitigating factors with the construction of homes. People will complain about the planes flying over their homes and will object to the traffic patterns of the airport. The airport is very concerned about this issue. Commissioner Valenzuela also expressed concern about residential being so close to the employment areas and the issues associated with future truck traffic. According to Mr. Pew the property to the east of Meridian Road is designated as employment in the Town's General Plan but Pinal County has plans for future residential. He would like to see a review of the General Plan and an assessment of employment property. A cost benefit analysis should be done. He does not want to see a similar "Scottsdale Road realignment" issue.

Commissioner Sossaman asked if Commissioner Valenzuela thinks Signal Butte should be straight.

Commissioner Valenzuela asked why the road has to go to Meridian. If the decision is made to end the freeway at Signal Butte, this will become a much more important corridor. The risk is if Pinal County will continue the freeway beyond this point.

Commissioner Sossaman explained that the realignment is planned because Signal Butte will not be a true north/south corridor. Bringing traffic north on Meridian and over to Signal Butte because an interchange and the timing of an interchange at Meridian is uncertain.

Commissioner Sweet stated that the General Plan plans for industrial land under the airport overflight area and now it is proposed to change. Changes continue to be made without giving ideas a chance to work. The airport traffic is a concern.

Commissioner Valenzuela stated that the biggest issue is a large single event not necessarily the continuous noise. The F22-F35 aircrafts are loud. Air cargo service planes are older, somewhat louder aircraft and fly primarily at night.

Commissioner Sossaman said that transportation in the Town is an issue. He stated the transportation corridor is a valuable piece of moving people through Town.

Chairman Schroeder called for the approval of the motion. Motion carried 9 ayes to 1 nay, with Commissioner Barney abstaining from the vote.

Chairman Schroeder stated that the recommendation from the Economic Development Commission will move forward with GP09-58, Barney Farms to the Planning & Zoning Commission and Town Council.

## **5. Summary of current events – Reports from Chair, Commission Members and Economic Development Staff.**

Economic Development Director, Doreen Cott stated that "Gateway to the East Valley" magazine copies are available. There is a story on the Communiversitry of Queen Creek in the inaugural issue.

Passport of Discovery will be held Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at Desert Mountain Park. The featured country is Ireland.

The Farmers' Market took place on March 6<sup>th</sup>. Parks and Recreation moved the market to the first Saturday of each month: March, April, May and June. Economic Development is no longer involved in planning the event.

Town Council approved the transition of Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Center to the Economic Development Department. Council also approved capital improvements and authorized the hiring of a general manager.

Commissioner Humphries stated that Valley Metro has created a new route, 184. The route will go from Red Mountain Community College, stop at the airport terminal, Arizona State University Polytechnic back up to Red Mountain Community College, along Power Road. Service will also stop at the Superstition Springs Transit Center. Service begins July 25, 2010.

Next Meeting: April 28, 2010

**6. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 9:27 a.m.

/jk