



DRAFT MINUTES

Town Center Committee

Development Services Building, Saguaro Room

October 13, 2010

8:00 am

1. Call To Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Kim Moyers, Management Assistant at 8:03 a.m. The following people were in attendance:

Committee Members:

Shawn Valdez
Nancy Diab (arrived at 8:24)
Brandon Walsh
Monica O'Toole
Chris Webb
Angela Troge
Shane Randall (arrived at 8:55)
Steve Ingram
Barbara Khalsa
Jason Gad
Hannah Dixon (arrived at 8:25)
Marquis Scott (arrived at 8:08)
Councilmember Julia Wheatley
Vice Mayor Craig Barnes

Town Staff:

Doreen Cott, Economic Dev. Director
Kim Moyers, Econ Dev Specialist
Joy Maglione, Town Clerk Assistant

2. Introductions: Kim Moyers introduced new member Vice Mayor Craig Barnes.

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 September 8, 2010 minutes:

Motion: Jason Gad 2nd: Steve Ingram

To approve the September 8, 2010 Meeting Minutes, as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Discussion and possible action on the Town Center Committee By-Laws:

Ms Moyers distributed a draft copy of the Town Center Committee *By-Laws* for review. The bylaws detail the responsibilities of the committee. Ms Cott explained that the bylaws for this committee are slightly different than the standard bylaws for an all-

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resident committee. The Town Center Committee is comprised of owners, residents and key stakeholders specific to the Town Center. The committee will have term limits with the option to reapply when the term is complete.

Jason Gad asked about the designation between voting and non -voting members. Ms Cott responded that the only non-voting members are Town staff. There are instances where Town Council members may abstain from a vote if the item will be going forward to Town Council for approval.

Motion: Barabara Khalsa Second: Jason Gad

To approve the Town Center Committee Bylaws as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Discussion and possible action on Chairman and Vice Chairman positions

Ms. Moyers opened the nominations for the Chairman position. Angela Troge nominated Jason Gad for Chair.

Motion: Angela Troge Second: Steve Ingram.

To elect Jason Gad as Chair of the Town Center Committee

Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Jason Gad opened up the nominations for Vice Chair. Jason Gad nominated Chris Webb as the Vice Chairman.

Motion: Jason Gad Second: Vice Mayor Barnes

To elect Chris Webb as Vice-Chair of the Town Center Committee.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Discussion and possible action on Town Center Committee Term Limits

Ms Moyers explained that per the bylaws, committee members will have two year terms. Since it is a new committee, half of the members will serve a one year term and the other half will serve a two year term allowing for staggered terms to keep the continuity of the committee intact. There is an option to reapply if a member is still interested after serving their term. Steve Ingram, Angela Troge, Brandon Walsh and Chris Webb volunteered to serve a one year term. Non-present member Shane Randall was also

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3. *Provide directional signage to help identify the Town Center; provide a unified way finding system throughout Town Center*
 - We are currently working on signage. How do we include Town Center in the way finding system?
4. *Update, adopt and implement Town Center zoning districts*
 - Do we want to create a new designation called “Town Center” to avoid possible rezoning issues for new businesses?
5. *Develop, adopt and implement Town Center architectural design standards and guidelines that include varied materials, adopted themes and unique building designs.*

Ms Cott discussed the homebuilder and directional signage program that will be presented to Town Council. It is a three tier program that includes homebuilder signs, directional signs and wayfinding signs. Direction from Council was to focus on homebuilders and directional signage first. Wayfinding signs will evolve in the future as development occurs in the Town Center.

Councilmember Wheatley asked if the sign program included pedestrian signs. Miss Cott responded that pedestrian signs are included in the wayfinding signs program.

Shawn Valdez discussed the need for a clear cut plan for signage at the Ellsworth Loop entry points to direct traffic to “old” Ellsworth Road. He reported that customers cannot find the businesses on Ellsworth Road ever since traffic was diverted to the Loop Road. He pointed out that many businesses have closed. Mr. Valdez recommended that the committee focus on Town center specific signage to help the small business district. He stated there is a need to get people to the downtown area and to create a pedestrian friendly main street. He stressed the importance of helping to keep the small businesses open.

Angela Troge suggested a focus on specific signage that describes the area as a downtown district or a Main Street area.

Ms Cott acknowledged the need for signage in the Town Center and stated that it was discussed by the prior committee. Ms Cott clarified the elements of the directional signage program and discussed the types of signs planned. The broader town wide plan will initially focus on vehicle oriented directional signage. These signs will direct visitors and residents to various destinations within the town, including the downtown area. Ms Cott said that moving forward this group can look into pedestrian oriented signage in the Town Center which will be small-business focused.

Vice Mayor Barnes stated that he would like to move this program forward to Council very quickly to start helping businesses in the downtown area. He suggested installing decorative placards above street signs and traffic poles which designate the Town Center. Some distinguishing elements such as different colored signs were discussed. Vice Mayor Barnes wanted this to be a top priority to preserve existing businesses.

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Ms. Troge suggested grouping businesses together to create potential downtown districts. She mentioned themes, similar to the Vestar shopping plaza, where similar businesses are linked together.

There was discussion on zoning regulations and allowed uses when attempting to group businesses. It was mentioned that private commercial investors which own the land, can specify where a business can locate but the Town cannot prohibit businesses from a certain location if it is an allowed use.

Jason Gad recommended that the committee present a competitive analysis of the Town Center to the Town Council. The analysis could compare growth and percentages of new businesses compared to other cities and towns across the valley. It would help the Committee get a better sense of available options when the economy improves.

Ms Moyers stated that Buxton (a demographic research firm) has approached the Town of completing a competitive analysis for the Town. It would include the businesses that we already have in Town and the type of businesses that could be successful in the downtown area. Ms Cott added that it would help staff to promote the Town Center to specific businesses and be more strategic in the businesses that we approach.

Mr. Valdez added that Chandler recently conducted a survey asking residents what businesses they would like to see in their downtown area. Ms Cott mentioned that an informal survey was done on the Queen Creek website on that issue in the past. Nancy Diab added that Chandler focuses on science and technology fields and asked if we should be looking at those larger revenue generating businesses as well.

Ms Cott explained the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis of the Queen Creek employment areas that was done by the Economic Development Commission. It included the Town Center as a key area of the community to attract businesses.

Jason Gad discussed developing and promoting cultural attractions to bring people to the area. The Committee talked about different venues and events that would attract people, such as Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre, festivals, farmers markets, theatres, art walks, and concerts. They discussed other cities that have similar events on a regular basis and the logistics of their downtown areas compared to Queen Creek.

Vice Mayor Barnes suggested utilizing the open outdoor stage at the Queen Creek Library on Ellsworth Road to host community events to help attract people to the Town Center area.

Hannah Dixon mentioned creating a destination for families; similar to how shopping centers market their developments.

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Nancy Diab proposed working with the high schools during their homecoming event to get the homecoming floats to come through the Town Center every year. The members discussed developing tradition in the Town Center with ideas and events that can be built on and develop over time.

Councilmember Wheatley suggested giving the Town Center area an identity similar to Old Town Scottsdale and other areas. She mentioned incorporating signage that compliments the identity and creating a brand for the Town Center.

Ms. Troge suggested diagonal parking for small businesses on Ellsworth Road so existing driveways could be converted to patios or extra business space. Ms Cott explained that this was discussed by the previous committee. It was researched by Dibble Engineering and it was not recommended for safety reasons.

The group discussed relaxing or eliminating the parking requirements for the shops on Ellsworth Road to help promote new business. They suggested shared parking areas which would encourage a pedestrian friendly walking environment in the Town Center. Chris Webb stated that we have to proactively plan for shared parking with both short term and long term parking plans.

Vice Mayor Barnes discussed temporary and permanent parking arrangements such as blocking off the road on weekends or for special events. Existing parking lots such as the Library or Town Hall could be used for shared parking. Brandon Walsh questioned the impact that blocked roads would have on the residents on Ellsworth Road and asked how many residents lived in that area. They discussed blocking smaller sections or sections that are less inhabited by residents.

Mr. Valdez stressed the need to get more businesses into the area to create the “Main Street” experience so people will want to come. He suggested that we initially focus on shared parking for the Ellsworth Road strip because it is a small area and is walkable.

Marquis Scott talked about creating the right experience for the Town Center to attract people. He suggested providing a good mix of shopping choices and a diverse selection of events. He noted if the right experience is created people will not mind walking and word will spread.

Monica O’Toole addressed signage for businesses in Town Center. She suggested relaxing some of the regulations for temporary signage for new businesses.

Ms. Diab asked about the revolving fund for renovations to buildings in Town Center. Ms Moyers replied that façade improvement grants are common in many communities and it is being discussed as part of the Economic Development Work plan. The members discussed blighted areas, vacant lots and how they can be improved. Chairman Gad suggested that it might be a good opportunity for the Town to buy some of the vacant

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land and then lease back to a private user.

Councilmember Wheatley asked for more clarification on the three tiers of the signage program. Ms Cott reviewed the details of the program. Ms Cott informed the group that there are many options for pedestrian oriented wayfinding signs and this committee will look at specific signage for Town Center. Staff will be presenting a vehicle oriented directional sign and homebuilder sign program to the Council at the October 20, 2010 meeting. Councilmember Wheatley asked if we will have to revisit the sign ordinance when the signage program occurs. Ms Cott responded that some changes will be made to the sign ordinance to accommodate the directional and homebuilder sign program. Staff will work with Development Services to update the sign ordinance concurrently with the sign program. Revenues and costs of the sign program were discussed. Ms Cott explained that homebuilders will pay to be part of the program and the Town will receive a percentage of the revenues which will then be used toward directional signage costs.

Chairman Gad asked the Committee for their ideas and priorities for the Work Plan. The Committee agreed on the following:

- **Improvement Grants** - Encourage renovations in Town Center through improvement grants
- **Set Design Standards & Guidelines** - Establish design standards and criteria for businesses and for improvement grants. Develop a plan that can be presented to Town Council.
- **Identity** - Create a vision and clear identity for the Town Center including design standards, signage and branding
- **Engage Town Center Businesses** - Include Town Center businesses in future plans, keep them informed on improvement grants, designs standards and other issues. Seek input from businesses.
- **Competitive Analysis** – Create a competitive analysis so we can prioritize and be ready to attract business when the economy improves and business growth returns

Councilmember Wheatley questioned the process for distributing funds for the improvement grants with regards to design standards, colors and material choices. Ms Moyers replied that typically the process includes providing the applicant with a set of guidelines. The applicant would present their plans to a committee for approval prior to starting the project. After completion the work would be inspected to make sure the criteria was met and then the applicant would be reimbursed. Ms Moyers stated that no money would be given up front and the applicant would be informed of all rules beforehand.

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Ms. Diab asked Ms. Dixon if Vestar ever did a competitive analysis on the area. Ms. Diab added that Westcor provides a report to all their merchants annually. Ms. Dixon responded that she would look into it and get back to the committee.

Ms. Troge felt that parking should be included on the Work Plan. The members discussed shared parking and signage as they factor into the items on the Draft Work Plan list.

Ms Moyers suggested that parking and signage be included on the Work Plan as ongoing plans because they may not be completed in one year. Vice Mayor Barnes stated that he would like all signs, including directional signage directing traffic to Town Center and the more specific restaurant and shopping signs, to be completed and installed within the year.

There was further discussion on installing temporary signs or banners to get people to the Town Center until the wayfinding program is in place. Ms Moyers suggested adding the subcategory of temporary & permanent signs to the Signage item on the Work Plan. She suggested that temporary signs could be used until we decide on the theme and identity for the Town Center and we are able to install the permanent signs.

The following additional items were added to the Work Plan:

- **Parking & Signage** – Ongoing. Includes shared parking and the three tier signage program. Temporary and permanent signs to address the needs of Town Center
- **Zoning Districts**– Currently being addressed by the Planning Department.

Motion: Nancy Diab

Second: Monica O'Toole

Motion to approve all the items outlined on the proposed Work Plan which include: Improvement Grants, Design Standards, Identity, Engage Town Center Businesses, Competitive Analysis, Parking, Signage (Permanent & Temporary) and Zoning Districts.

Motion passed unanimously.

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Ms. Moyers presented the Committee with an idea for decorative fence panels which can be purchased for locations throughout the Town. She provided the group with a sample to look at. The panels are made of galvanized steel and have designs etched on them that depict different scenes, such as historical places in Queen Creek. The panels are very economical and some residents and local farm families have shown interest. The company will also include an identifying piece of Queen Creek on each pane. Included with the panels is a plaque that depicts a story of Queen Creek history. Ms Moyers explained that this is an idea to be presented to the community in the future and can be considered when we create the identity for the Town Center.

F. Discussion of staff attendance at the International Downtown Association Annual Conference- Ms Moyers commented on the week long International Downtown Association Annual Conference that she recently attended. She encouraged Committee members to visit the website, take classes or attend conferences if they were interested.

Ms. Troge suggested prioritizing the Work Plan list and working on items for the next meeting. Ms Moyers stated that she will work with the Chair and Vice Chair to form subcommittees and will contact members via email.

Mr. Valdez asked for updates on the Small Business Incubator Program. Kim Moyers stated that the goal is to open in January 2011 in a 5,000 square foot building located in Town Center. It will be an office style incubator. Partners include the Queen Creek Chamber of Commerce as well as sponsors. A survey is being completed for businesses that are interested in participating in the program.

The next meeting will be November 10, 2010 at 8:00 a.m.

Motion: Councilmember Wheatley

Second: Nancy Diab

To adjourn meeting.

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:28a.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Maglione, Town Clerk Assistant

Chairperson

I, Joyce Maglione, 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 October 13, 2010 Town Center Committee Meeting. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 19th day of October 2010.

Passed and approved on _____