



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING

March 24, 2010, 7:30 a.m.

San Tan Conference Room

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 January 27, 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 recommendations on the updates before presenting to Town Council next month. The Town Center Committee has recommended combining the two mixed use designations of commercial

and retail. Other recommendations are sidewalks, landscapes, site furnishings, decorative traffic signals and street lights.

Commissioner Sossaman asked about where the funding of the decorating of the existing light poles will come from.

Ms. Cott stated that it will come from the quarter percent sales tax from Queen Creek Marketplace and Cornerstone that will be used for maintenance, programs and be best used for Town Center.

Council Member Barnes stated that when new poles are added, the Town will take from places such as downtown and not purchased new ones.

Ms. Cott indicated that the zoning map has been updated to include the new boundaries and is the current zoning that exists in the Town. Ms. Cott stated that the Town Center Committee has voted on each of the changes individually on the proposed land use. The land use includes residential, commercial, mixed use and open space.

Ms. Cott provided the commission with the Proposed Mixed Use Definitions. The Town Center Committee came up with the quantifiable standards which are included.

Commissioner Barney asked if this means that it is not yet determined which direction to go as far as quantifiable or non-quantifiable?

Ms. Cott indicated that that it would include a combination of commercial, office and residential. The Town Center Committee wanted to ensure that there is to be a balance of uses. This was an opportunity to look at the areas of development or redevelopment. Recommended updates will be taken to Town Council on April 7th and then if council approves the updates, then staff will initiate a general plan amendment.

Commissioner Sossaman asked if we have definitions of commercial and office and what the difference is. Commercial is basically retail.

Ms. Cott indicated that the definition is limited specifically to Town Center.

Planning Manager Wayne Balmer indicated that there is a definition of mixed use throughout the Town that is in place already.

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 is very difficult to implement. It gives the town the ability to deal with this in a more thoughtful way. The town can rely on the numbers and have developers meet those standards or do something special to deviate from it. Makes it difficult for land owners to approach it and try to make it happen in the area.

Mr. Balmer stated that the smaller projects cannot meet the standards and the Town realizes that. The 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 ability of flexibility and guidelines to follow through with a project coming to Town.

Commissioner Sossaman asked what is stopping the land owner in getting 50% of mixed use such as an apartment unit and leaves the project.

Commissioner Humphries and Chairman Schroeder made suggestions on the changing the wording of the definitions.

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 guidelines and develop the components of it, you would find ways to implement it.

Mr. Balmer stated that the general plan has goals to be achieved. It does not have percentages and has more guidelines. This was proposed at the Town Center Committee and the question was that it was too broad. This was the debate.

Commissioner Humphries asked if this allows the flexibility and if Town Council has the ability to approve it.

Mr. Balmer said that the question that arose was how much latitude is appropriate to have developers have some flexibility from Town Council? Council will have flexibility but also some guidelines.

Commissioner Sossaman stated that when a developer comes in and has the first Tack meeting, the guidelines will be presented to them and they will have no latitude. They will go around the administrative policy.

Mr. Pew stated that the Town staff reviews projects based on Town adopted standards and policies.

Council Member Barnes indicated that we don't want to put hard numbers on it but rather have a guideline to stick to.

Commissioner Sossaman said that projects work both economically and demographically.

Chairman Schroeder indicated that Town Center is mostly retail and looks like we are introducing a risk factor of someone coming in will build 50% more retail with a PAD with other uses and all that is built is more retail. He is concerned about the risks.

Commissioner Barney indicated that our objective is to seek ways to spur growth in the retail sector. We need to see growth in the Town Center which catalyzes other projects that happen in the rest of the Town.

Ms. Cott said that the SWOT focused on business attraction and mixed use which is mostly residential and this new use allows for different types of development.

Commissioner Sossaman and Commissioner Humphries made suggestions on the percentage verbiage to the definitions.

Chairman Schroeder suggested putting the burden on the applicants.

Ms. Cott indicated that the intent of the definitions is to be primarily used as guidelines.

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

Ms. Cott asked the commission for a motion made on the definitions. 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 Proposed “Mixed Use” Definitions as in with the following changes 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 members on Barney Farms.

- Two phases
- 257 acres
- Employment Type B
- Access to 802 Freeway with a proposed exit to Meridian Road. The Town is looking at Signal Butte Road access. A corridor study is underway.
- Queen Creek Sports Complex is preferred
- The property was a trade for other property
- Industrial to the north, commercial to the south and residential to the side
- The land south of Queen Creek Road has some ownership challenges
- Planning Commission reviewed and made recommendations to the Council
- Met with TAC in February

Five (5) Core issues:

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

Commissioner Sossaman asked about a development agreement that bring the issues together.

Mr. Balmer stated that we don’t have a development agreement but would be most advantageous.

Commissioner Sossaman asked if there is retail.

Ms. Cott indicated that there are 20 acres of commercial.

Commissioner Sossaman asked if it is stainable as far as residential component vs. retail component.

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 houses cost the Town money and retail bring the money in. Shovel ready sites is much further out than residential and retail until industrial sites are built. Traffic patterns will show that people won’t travel much further south and concerned that this area is sustainable.

Mr. Balmer indicated that the road going south is in Pinal County and therefore we have the Pinal County traffic coming through.

Ms. Cott stated to clarify the corners of Queen Creek, Meridian and Signal Butte show commercial use.

Mr. Ralph Pew of Pew & Lake gave a brief presentation on behalf of the Barney Family who are owners and applicants of the General Plan Amendment. He cited that the Barney Family is the most supportive of Economic Development in the northern tier of the Town and own the vast majority of the land. The Town has the option of either luring economic development to the northern tier or adopting the general plan amendment that will allow the corridor to have the potential to happen. By adopting the general plan amendment it allows the dedication of the signal butte/meridian alignment as part as the zoning case. A development agreement has already been drafted and sent to the Town and had an initial meeting with staff and sets forth the mechanism to assure the dedication of 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. The Applied Economic Study concluded that when the Town adopted the general plan and chose a number (4) for jobs to population ration, the number is a mathematical calculation based on what is going on with the county and what other cities are able to achieve. Queen Creek was low on the ratio. Mr. Pew concluded by asking for support from the commission members on the General Plan Amendment.

Commissioner Brown stated that the way the park was configured prior to the access didn't work. 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 thinks this is a good use.

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 site opposed to the road. The park has a funding mechanism.

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

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

Commissioner Sossaman asked if there will be a requirement for more open space next to the park?

Mr. Balmer stated that the park may be owned by the HOA or by the Town. With the impact fees it may be possible to start on the west park.

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 realign is huge. He is pleased to see the move under the sound area because those will be the problem areas for the Town to fill other than factories. Feels that it makes for good use.

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

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's position prefers not to see residential within this area. Wants to make sure there are mitigating factors of the construction of homes. People will complain of the planes going over head and will object of the traffic patterns of the airport. This is a great concern of the airport. Has seen plans that have introduced an open space in a residential space in an area that is primarily designated as employment and always been successful for residential. The employment is designated and primarily along Germann but with the roadways shaped like they are, you are introducing a lot of issues for truck, sidelines, transportation flow; and it appears that employment A is lighter industrial. According to Mr. Pew the property to the east of Meridian the town has designated as employment but Pinal County has designated residential. He would like to see a review of the general plan for Queen Creek and look at the employment property. The cost benefit analysis will need to be done. He does not want to see a "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. There is no commercial corridor but it is an extra negative piece and businesses will go where access is easiest.

Mr. Balmer indicated that some parcels that backup to employment opposed to more residential.

Commissioner Humphries indicated that the development agreement gives the opportunity to explore this and doesn't mean that it is cast in concrete.

Realignment Signal Butte to Meridian because Meridian goes all the way to Tucson, taking an opportunity to bring people up from the south. There is no interchange at Meridian.

Commissioner Valenzuela asked if the interchange ends why would you want to go south?

Mr. Balmer stated that it will change the character of the residential lower intensity street and still need to provide access to travelers.

Commissioner Sweet stated that the general plan's idea was to keep the higher industrial under the airport area and transportation and now we're getting rid of it. Changes continue to be made without giving the ideas a chance to work. The airport traffic is a concern.

Commissioner Valenzuela stated that the biggest issue is a large single event instead of continuous noise. The F22-F35 aircrafts are loud. Air cargo service planes are older aircraft and fly primarily at night causing single event noise.

Commissioner Sossaman said that transportation in the Town is an issue. He stated the transportation corridor is of great value of getting the traffic through this area.

Chairman Schroeder called for a vote on the Motion. Motion carried 8 ayes to 1 nay, with Commissioner Barney and Councilmember Barnes abstaining from the vote.

Chairman Schroeder stated that the recommendation from economic development is to move forward with GP09-58, Barney Farms.

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 were available. In the magazine there is a story regarding the Queen Creek Communiiversity.

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

The Farmers Market took place on March 6th. 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.

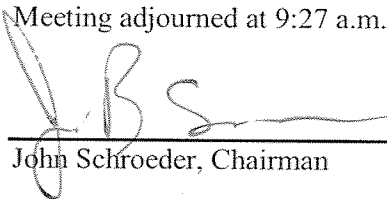
Council approved the transition of Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Center to the Economic Development Department. Council also approved capital improvements to the park and it will become more attractive to regional events. Also authorized was a general manager that will oversee the staff of HPEC and under the Economic Development umbrella.

Commissioner Humphries stated that Valley Metro has created a new route, 184. The route will go from Red Mountain Community College, stop at the terminal of the airport, 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.



John Schroeder, Chairman

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