



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION MEETING OF THE QUEEN CREEK  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

**Wednesday, October 12, 2011 7:00 P.M.**

**Council Chambers, 22350 S. Ellsworth Road, Queen Creek, AZ 85142**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Vice-Chairman Ingram.
2. **ROLL CALL** (one or more members of the Commission may participate by telephone).

**Present**

Vice-Chairman Steve Ingram  
Commissioner Jason Gad  
Commissioner Alex Matheson  
Commissioner Debbie Reyes  
Commissioner Kyle Robinson

**Absent**

Commissioner Ryan Nichols  
Chairman Steve Sossaman

**Staff**

**Present**

Director of Development Svcs. Tom Condit  
Planning Administrator Wayne Balmer  
Economic Development Director Cott  
Development Services Assistant Laura Moats

**Absent**

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**  
Members of the public may address the Commission on items not on the printed agenda. Please observe the time limit of three minutes. Speakers' cards are available at the door, and may be delivered to staff prior to the commencement of the meeting. There were no public comments.
4. **Consent Agenda:** Matters listed under the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion and one vote. Public Hearing items are designated with an asterisk (\*). Prior to consideration of the Consent Agenda, the Chairman will ask whether any member of the public wishes to remove a Public Hearing item for separate consideration. Members of the Commission and/or staff may remove any item for separate consideration.
  - a. **Consideration and Possible Approval of September 14, 2011 Work Study and Regular Session Minutes;**

**Motion by Commissioner Gad to approve the Consent Agenda as presented,  
Seconded by: Commissioner Reyes. All ayes. Motion carried 5-0.**

5. **Public Hearing, Discussion and Possible Action on TA11-067, “Text Amendment on Article 6.16.B.8, Off-Site Temporary Real Estate Signs, and 16.O, Sign Definitions, A** Town-initiated text amendment to the Queen Creek Zoning Ordinance to amend requirements and standards for Off-Site Temporary Real Estate Signs.

Mr. Jackson Moll of the Home Builders Association of Central Arizona (HBACA) addressed the Commission. He explained the HBACA’s concerns as falling into four categories:

- 1) Ineffective: Mr. Moll stated it is the home builders’ experience is that once a jurisdiction has approved sign kiosks/sign plazas, this form of signage is not as effective as weekend temporary signs.
- 2) Cost-Benefit analysis: The issue is not that this form of signage is cost-prohibitive; it is that it comes down to a cost-benefit analysis, and whether these signs are an effective use of money. He cited the city of Maricopa as an example, stating they are revising their Zoning Ordinance to revitalize their sign kiosk program.
- 3) Economic Development: Mr. Moll stated studies done by the National Association of Home Builders cite the multiplier effect of economy versus home construction. He said the multiplier effect for residential is typically greater than for retail/commercial because it is spread across so many areas.
- 4) Enforcement Issues: Mr. Moll stated he heard during Work Study a lot of concerns expressed which he feels come down to enforcement issues, such as sign placement and signs being up longer than the Code allows. He stated he does not know if staff has looked at this, but if not, he would direct staff to review its enforcement issues.

Mr. Moll referenced the Joint Town of Queen Creek and Town of Gilbert Council meeting held on August 23. He stated the Town of Gilbert has amended its sign code related to residential construction by increasing the number of permanent off-site signs, and has extended the allowable hours for weekend directional signs, with sign posting starting at 4 p.m. rather than 6 p.m. on Fridays.

Commissioner Robinson asked if the Home Builders Association has a cost of the new signage for builders. Mr. Moll responded he does not have cost. From experience builders have had in the past, it is not an issue of actual cost, but what the benefit is to builders relative to the cost. He stated it ultimately comes down to the fact that the benefit is not worth the cost.

Commissioner Robinson asked if there are any permanent signs in Queen Creek that builders have purchased and/or placed. Mr. Moll responded permanent signs are located on-site or within a short distance of the site. The only off-site signs are weekend directional signs. There is no provision for larger off-site directional signs for Sunday through Saturday.

Commissioner Robinson clarified he was referring to billboard-type signs. Mr. Moll responded, “no”, there are no billboard signs for homebuilders.

Planning Administrator Wayne Balmer added the Town has a provision for subdivisions to have identity signs posted at the subdivision entrance, not across the street from the site. There is no provision to have a sign that would identify a subdivision located several miles away; the only provision is temporary weekend real estate signs.

Mr. Moll clarified relating to Sunday through Saturday off-site signs – in Gilbert, signs are permitted on vacant, unapproved properties with the owner’s permission; not in rights-of-way. He stated they are located off the street.

Commissioner Gad asked Mr. Moll about the Home Builders’ objection to the general use of kiosks/plazas and asked if the opposition is related to the number of proposed sign kiosks/plaza sites (i.e. the proposed number of sign plazas is approximately six, compared to the number of small signs currently being posted being significantly more than six off-site locations). Commissioner Gad asked if the issues the Home Builders have would be alleviated if there were 12 plazas as opposed to six. Mr. Moll replied the issue does not relate to the number of signs. It comes down to the size of the actual panels themselves, and the fact that that builder’s panel is one of many builders that is listed on the entire sign. Secondly, with free-standing signs, there are limits to the amount of content on the signs. He stated it boils down to a question of how the builder individualizes themselves from other builders.

Vice-Chairman Ingram asked staff to display the slide illustrating the sign plazas. After looking at the pictures, Vice-Chairman Ingram stated it looks like all the builders’ panels are larger than two feet, and they all have distinct logos. Commissioner Gad pointed out that builder’s can also customize sign colors, fonts, etc.

Mr. Moll replied the issue is not colors or fonts; it’s that all signs are on the same larger sign, all lumped together. Additionally, the off-site temporary signs have more information than just the builder’s names and a directional arrow. They include price information. He pointed out the signs at Hastings Farms for William Lyon Homes will say Hastings Farms (subdivision name).

Vice-Chairman Ingram asked Economic Development Director Cott if the sign company has discussed whether signs would list subdivision names or builders’ names. Ms. Cott responded the sign company has only discussed builder’s names on the signs.

Commissioner Robinson asked if the sign company provides any lighting on the signs for night vision. Ms. Cott responded the letters are done with reflective vinyl. No separate lighting was discussed, and it was not part of the original proposal.

Vice- Chairman Ingram asked Mr. Moll to convince him why homebuilders need special dispensation for 10 extra signs that no other businesses are allowed to have.

Mr. Moll responded by using In-N-Out Burger as an example. He stated these types of businesses will be visited by local in-town people. Homebuilders' subdivisions will be visited by people from out of the area. Therefore, it is important to have more homebuilder signs placed for those people searching for subdivisions.

There were no further questions from the Commission.

Vice-Chairman Ingram opened the Public Hearing at 7:27 p.m. There were no public comments and the Public Hearing was closed.

#### COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Gad stated his feelings are now conflicted because he sees the impact of the builders not being able to have unique marketing; however, he wants to keep the Town clean, unique, and not have staff spending a lot of time removing signs. He asked to revisit the number of kiosk locations, which are proposed at six, and asked if it's possible to have more kiosks available to the builders.

Ms. Cott clarified currently there are six identified locations for homebuilder sign plazas; but it is anticipated that number to grow up to 10 with new development that occurs.

She stated that the proposed locations were strategically placed, but can be adjusted so they are most effective in directing visitors. The locations can change based on needed effectiveness.

Commissioner Robinson noted there would be some benefit to 24/7 advertisements on kiosks versus the limited advertising the small off-site signs provide on the weekends only. He stated he agrees there should be more kiosks placed for builders to utilize. He stated he didn't see any on the west side of Town in the Power/Queen Creek roads area.

Mr. Balmer responded Commissioner Robinson is correct in that there are no proposed sign kiosks on the west side of town because the locations are more focused on the north and east side of Queen Creek where new building is taking place. He stated there is no cap to the number of sign plazas/kiosks. If there's more market demand, there can be more sign plazas installed. This is a concept Queen Creek has never tried before. Some communities have tried and had good results, and others like Maricopa have not experienced as positive an affect. Queen Creek staff has not looked at installing signs off the rights-of-way on private properties. He noted the Commission can ask staff to explore this option as well.

Mr. Balmer asked the Commission to keep in mind the proposed text is conceptual. It is not specific as to the number of sign kiosks.

Vice- Chairman Ingram asked if Mr. Moll represents all homebuilders. Mr. Moll responded he represents members of the association, and added it is not fair to say he represents all homebuilders. He clarified he represents the members of the home building agency. Mr. Balmer stated that letters outlining this proposed text amendment were sent to all home builders in the area. Mr. Moll added at least two builders in Queen Creek are members of his association.

Commissioner Reyes asked for confirmation that Staff is asking for amendments to only the wording of the text, but asked if it is decided later on to put the subdivision name on the panels, could that be changed.

Mr. Balmer responded the Town has a contract with a sign company who produces those signs. The Town could ask them to modify the signs so that individual builders could modify their sign panels, i.e. two panels put together for one sign builder.

Ms. Cott stated this topic did not come up in previous discussions. She stated she would be happy to talk to the representative from National Sign Plazas, who works closely with builders. She noted there is some flexibility in the contract. She stated the approved designs of the signs allow builders to use their logos, brands, etc.

Director of Development Services Condit pointed out should Commission approve the language as written, it does not prohibit staff from working with builders and the sign company to add sign plazas. This text just says the signs need to be on the sign plazas.

Vice-Chairman Ingram requested the cost data, and asked Mr. Moll for some concrete data on how the off-site signs benefit the builders.

Ms. Cott addressed the Commission stating she had gathered additional information after the Work Study session. The cost of the signs is \$70/panel/month compared to the current signs allowed, which are typically running \$3-\$5/sign/week. Both are fairly comparable in cost. A total of 10-12 small, off-site signs cost approximately \$40/week over 4 weeks, and are only displayed on weekends.

Commissioner Gad asked Ms. Cott if the Commission did not recommend approval of changing the language in the Ordinance, would it affect the directional signage program.

Ms. Cott responded the contract with National Sign Plazas included way-finding signs for the Town as well as the builders' directional signs, and not approving the text amendment would be detrimental to that contract. As part of the contract with National Sign Plazas, the homebuilder signs would generate revenue for the Town to offset the cost of the way-finding signs. It is in that way both programs (way-finding and homebuilder signs) are tied together.

Ms. Cott stated as a reminder that when this was originally brought to Council, there was interest in reducing the clutter seen every weekend and in reducing staff time involved in removing signs every Monday.

In response to a question by Commissioner Robinson, Mr. Balmer stated Staff sent letters to all the home builders in the area. There was one response from Fulton Homes requesting the name of the sign representative so that Fulton could get a sign panel.

Commissioner Gad concurred with Commissioner Reyes in that Town staff spends a great amount of time in removing signs and enforcing sign issues.

Vice-Chairman Ingram asked for confirmation that all off-site signs are currently in the Town's right-of-way. Mr. Balmer responded, "yes".

Mr. Ingram suggested if the off-site signs were nice-looking, small panel signs and used in combination with the sign plazas, this would be beneficial to both sides.

Mr. Balmer asked Ms. Cott if there is a timeline on the contract with National Sign Plazas. Ms. Cott responded the term of the contract is five-years, and it began on November 10, 2010.

Commissioner Robinson asked staff to solicit the home builders' opinions on purchasing small panel signs to be used as off-site signs on the weekends, in combination with the large sign plazas.

**Motion by: Commissioner Gad**

To recommend approval of TA11-067, Article 6.16.B of the Queen Creek Zoning Ordinance and 6.16.O Sign Definitions, with an amendment recommending Town staff explore the feasibility of allowing additional, off-site residential subdivision signs that could feature additional builder information to be placed on public rights-of-way or private property.

Mr. Balmer clarified the motion would be to recommend approval of TA11-067, as presented, with a second recommendation for staff to explore opportunities for public or private rights-of-way, the net benefit being that builders have more locations for marketing, but for the Town, the area would be uncluttered.

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Commissioner Reyes. All ayes. Motion carried 5-0.**

- 6. Public Hearing, Discussion and Possible Action on TA11-068, "Text Amendment on Article 6.16.B.6, Political Signs, and 16.O, Sign Definitions, A Town-initiated text amendment to the Queen Creek Zoning Ordinance to amend requirements and standards for Political Signs.**

**Motion by: Commissioner Robinson**

To recommend approval of TA11-068, Text Amendment on Article 6.16.B.6, Political Signs, and 16.O Sign Definitions, as presented.

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Commissioner Gad All ayes. Motion carried 5-0.**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS** - All administrative items were discussed during Work Study.

- 7. Review** of next month's agenda items:
- 8. Report** on Town Council Action:

9. **Communication** from members of the Commission and Staff

10. **Adjournment**

**Motion:** Commissioner Matheson  
To adjourn.  
**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Commissioner Reyes All ayes. Motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Steve Ingram, Vice-Chairman

ATTEST:

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Laura Moats, Development Services Assistant

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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 October 12, 2011 Regular Session Meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 12th day of October, 2011.

**These are draft minutes which have not yet been approved.**

Passed and Approved this of , 2011