



**MINUTES OF THE WORK STUDY MEETING OF THE QUEEN CREEK
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Wednesday, October 12, 2011 6:00 P.M.

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

1. **CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. in the Council Chambers by Vice-Chairman Ingram

2. **ROLL CALL**

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

Absent

3. **Discussion on TA11-067 “Text Amendment on Article 6.16.B, 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.

Planning Administrator Balmer provided background, stating the Town Center Committee has previously reviewed and made recommendations on “way-finding signs”. In July, 2010, a presentation was made to the Town Center Committee proposing a sign program that would combine way-finding signs and real estate/home builder signs. Mr. Balmer illustrated where directional signs have been erected in town, and the six proposed locations for the home builder sign plazas. He also pointed where four *additional* signs could be added in the future, depending on program revenue. He noted the proposed locations are subject to modification based on home builders’ preferences. The proposed new *sign plaza* definition would be “a permanent freestanding sign containing multiple sign panels which provide directional information to locate public facilities, subdivisions, services and attractions”. Mr. Balmer stated the Town entered into a contract with National Sign Plazas in November, 2010 for a directional “sign plaza” signage program within the community.

Commissioner Robinson asked if the definition is written to state this will still be regulated by the Town. Mr. Balmer pointed out the language under Article 6.16.B. 8 **Temporary Off-Site Directional Real Estate Signs**, which reads, “temporary off-site directional real estate signs may be placed in an approved sign plaza located in the right-of-way”. Commissioner Robinson pointed out it does not state ‘town-approved’.

Mr. Balmer stated National Sign Plaza has worked with staff to place the proposed sign plazas in strategic locations. Ms. Cott stated the Town will get a percentage of the revenue for the sign space rentals, which will help offset the costs of the directional signs.

Commissioner Gad asked how the fees collected compare with the actual costs. Mr. Balmer replied staff had spoken with two sign manufacturers, who were not in favor of the sign plaza idea because they would lose revenue from the small signs the builders are currently placing in the rights-of-way on the weekends. Mr. Balmer added that National Sign Plaza will maintain these plaza signs on the Town’s behalf.

Commissioner Gad asked if the sign panels would be more expensive to the homebuilders. Mr. Balmer responded he did not know. Ms. Cott stated National Sign Plazas works with individual builders on prices. The types and locations of the panels vary by builder.

Commissioner Robinson asked what the cost is per panel. Ms. Cott stated there is standard pricing; however, staff does not have an exact cost. She stated these signs are not cost-prohibitive.

Commissioner Gad noted the letter of opposition received from the Home Builders Association of Central Arizona (HBACA) did not mention costs.

Commissioner Matheson questioned what the problems are with the current off-site signs. Mr. Balmer clarified the off-site signs to which staff is referring are not the signs at the subdivision entrances. They are the small off-site signs scattered around town in the rights-of-way on the weekends. He stated the problems range from the cluttered look of the Town when the signs are up, and vision/sight issues, to staff time spent removing signs on Mondays.

Commissioner Robinson asked if the Town has any control over signs put up in County islands. Mr. Balmer responded, “no”; therefore, there are usually more signs clustered in those areas on one side of the road (County), then on the other side (Town-owned).

Commissioner Gad asked if the proposed text amendment relates to sign walkers. Mr. Balmer responded, “no”.

Commissioner Gad asked Mr. Balmer to address comments on the letter of opposition regarding what neighboring jurisdictions are doing. Mr. Balmer responded the Town of Gilbert allows A-frame signs, but these signs are then taken down. He pointed out the Town sent a letter to all active subdividers and home builders, published a press release, and a news article had been done, which Mr. Balmer distributed to the Commission at the Work Study.

Commissioner Gad questioned how many signs are put up on weekends. Mr. Balmer responded signs are placed at every major intersection, and there are approximately 10-12 in each cluster.

There was no further discussion on this item.

4. **Discussion on TA11-068, “Test 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.

Mr. Balmer presented the staff report, pointing out the revised definition for a *political sign* as “a temporary sign erected in support of, or in opposition to, a candidate seeking public office in a special, primary or general election, or in support of, or in opposition to, a ballot measure on a special, primary, or general election”. Mr. Balmer noted the next local election is in March, 2012, and under the current election process, candidates can file paperwork in January. The candidates’ information packets will include information on where signs can be placed. The Town is proposing a text amendment to match the State Law recently adopted.

There were no questions from the Commission.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

5. **Review** of next month’s agenda items.

Recurrent Energy/Siete Solar/Roadrunner (Aurora) Solar Project

Mr. Balmer discussed the three separate applications received for proposed solar facilities. Commissioner Gad asked if the land on which the solar facilities would go would require rezoning. Mr. Balmer responded, “no”, because the land will be leased for a period of approximately 20 years, after which time the use would become obsolete and the land would be re-used in a different way. Mr. Balmer noted each proposed solar facility would sit on approximately one-quarter of a square mile.

Song of Life United Methodist Church

Mr. Balmer stated this project will not be presented to the Planning Commission. It will go straight to the Town Council. There were questions about why this application would not be presented to the Commission, compared to Rock Point Church, which was presented to the Commission. Mr. Balmer explained per Ordinance, Rock Point was required to go to Commission based on its size (over 1,500 people); whereas, Song of Life Church is a small church (under 1,500).

Mr. Balmer noted In-and-Out Burger will be featured on this month’s E-Newsletter Town Question of the Month. The applicant has picked up redlines; however, they have six months to resubmit, so it is unknown what the time period will be for this business.

Commissioner Gad asked about the status of Culvers. Mr. Balmer responded Culvers will not

be locating at the original proposed site south of Discount Tire because that site is now in the auction/foreclosure process. The applicant could re-apply at a different location.

In response to a question by Commissioner Reyes, Mr. Balmer provided some site information on PA11-0012, Bellerio at Pegasus Estates.

Mr. Balmer noted there are currently no projects scheduled for November; therefore, there may not be a Commission meeting in November.

Mr. Balmer and Ms. Cott provided background information on the RFP recently issued for the Mixed Use Entertainment District, which is Phase II of the Queen Creek Marketplace. Ms. Cott noted this involves an aggressive time schedule, and presentations will be made to the Council by prospective developers at its December 21, 2011 meeting. Ms. Cott informed the Commission a pre-proposal conference call was recently conducted at which at least 10 companies participated. She noted most of the interest came from local (Arizona) or California companies, although the RFP was distributed to over 200 developers nation-wide.

Commissioner Gad noted he realizes the time table is aggressive, and it is his hope that if Town staff can do anything to help expedite the process, they do so. Ms. Cott noted there are several various incentives the Town may be able to offer.

6. **Report** on Town Council Action

Director of Development Services Tom Condit reported on the following action taken at recent Council meetings:

September 21 meeting:

- 1) Approved IGA with Town of Gilbert for Fleet Services in the amount of \$160,000 for preventative maintenance of Town vehicles;
- 2) Council received update from Planning Administrator Balmer on ULI Study and ASU Capstone Project.

October 5 meeting:

- 1) Approved Tierra Farms Conditional Use Permit request

7. **Summary of Current Events** from members of the Commission.

There was no discussion under this item.

8. **Adjournment**

Motion by Commissioner Gad, seconded by Commissioner Robinson, to adjourn. All ayes. Motion carried 5-0. The Work Study meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Steve Ingram, Vice-Chairman

ATTEST:

Laura Moats, Development Services Assistant

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 Work Study 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

Passed and Approved this 9th day of November, 2011