

Ridgecrest General Plan Update

Meeting Minutes

July 24, 2007

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Ridgecrest City Council Chambers

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:29 p.m.

Present: Vice-Chair Jim Smith, Andy Kilikauskas, Joanna Rummer, Mike Biddlingmeier, Howard Laire, Jim Fallgatter, Lois Beres, Ruth Cooper, Erik Kauffman, Nellavan Jeglum, John O’Gara, Sharon Porter, Chuck Roulund

Absent: Chair Jerry Taylor, Craig Porter

Staff Present: City Planner Matthew Alexander, Public Services Director Jim McRea, Administrative Secretary Danielle Valentine

2. Minutes

A motion was moved by Howard Laire and seconded by Lois Beres to approve the minutes of 6/26/07 as submitted.

3. Map Atlas – Part Two of Two

City Planner Matthew Alexander briefed the Committee on the second part of the Map Atlas from the Consultants – Matrix Design. Planner Alexander noted that the purpose of the map was to provide a good foundation representing Ridgecrest as it is today. He acknowledged that the consultants had received the GPAC comments regarding Map Atlas Part One and explained that the consultants would review those comments and any other comments received for Map Atlas Part Two before undertaking a revision of the entire Map Atlas. Planner Alexander then briefly summarized the contents of Map Atlas Part Two and asked for any comments from Committee Members.

Member Roulund identified that some streets indicated as being on the base in the Atlas were in fact no longer in existence. He asked that these streets be removed for accuracy and commented that they were making the map “busy”.

Member Roulund further commented that the map was still showing a school on the airfield on base which was incorrect. Also, he stated his concern that per the Existing Land Use Table 19% indicated as “vacant land” was incorrect as it included Base land. Member Roulund stated that he thought the inclusion of this land drastically skewed the numbers and should be removed.

Planner Alexander responded acknowledging that staff had emailed Committee members in regards this topic after the last GPAC meeting. He accepted that decisions on this land would not be within purview of the City however noted that there could be an instance – in the future – where a small portion of the land might be determined “surplus” by MAWS placing it under municipal jurisdiction.

Chuck Roulund then asked Committee members if anyone saw value in including said land. Vice-Chair Smith said he agreed with Member Roulund that it was of no value to include the land on Base. Member Fallgatter indicated he wanted the land included but represented differently so the distinction was clear.

There was discussion back and forth as to the merits or otherwise of including vacant land on Base in the City's Existing Land Use Map. Chair Smith then asked for a motion to take a vote on whether the Base land should remain or be taken out of the Land Use Map. When asked for further clarification Vice-Chair Smith stated that the vote would be to leave the numbers in the key of the map to reflect the existence of the land but remove it from the actual map.

There was further discussion regarding the details of the motion. Member Biddlingmeier suggested the motion could be summarized as "take out any Navy land and leave in any BLM land".

Vice-Chair Smith asked the Committee if everyone was satisfied and asked Planner Alexander if a formal motion was needed to action the Committee's wishes. Planner Alexander responded indicating a minute order would be sufficient.

Vice-Chair Smith asked for any further comments. Member Jeglum said she liked the big map and the change to show vacant land in white. Member O'Gara asked if he could send an email to Planner Alexander regarding the Biological Resources portion of the Map Atlas rather than discussing some errors he was aware of. Planner Alexander responded affirmatively.

4. Bowman Creek Alternatives

Planner Alexander introduced Item number 4 by describing the Bowman Corridor as being 6 miles long and varying from 140 to 240 feet in width, being a multipurpose piece of land and indicating the City now had a draft E.I.R. for the New Wal-Mart project which was planned for location at the intersection of China Lake Boulevard and Bowman Road. Planner Alexander stated that most people felt the drainage from the channel in place by the current Wal-Mart did not work very well. He called the one mile portion of the Bowman Corridor between Norma Street and Sunland Street the "Pilot Project" indicating the area of focus would be China Lake Boulevard, Bowman Road and the Drainage Channel as it was that portion of the Bowman Creek which would be influenced by the Wal-Mart development.

Planner Alexander stated that the existing Bowman Channel had a chain link fence which collects trash and is not attractive and does not encourage use. He provided photos showing that despite it's unattractive nature citizens were using the Corridor for recreational purposes. Planner Alexander then introduced Dan Lare of Dan Lare Planners as the consultant of choice to assist with development of a plan for the Bowman Corridor.

Mr. Lare introduced himself to the Committee and stated that he intended to show members two different approaches as to how they might use a drainage channel. He indicated he was looking for consensus from members as to which option they preferred. Mr. Lare then went on to say that upon his review of the project area he believed it to be a "gateway" to Ridgecrest.

Mr. Lare made a slide presentation to the Committee and asked them to consider among other things; how they wanted to use the land – for e.g. reducing the land

set aside for roadway, installing a "roundabout" versus traffic signals and how they wanted the Wal-Mart building to look showing examples of buildings erected by Wal-Mart which he believed to be attractive and fitting of the landscape in Ridgecrest. Mr. Lare noted that these considerations were peripheral to his contribution but that he felt that thinking outside the box is important to considerations for the overall vision of the project.

Mr. Lare summarized the existing conditions noting there were pools of water gathering between Norma Street and China Lake Boulevard and the fence line was collecting plastic bags. Mr. Lare then presented further slides showing what can be done with trails and ditches and asked the Committee if they had any questions.

Member Jeglum asked how the influx of water would be controlled to which Mr. Lare responded that there wasn't any reason why Bowman Corridor could not be designed to handle water influx. Vice-Chair Smith suggested that instead of looking at the one mile stretch between Sunland and Norma Mr. Lare should be designing for the entire six mile channel area. Member Biddlingmeier asked if in his proposal Mr. Lare would be factoring total ownership costs. Mr. Lare indicated this could be done though it was outside the usual scope of his work stating we are the "idea people".

Member Fallgatter stated that he felt this was "great stuff" and said that if the one mile section could be done it would perhaps get the rest of the channel project started. Mr. Kauffman asked that Mr. Lare provide costs for construction and ongoing maintenance for the project area.

Member Fallgatter stated his approval of the roundabout saying "I think they work fantastically". Member Kilikauskas said as a member of the Parks and Recreation Subcommittee he was pleased with what he had seen from Mr. Lare. He indicated that Mr. Lare's ideas tied in well with what the subcommittee had discussed and noted that Wal-Mart would be providing the funds needed to pay for the project.

Member Fallgatter then noted he had seen Gary Parsons, Economic Development Project Manager shake his head at Member Kilikauskas last comment and asked Mr. Parsons if the funds would be available. Mr. Parsons said that if the project was too expensive Wal-Mart would not fund it. Member Fallgatter stated that it was his understanding that because Wal-Mart needed the dirt from the channel the funds would become available via the resulting transaction. Mr. Parsons responded stating that if the cost of the dirt was too high Wal-Mart would source dirt elsewhere.

Vice-Chair Smith then asked the Committee to "wrap up" as the Planning Commission was due to meet in the Chambers in less than five minutes and asked for final comments.

Planner Alexander stated that he felt in his opinion the City could not afford to not seize this opportunity. He said that Wal-Mart could be forced to put in a concrete ditch which would be a more costly option than those proposed by Mr. Lare and therefore he felt there was indeed room for negotiation with Wal-Mart developers.

Vice-Chair Smith asked members of the Committee if anyone was opposed to either of the options presented by Mr. Lare. Member Roulund stated that he was opposed to the green belt option. Vice-Chair Smith then asked the Committee if

there was general consensus on asking Mr. Lare to move forward with Option B and all responded affirmatively. Vice-Chair Smith then asked if any member of the Committee was opposed to the idea of a roundabout and no oppositions were voiced. Vice-Chair Smith then told Mr. Lare that he had the direction he had requested from the Committee.

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7.00 p.m.