

Ridgecrest General Plan Update

Meeting Minutes

December 4, 2007

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Ridgecrest City Council Chambers

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 p.m.

Present: Jim Fallgatter, Howard Laire, Nellavan Jeglum, Jim Smith, Jerry Taylor, Craig Porter, Ruth Cooper, Chuck Roulund, John O’Gara, Joanna Rummer, Andy Kilikauskas

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

City Planner Matthew Alexander advised that Rick Rust and Molly Bosley of Matrix Design Group were present for this final GPAC Meeting for 2007.

2. Development of Land Use Alternatives

Rick Rust briefed the GPAC on the schedule for the evening. He said that the evening’s purpose was to move towards a preferred alternative. He confirmed the definition of the Planning Area including both land inside and outside the city limits. He introduced the map package consisting of 7 labeled maps as follows:

1. Existing Land Use
2. Existing Zoning
3. Existing General Plan
4. Available Land
5. Available Land (Aerial View)
6. Proposed Residential Development
7. Alternative A

Mixed Use

He went on to discuss mixed use. He said mixed use was exactly as it sounded – a mixture of uses, a range of densities and associated zoning designation. He clarified that mixed use could occur either on a horizontal scale or a vertical scale. He asked the Committee if they had any questions on mixed use as it had seemed to initially have been an area of interest and in the last minutes seemed less popular.

Member Roulund said his understanding was that the Committee wanted the option to have it.

Member Fallgatter asked if a P.U.D was a mixed use example.

Molly Bosley responded saying that it could be but wasn’t always. Rick Rust explained it was a fine line of distinction. Molly Bosley said timing usually defined it.

Andy Kilikauskas said it was his understanding that the Committee wanted mixed use but did not necessarily want to specify an area.

Rick Rust said that what can happen if land is not designated and put aside for mixed use, the larger parcels can become smaller over time as pieces of land are "used up".

Member Jeglum asked if it wasn't already that way given that any area that may be assigned a mixed use designation would consist of different parcels. She asked how you determine what mixed use means.

Rick Rust responded that sometimes City's demanded that an area designated mixed use be developed as one large plan, or smaller plans indicating how they would cooperate with neighbors. He said City's treatment of mixed use was dependent upon how serious they were about designating land for mixed use.

Member Roulund said it was his opinion that multi use should not be allowed within lower density areas.

Member Fallgatter asked if there was a "check and balance" of a ratio for commercial versus non-commercial and Rick Rust said that usually General Plans allowed for a scattered development and an over-allowance of designated areas to allow for the fact that not all land will be developed as might be foreseen. He confirmed that mixed use could allow for 100% use of one type of use but that part of the process was to "write the rules".

Member Fallgatter asked if areas were zoned Commercial could they still be allowed to have a mixed use development. Rick Rust confirmed but said that you would not want to encourage mixed use in all commercial zones. Member Smith said that would be the role of the Planning Commission.

Member Jeglum said that she did not agree with mixed use. Her feeling was that the General Plan was a 'general plan' and that mixed use was too specific.

Chairman Taylor said the other side of the argument was that mixed use allowed for a variety of uses within a smaller area and therefore made life simpler for its residents.

Rick Rust asked if the group did want to allow mixed use.

The group made a general statement that they did.

Rick Rust then asked how they wanted to allow it.

Member Kilikauskas said that he felt the ad-hoc approach would be best – i.e. bring development plans to the Planning Commission. Member Roulund added that lower density residential should be excluded. Rick Rust asked if an exclusion should be included for the MIA. It was generally agreed that a mixed use designation would not be practical within the MIA given that the focus within the MIA was to keep density down.

West Expansion

Rick Rust asked if the group was supportive of an extension to Highway 395 on Bowman Corridor. There was general agreement.

Southern Expansion

Rick Rust said there were 'issues' on the west side, north and eastern borders. He asked the Committee if they wanted to set aside a future area for resort residential/ golf-course type oriented area/ retirement residential area. He said there could be an opportunity to transfer BLM land out of the south into an area the base might like protected and set aside that land for such an area.

Member Kilikauskas said that the Conservation Committee was interested in protecting the recreational aspect of the hills area and he did not think that area was practical for a golf course area given that water would have to be pumped up hill.

Member O'Gara said that he thought BLM valued those lands mentioned very highly and would not easily make such an exchange.

There was general agreement that there be no development south of Jarvis and that development north of Jarvis would be appropriate.

Rick Rust then asked if the Committee would be agreeable to development in the College Heights area – which was south of Jarvis. There was general agreement that it would not be appropriate to increase the density of College Heights.

Rick Rust asked the Committee for their opinion on subdivision development in the area just north of Jarvis. There was general agreement that this would create traffic and water flow problems. Rick Rust then showed the Committee Map 6, which outlined tracts recently dedicated to such development.

Member Kilikauskas said that the reality was that Springer was the cut-off in that the area north of Springer would be less dense as you move up the hill.

Rick Rust asked the Committee for their opinion on the area south of Springer and other areas in the south – there was general agreement that these areas should remain in their current zoning categories.

The Committee then discussed the area from College Heights to Downs/Springer to Jarvis. The consensus was E1 zoning (minimum 1 acre lots), was appropriate.

The area Springer North to China Lake Blvd bounded by Downs – consensus agreed E2 (minimum ¼ acre lots).

Commercial Lands

Rick Rust said there appeared to be a substantial inventory of undeveloped commercial land. He asked if the Committee wanted to reduce this amount which could increase competitiveness for any potential developers. There was general consensus that the Committee would consider reducing commercial land on Ridgecrest Boulevard. There was a general consensus that the area of China Lake Boulevard outside the City limits to the south of Springer could be reduced until Member Rummer pointed out that it might be prudent to set aside that area for a future instance of a commercial need if the Northern Area of China Lake Boulevard became developed out.

There was a vote in regards to this area and it was a tied result. Therefore it was agreed that this topic be set aside for discussion with the County. Member Cooper asked that consultation include that the area west of Mahan was included in the flight area.

Rick Rust gave an outline of plans for the next GPAC meetings saying that GPAC 11 would address the Preferred Alternative; GPAC 12 in February would address the GPAC Draft Goals and Policies and that time was allowed in March to further discuss these goals and policies with the draft zoning ordinance being presented to the Planning Commission in March.

3. Public Comments

Kristen Werwick of AMG Associates asked what the appropriate procedure for landowners to determine what the initial general plan designation was for their land and if necessary how to bring forward objection to that designation.

Ron Schuller spoke to the Committee in regards to the expansion to the west. He wanted to know how far west any potential development might occur. Chairman Taylor responded stating that the area Mr. Schuller lived in was most unlikely to be included in any development plans in the immediate future but that because that area was within the sphere of influence it had been discussed.

Carol Vaughan asked if residents could see maps given that plans were being brought forward for areas where there were existing developments. She said it was her concern that all plans and proposals put forward had historically meant an increase in the cost of housing.

Rick Rust confirmed that the land discussed during the evening was approximately 98% vacant and development proposed was mostly consistent with the current use in the other 2%.

4. GPAC Member Comments

It was confirmed that the GPAC meetings would continue according to the usual schedule in January – i.e. next meeting scheduled for 22nd January, 2008.

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned 7:15 p.m.