

**CITY OF EL MIRAGE  
SPECIAL PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 20, 2008**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair David Shapera called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present were Chair David Shapera, Vice Chair Hugh Flisyn, Commission members Robert Jones, and Deidre Gossett, Community Development Director George Flores, Senior Planner Mark Smith, City Attorney Rick Flaaen, Code Enforcement Coordinator Anthony Kern.

**III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2008**

The Chair delayed action on the approval of the minutes until the next meeting.

**IV. WITHDRAWALS AND CONTINUANCES [NONE]**

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Discussion on Paper on New Urbanism & CPTED and other concerns.**

The Chair said that part of Planning & Zoning is planning. The original townsite needs help. Step 1 was to see that mobile homes cannot be replaced. Step 2 was to recommend to the City Council that they step up code enforcement.

Adam Muntian stated he was a Surprise Police Officer and finishing his master's degree in Urban Design & Planning. He presented a Powerpoint slide show on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design [CPTED] and New Urbanism. CPTED designs in a change in behavior while New Urbanism led to denser, walkable communities. CPTED principles include natural surveillance (visibility), territorial reinforcement (investment), natural access control, activity support, and maintenance (clean, repaired, landscaped, etc.). It enhances the quality of life and increase in business. He encouraged the use of it along Thunderbird Road. New Urbanism deals with smart growth instead of sprawl including narrower streets, closer buildings, pedestrian access rather than auto dependence, mixed uses, increased interaction on streets, architectural variety, reduced setbacks, buffered sidewalks, alleyways, and community recreational facilities.

Robert Jones remarked that alleys are often not lit and crime is prevalent. They need to be maintained. The ordinances are already on the books and need to be enforced. He noted that there is nothing for youths to do. The City grew too fast.

Infrastructure has not caught up yet but will improve over time. He asked with everything brought to the street if the parking went in the rear. Muntian said yes.

In regard to alley maintenance, David Shapera said that the City needed an alternative to the junkyards that they are now. Adam Muntian said that Fire cannot get in them now. They need to be properly designed and maintained.

Robert Jones suggested pocket parks. Arizona is hot so people don't come out until after 8:00 p.m. David Shapera said the developers came and got away with murder, but we can require illumination, give kids a place to go & light up areas. Adam Muntian said his professor at ASU said there should be federal monies for struggling communities to fight crime.

Deidra Gossett liked the small town feel and said we should make Thunderbird more attractive and than market residential on top. Staff reminded her that the downtown was in noise zones & the City cannot increase residential densities. David Shapera said we deserved better. The Post Office was dumpy and across the street from downtown. Thunderbird Road needed medians and crossings.

Audience member Doug Doede talked about Verrado near the White Tanks in Buckeye. They had alleys with garages in them, no graffiti on the new high school and 2 elementary schools, a hospital coming, and a downtown with shops, businesses, and residences. David Shapera said this was why this is on the agenda. They need to come up with a program and send it to City Council. They should be acquiring property downtown and getting the shacks torn down. Code Enforcement is a big deal for them. They are expecting a lot but are concerned that things are not moving along. They don't want to wait any more. They have waited long enough. They need to make sure people are arrested for graffiti and hit as hard as the law allows so they don't think about doing it again.

Deidra Gossett asked about a list of developments. Adam Muntian said he had his own list prepared for tonight including projects like Chicago's successful infill redevelopment, but there are several available on line under 'New Urbanism'.

Hugh Flisyn said the homeowners associations are working with the City to put lighting in the parks. Costs can go as high as \$10,000 per pole. He suggested purchasing homes, knocking them down, and putting up 'brownstones' [townhouses] block by block. It can be done with a foresight and a little money. David Shapera said the City does not need to be in the real estate business.

Code Enforcement Coordinator Anthony Kern said the staff was working out a strategic code enforcement plan and could provide monthly citation statistics.

Community Development Director George Flores said it was an excellent presentation and staff embraced the concepts. They have been done in every community in the Valley, but they are easier to implement in new development.

In regard to cars versus pedestrians, Mr. Flores reminded the Commission that there was a meeting on Tuesday at the El Mirage Elementary School on traffic calming. Thunderbird was a good example of the need to control the traffic. A strategic code enforcement plan can become a tool for addressing issues. The update of the General Plan can include specific plans for downtown, reuse zones, and major streets. He cited Phoenix, Tempe, Scottsdale, and other cities that used their General Plan and specific plans to make long-term changes to their downtown areas.

**VI. CALL TO THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS [NONE PRESENT]**

**VII. STAFF REPORT ON PAST AND PENDING PROJECTS [LIST PRESENTED]**

**VIII. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS BY COMMISSION MEMBERS [NONE]**

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION [NONE]**

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at about 7:10 p.m.

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Mark L. Smith, Senior Planner

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David Shapera, Comm. Chair