

**WORK SESSION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF EL MIRAGE
EL MIRAGE MUNICIPAL COURT
14010 N. EL MIRAGE ROAD
6:00 P.M., THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2010**

Minutes

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order by Mayor Michele Kern at 6:00 p.m.
- II. **ROLL CALL** – Present were: Mayor Michele Kern, Vice Mayor David Shapera, Councilmember Roger Cleveland, Councilmember Ben Lewis, Councilmember Adam Super. Excused: Councilmember William Conner, Councilmember Roy Delgado
- III. **WORK SESSION**
 - 1. **Artist – Live/Work/Live Program – Discussion.**

Economic Development Director Scott Chesney gave a presentation regarding the proposed Arts Based Redevelopment program (Exhibit A).

The program was derived using the updated General Plan as a guide. Through the Theatre Simple and the Park Bench outreach initiatives, the main driving forces behind the plan were that 1) Residents appreciated small-town quality of life 2) Residents want more retail, dining, and entertainment choices 3) Residents want to preserve and enhance the value of their homes 4) Residents want stable, safe, family-oriented neighborhoods 5) Residents want better jobs in the city.

The main priority areas for development consist of 1) Downtown 2) Gateway entrances to the city 3) Agua Fria.

Economic Development Coordinator Marianne Archibald gave a brief overview of the Artist Relocation program. The main objectives of this program will be to 1) Create a catalyst for economic development 2) Stimulate jobs & investment in creative sectors 3) Generate cultural tourism and overnight stays 4) Diversify the local economy 5) Improve & stabilize property values.

The El Mirage Artist Relocation program has been crafted after the successful program from Paducah, KY.

Implementation of the program started with identifying priority projects. These such projects include the Artist in Residence Studio & Gallery, the New Mirage Galleries (Senior Center & Courts), El Frio Street residential studios & galleries, Grand Ave. frontage entertainment and retail, and Well Street at Alto neighborhood markets.

The Artist Relocation program is currently being funded by grants and HOME funds. The most recent grant applied for is a \$5 million dollar economic stimulus grant which the city will find out if they have been awarded the grant by March 15, 2010.

Other key development projects that fall under the broader Arts Based Redevelopment program include the 1) Business Development Center 2) New Mirage Galleries 3) Ecopreneur's Program 4) Kitchen Incubator 5) Wal-Mart Shelf Program 6) Green Job Training 7) Economic Gardening 8) Farmers' Market.

As part of the downtown revitalization plan, the city is currently looking into the feasibility of adding commuter rail service on the BNSF railroad along Grand Ave. MAG should be completing their commuter rail study soon and will be sharing that info with the Corridor Committee on March 8th.

Mayor Kern moved item number (4) to the second item to be discussed.

4. Economic Development – Discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding the status of the Northern Parkway project and the El Mirage Road Corridor project.

Economic Development Director Scott Chesney stated that the Northern Parkway project has taken a lower profile due to budget constraints.

The El Mirage Road Corridor project has received a funding source through the prop 400 funds for approximately \$68 million dollars.

2. Sign Ordinance – Proposed amendments.

Community Development Director George Flores presented an overview of the proposed sign ordinance amendments (Exhibit B).

The main proposed sign code changes consist of 1) Maximum sign area on facades 2) Signs on side or rear of buildings 3) Number and height of freestanding signs 4) Allowed area of freestanding signs 5) Number, area, and height of menu boards 6) Increase time for special event signs 7) Garage or yard sale sign during sale 8) Freedom of speech for political signs 9) Attached letters vs. painted/backlit signs.

Discussion ensued between Council and staff regarding the placement of yard sale and political signs on private property and in the right-of-way. The main issues surrounding the signs is that they are not being taken down after their intended use and that signs in the right-of-way pose a possible liability to the city.

The idea was proposed to have individuals that are to perform community service hours, take down signs that are in the right-of-way.

3. General Plan – Discussion.

City Attorney Rick Flaaen stated that under Arizona law, General Plans are good for ten (10) years, at which time they have to be updated or readopted. The General Plan is a statement of the community goals and development policies. Once the plan is adopted by Council, it will go before voters at the next General Election which is scheduled for August 24th, 2010. The General plan does have to comply with the state statutes regarding Luke development. The proposed General Plan draft has been submitted to both Luke AFB and the Attorney General's office for their review.

Community Development Director George Flores said that the planning process for the creation of the General Plan consisted of: 1) Data collection & analysis 2) Community Involvement Program 3) Formulation of community vision 4) Preparation of goals, policies, and implementation measures 5) Preparation of the implementation Plan (Exhibit C).

The community involvement part of the General Plan process included having theater simple, an internationally acclaimed theater company based in Seattle, Washington; bring their Park Bench public input process to El Mirage.

The Park Bench is a mobile interview process where residents of all ages were asked questions and were invited to share their thoughts on their community.

Theater Simple met El Mirage residents at the community clean up event & the Pueblo El Mirage Banquet Hall on Saturday, September 20, 2008, Wal-Mart SuperCenter on Sunday, September 21, 2008, and the Dysart High School on Monday, September 22, 2008 for input.

Next, a seven day Design Charrette was conducted on Monday, October 6, 2008 through Saturday, October 11, 2008. This week long event included residents of the community, invited stakeholders, and state, county, and military representatives.

The major planning areas conform to either Growth areas, Redevelopment areas, or Infill areas. These five major planning areas consist of 1) Downtown/Central Business District 2) Downtown/Arts District 3) Agua Fria Gateway 4) Commerce/Industry Park 5) The Neighborhoods.

Vice Mayor Shapera stated that at a future Work-Session he would like to receive more information on funding sources and also what BNSF has planned in conjunction with the updated General Plan.

Community Development Director George Flores proposed bringing back each of the five major planning areas as separate Work-Sessions in order to allow Council enough time to review the material and ask questions.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

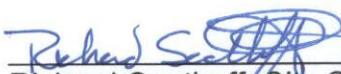
Mayor Kern adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.


Michele Kern, Mayor

ATTEST:


Richard Saathoff, City Clerk

I hereby certify the foregoing minutes are a true and accurate record of the City of El Mirage Work Session Meeting held January 28, 2010 and a quorum was present.


Richard Saathoff, City Clerk