

**CITY OF EL MIRAGE
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 21, 2010**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Doug Doede called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge.

II. ROLL CALL

Members present were Doug Doede, Brandon Forrey, Mary Koestner, Bill Morrison, and Beth Simek. Staff members present were Community Development Director George Flores, Management Assistant Sharon Antes, Senior Planner Mark Smith, Attorney Rick Flaaen, Economic Development Director Scott Chesney, and Technician Margarette Aranda.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – March 17, 2010

Bill Morrison made a motion for approval of the minutes. Beth Simek seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 to 0.

IV. CONTINUANCES [NONE]

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Hearing on Proposed General Plan Update

The Chair asked George Flores to present an overview of the process. Mr. Flores stated that it had been 23 months since Council had awarded the contract to The Planning Center in Tucson to do the General Plan Update. In September of 2008 they brought in Theatre Simple to do a “Park Bench” project to interview citizens. In October 2008 they sent an invitation to all the residences in El Mirage to a Design Charrette from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday. In addition they invited stakeholders including representatives of various state and regional agencies, homeowners association presidents, the County, and Luke Air Force Base, Valley Metro, and the West Valley Arts Council to meet and discuss their concerns. A Vision Statement was created that formed the basis of the plan the Commission had this evening. There are 4 documents including an Executive Summary (copies of which are available tonight), a Policy Plan, an Implementation Plan, and the Background and Current Conditions. The draft was sent out for 60-day review to state and regional agencies and the comments received are in the packet delivered to the Commission and available tonight. Two PowerPoint presentations were done for the Commission in February and March and for Council in January and March. The Plan meets all state law requirements and recognizes the limits of our 12 square miles. It provides live/work opportunities. It provides a foundation for the future and is a well thought-out document. That brings it to the hearing tonight.

Kristi Vater of 12198 W. Soledad St. addressed the Commission. She began by quoting the *Art Business News* magazine: “We are certainly at an important crossroads – and one that I believe can only be overcome by bold, decisive business moves.” She told the Commission that she owns a business called Divine Art Connections and represents 11 local artists. She owns a home in El Mirage and has lived here five years. She loves the community and wants to see the planned improvements put in place and the City revitalized as the gem of the Northwest Valley and the metro. She thought introducing the arts was a perfect way to revitalize the City.

She attended the reception for photographer Thomas Schultz on June 3rd and was impressed with how well it was done. She also attended the “What’s Up Downtown?” presentation on June 4th hosted by Marianne Archibald and Scott Chesney. She said the presentations were fantastic and the scope of the Plan is amazing. She is wholeheartedly in favor. She supports the improvements to the Agua Fria River channel, Grand Avenue, and the Arts District. She hopes to be a part of the Arts District, Farmer’s Market, Community Gardens, and Thompson Ranch Road area. She thought it would dramatically improve revenues and draw commuters from all over the region. She saw a complete revitalization of the City and she added that it took bold, innovative plans like this to transform a region.

She said she was particularly interested in the Arts District. She was exposed to the arts communities in Phoenix and Scottsdale. The City’s is distinctive because it is based on a successful plan in Paducah, Kentucky, that draws artists to both live and work, providing stability for both the artist and the community. An arts district can draw visitors and inspire young and old. First Fridays downtown draws 15,000 visitors a night. Scottsdale is a world renowned arts center with galleries and art walks. She said art draws tourists and becomes a catalyst for other industries.

There were no other comments so the Chair closed the public hearing.

VI. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS [None]

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Mark L. Smith, Senior Planner

Doug Doede, Commission Chair

George Flores, CD Director

Rick Flaaen, City Attorney