

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL JOINT WORK SESSION OF THE CITY COUNCIL AND  
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA,  
HELD MARCH 12, 2009, AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING, 191  
SOUTH SIXTH STREET, COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA.

---

CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Mayor Joens called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll call was taken as follows:

Council Members Present

Diane Joens, Mayor  
Karen Pfeifer, Vice Mayor  
Tim Elinski, Council Member  
Duane Kirby, Council Member  
Linda Norman, Council Member

Council Members Absent

James Chapman, Council Member  
Terence Pratt, Council Member

Staff Members Present

Doug Bartosh, City Manager  
George Gehlert, Community Development Director  
Casey Rooney, Economic Development Director

Richard Smith, Deputy Clerk  
Kyla Allen, Executive Assistant

Planning & Zoning Commission Members Present

Pat Dixon      Jake Gonzalez      Richard Kevin  
Ed Kiyler      Diane Lovett      Darold Smith

P & Z Commission Member Absent

Raymond Cox

OVERVIEW & REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF HOUSING ELEMENT

Mr. Gehlert explained this was the first annual meeting this year regarding the implementation of the General Plan, as required by state law. This segment was based on the Cottonwood Housing study and Focused Future Economic Development study of 2000-2001. It was not required by the State but was done because of Cottonwood being the business hub of the Verde Valley. The Housing element recommended the City work toward establishing a balance between housing supply and demand since supply and demand for various housing types was badly mismatched. Demographics demanded a larger supply of low cost, affordable housing units. Mitigation could be accomplished through economic development measures which boosted incomes, but must also come from alternative housing types such as higher density development, land trusts, and economic assistance. Multi-generational housing types and investment in aging neighborhoods should be considered. The housing problems were large enough that regional cooperation and solutions were considered the key to resolving them. Cottonwood already provided the bulk of affordable housing available in the Verde Valley. To that end, staff participated in the Verde Valley Housing Task Force (VVHTF).

The City had taken steps to upgrade infrastructure with major projects for utilities, streets, the recreation facility and an award winning transit system. New ordinances creating the positions of enforcement officer and hearing officer as well as nuisance abatement ordinances had been put in place. These ordinances included ones addressing rental property maintenance, graffiti, transients, disorderly gatherings, noise, fireplaces and wood burning stoves, and building code enforcement.

Promotion of housing objectives was limited due to reduced budget related staffing. A new housing study was needed because information on file was out of date. Consideration should be given to ensuring a certain percentage of new housing units met affordable standards. Code should be developed for alternative residential units and home occupation restrictions loosened. Greater participation in the VVHTF should be pursued and support given to the future VISTA worker to establish a housing assistance program and rehabilitation of rental properties for the purpose of enabling the establishment of a first time buyers program for low income families. Such efforts would stabilize neighborhoods and increase property values. Targeted neighborhoods were Main & Mingus and Old Town where it was planned to have up to 10 new first time buyers within a year. The VISTA program was expected to be self sustaining through grant funds.

Council Member Elinski asked about the feasibility of a land trust.

Mr. Gehlert stated, as a member of the VVHTF, he was aware that Camp Verde had purchased 5 acres there for such a program.

Council Member Kirby stated that the Northern Arizona Council of Governments had a program for first time home buyers which could be a resource.

Council Member Norman asked what was considered affordable.

Mr. Gehlert stated 30 percent of gross income was the rule of thumb.

Council Member Kirby stated that Habitat for Humanity was another resource to be utilized.

Mayor Joens stated Habitat had shifted their focus, for the time being, to Camp Verde.

Council Member Elinski stated he wanted to look in depth into a land trust where selected neighborhood properties would be purchased and revitalized as part of such a trust.

Mr. Gehlert stated he needed direction. He had been holding discussions with representatives from Phoenix who had land trust experience.

Mayor Joens directed that a speaker be engaged to give a presentation to the Council at a future meeting.

Council Member Kirby asked where assistance for first time buyers could be expected to come from.

Mr. Bartosh stated the VISTA program would assist through grant funding.

#### REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

Mr. Rooney stated it was important to position the City properly to take advantage of the economy when it recovered. That would be best done by creating the right kind of environment for new ideas to flourish and be able to take hold as businesses by improving wealth, job opportunities and quality of life.

To that end, economic evaluation was underway and economic development infrastructure was being created. A market study was initiated and business development continued through the many local community organizations, particularly the Cottonwood Economic Development Council. The concept of a business incubator should be furthered to develop economic opportunities such as viniculture was becoming. It was important to have a youth development program to promote future leadership.

The Verde River and eco-tourism should be emphasized and strengthened. Water wise agriculture was a possible future source of economic growth as were the arts. Main Street civic programs and health and family support services would be attractions for new businesses, particularly if the local labor force had the skills and education needed. The airport and industrial parks were in place and the Arizona Prospector website updated to provide information to interested parties. We were targeting smaller, modern, "brain" industries whose workforce would be attracted to the area for its quality of life.

Discussion followed led by Mayor Joens and Council Member Elinski about achieving a balance between smaller businesses that might offer better wages and the "big box" type stores that provided a good tax base but offered less lucrative wages and fewer career paths.

Discussion revolved around the need for a balance of business types to provide different opportunities for wages, taxes, and to attract shoppers, so as to remain the business hub of the valley.

#### ARIZONA SMART GROWTH SCORECARD

Mr. Gehlert stated this was a document that was now required in order to be considered for discretionary state spending. It was designed to help gauge how well cities were doing with sustainability issues. It consisted of 50 questions and higher scores were awarded for completeness and proper elaboration and documentation.

Discussion followed regarding various questions of the score card and whether the preliminary responses prepared by Planning & Zoning needed amending or whether the new administration still intended to utilize the score card at all.

Mayor Joens directed staff to take appropriate steps to ensure as high a score as possible and for those to be reviewed by both Planning & Zoning and the Council before submission to the State, which should take place as quickly as possible if the score card were being retained by the new administration.

#### NEXT JOINT WORK SESSION DATE & AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Gehlert stated the next joint meeting would take place on the second Thursday in May. The topic would be land use.

Mayor Joens asked when changes to the General Plan would be made.

Mr. Gehlert stated revision was planned for 10 years from inception.

#### CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Mayor Joens opened the floor to the public. No one chose to speak.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Joens moved to adjourn. Council Member Kirby seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The special joint meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

---

Diane Joens, Mayor

---

Richard Smith, Deputy Clerk