

MINUTES OF THE JOINT WORK SESSION OF THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF COTTONWOOD,  
ARIZONA, HELD MARCH 13, 2012, AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE COTTONWOOD  
RECREATION CENTER, 150 SOUTH 6TH STREET, COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA.

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CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Joens called the joint work session to order at 6:00 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Diane Joens, Mayor  
Karen Pfeifer, Vice Mayor  
Tim Elinski, Council Member  
Ruben Jauregui, Council Member  
Linda Norman, Council Member  
Jesse Dowling, Council Member

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Terence Pratt, Council Member

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Ed Kiyler, Chairperson  
Don Speer, Commission Member  
Jean Wilder, Commission Member  
Robert Williams, Commission Member  
Judd Wasden, Commission Member

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Steve Horton, City Attorney  
Matthew McLean, Deputy Clerk  
Dan Lueder, Development Services General Manager  
George Gehlert, Community Development Director  
Charlie Scully, Long Range Planner  
Nikki Arbieter, Planner

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE DIRECTION TO STAFF:

DIRECTION CONCERNING THE STATE-MANDATED RE-ADOPTION OF THE CITY'S GENERAL PLAN

Mr. Gehlert stated staff will begin working on the update to the general plan that is required under Arizona Revised Statutes §9-461.5. The current general plan was ratified by the voters in 2004, and the update must be ratified by voters by 2015. The general plan has to include land use, circulation, open space, growth areas, environmental planning, costs of development, and water resources. The last general plan took over two years to develop.

Mayor Joens stated it was a great process last time, there was a lot of public input and all

the studies we had completed prior to it.

Mr. Gehlert stated last time we put a full page add in the Verde Independent announcing the process and a held a series of community meetings to receive input. It is not unusual to have some type of steering committee to guide the process. Last time it was the Planning and Zoning Commission that provided that function. They will probably start some type of public survey through this year. We are thinking it will be done mostly in house. We will be bringing back some type of calendar at a later meeting.

Council Member Elinski stated he is wondering what we will be doing about the housing strategy specifically and wondering if it will be a deficit if we don't have a new plan.

Mr. Gehlert stated the housing issue has changed with the economy. It is something we will be looking at and whether or not we need a new study.

Mayor Joens stated the last time we tried a plan to encourage home ownership. So many of the studies that were in our 2003 plan could be obsolete, and questioned if we had criteria to determine that.

Chairman Kiyler stated we have a good document in place and we can use that as our base and go forward.

Council Member Dowling stated we should include some self renewing aspects in the general plan, so it is more of an evolving copy. So as things do change, the document itself becomes more of a living document and not a stagnant item.

Vice Mayor Pfeifer stated we have a lot more electronic access to a lot of this information than we did last time.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE COTTONWOOD ZONING ORDINANCE, ADDING A NEW SECTION 405. G. 11. ELECTRONIC MESSAGE DISPLAY SIGNS

Mr. Scully stated the Planning and Zoning Commission discussed electronic message display signs at previous meetings. There are three examples in the city of message signs already; one at Mingus Union High School, one at the Giant gas station and one at Verde Valley Baptist Church. New technology has made it more affordable and some businesses would like to have this option. Staff has proposed an addition to the Zoning Ordinance. The Commission has a range of concerns regarding this issue such as, the brightness level at night time, to questions about if whether or not they should be allowed at all. This is not for electronic billboards or off premise signs or video screens. In the draft ordinance we could regulate the changes that can be made on the sign, which could only allow for a static message with no movement or flashing or scrolling. We can look at the location of where these signs could be located. We can also regulate how long a message can stay on screen, some cities have allowed a message to stay for eight seconds, others have a sixty seconds.

Other cities also regulate how bright the sign can be it. We could also regulate the size of the sign.

Council Member Elinski asked what brought this on.

Mr. Scully stated businesses have asked about these signs and whether or not they could do this.

Council Member Elinski asked if other cities have had issues with these signs.

Mr. Scully stated some cities have prohibited them such as Sedona and Flagstaff.

Mr. Horton stated one of the things to be aware of is safety and the Council and Commission can regulate that.

Council Member Dowling asked if we are only looking at the amber or reddish looking light and if we could limit the color of the sign.

Mr. Scully stated we could limit the color.

Commissioner Wilder stated she would be interested in how this type of light affects the environment. She just cringes about the amount of light coming from Phoenix.

Council Member Dowling stated Flagstaff has been very aggressive on their dark skies ordinance.

Commissioner Wilder stated it is important to be responsive to being so close to the observatory.

Council Member Jauregui asked if there was a way to direct the light towards the ground.

Mr. Scully stated they mostly just go straight out, but we can have them turn the signs off starting at 11:00 p.m. or whenever the business closes. But parking lot lights and light spilling out from businesses are what you will see far more than these signs.

Commissioner Wasden stated Flagstaff has just adopted something last year and there is a certain corridor along their main street and allowing a sign every 100 feet, and he doesn't know if we want that. He would rather see us take a direction like our neighboring cities like Sedona or Show Low that says amber lighting only and static for 60 minutes. We are such a small town and we should relish what makes this unique and enjoy it.

Chairman Kiyler stated they have been working hard with the businesses that have been coming in and trying to maintain a small town look, but still allow them to use current technology. He would hate to see us become like Prescott Valley. We need to keep a handle on signs.

Commissioner Speers stated he is concerned about safety and signs that flash every eight seconds and the possibility of causing an accident.

Vice Mayor Pfeifer stated she agrees with the Commission and right now we don't have two carpet stores right next to each other, but we might in the future and they might want bigger signs to have people come into their stores. They need to be more monument signs and not flashing.

Mayor Joens stated the Giant gas station is very tasteful and it doesn't jump out at her.

Council Member Elinski stated if we allow these or not or regulate them, he doesn't think we are being unfriendly to our businesses. We are just leveling the playing field. He agrees with the Commission on the amount of regulation for these signs.

Council Member Dowling stated these are inevitable and we can't ignore it and we need to regulate it the best we can.

Mayor Joens asked if anyone has talked with the observatory in Flagstaff at all.

Mr. Scully stated there is a certain amount of unshielded light that is allowed per acre. We need to decide what we want to regulate or if we are prohibiting them.

Mayor Joens stated she is not an anti-sign person and thinks Cottonwood looks pretty good.

Commissioner Wilder stated the smart thing to do is look ahead and not let something become a bigger issue or problem.

Mr. Gehlert stated we have been asked about putting larger signs on the highway and we didn't have a way to accommodate that, so we took it the Planning and Zoning Commission. We have a standard of a 15 feet tall sign with a maximum of 40 feet face on them.

Mr. Lueder stated one of things that Mr. Scully has in the draft ordinance is limiting the size to 15 feet. He had asked Mr. Horton about not regulating the freedom of speech, just safety, outputs and things like that.

Mr. Horton stated as long as we are not getting at the content or the message then we can regulate it, such as the amount of animation and illumination and where it is located.

Mr. Lueder stated it seems to be that the consensus is to allow the signs but regulating them and keep our small town feel.

Mr. Horton stated aesthetics is another area and can be another legitimate basis for regulation, such as we could say that we are not going to have these signs in the Old Town historic district.

Mr. Lueder stated one of the things we will do is sit down and have a roundtable discussion with staff and then bring it back to Council.

Mayor Joens stated we would want input from the citizens and the businesses of the community.

#### PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CITY'S BICYCLE PLAN

Ms. Arbeiter gave an update on the Bicycle Plan. The Bicycle Advisory Committee started meeting monthly in October, 2011. The committee is comprised of 12 members including four staff members, community members, local businesses, schools, Yavapai County Health Department and Verde Valley Cyclists Coalition. She has completed the application to designate Cottonwood as a Bicycle Friendly Community. Hopefully we will receive bronze certification and we will receive a sign that says Bicycle Friendly Community from the American League of Cyclists. The sharrows were painted along 12th Street and two off-road "connector" paths were completed along Date Street. They would like to see some signage to explain sharrows and let them know there is path. They have a lot of good ideas of what they want to have done within the next fiscal year and they will be bringing them back in the form of budget requests. They would like to see bike racks at all city buildings, more signage and promotional materials showing a bike route/map, and they would like to sponsor some events like May as Bike Month. They are also seeking some grant money to improve the bike network.

Mayor Joens stated it is very exciting and we hope to market this to tourists as being a bike friendly community.

Mr. Lueder stated Ms. Arbeiter and Mr. Scott have been doing a great job and have been receiving a lot of compliments from the bike community. And we will be coming back to Council with some more concepts they have come up with.

Mayor Joens stated we can see a lot progress and thanked staff, Mr. Lueder and the City Manager.

#### CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Joens moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council Member Elinski, and carried unanimously. The work session adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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Diane Joens, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Matthew McLean, Deputy Clerk

**CERTIFICATION OF MINUTES**

I hereby certify that the attached is a true and correct copy of the minutes of a joint work session of the City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Cottonwood held on March 13, 2012. I further certify that the meeting was duly called, and that a quorum was present.

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Matthew McLean, Deputy Clerk

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Date