

CITY OF SAFFORD
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY OCTOBER 9, 2008 – 5:30 P.M.
PHELPS DODGE MEETING ROOM - SAFFORD LIBRARY COMPLEX
800 7th AVENUE, SAFFORD, ARIZONA

“The mission of the City of Safford is to make Safford a great place to live, work, and visit”

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Tuttle called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

2. **ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Ray Tuttle, Chairman; Gene Fowler, Vice-Chairman; Commission Members: E.C. “Buff” Cunningham and Dalton Overstreet.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commission Members: Jim Moser, Patricia Cervantez and Gherald Hoopes.

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Peter Stasiak, Community Development Director; Dustin Welker, Planner/Downtown Coordinator, Randy Petty, City Engineer, David Kincaid, Interim City Manager, Ron Green, Mayor and Sandra Findley, Administrative Assistant.

VISITORS: John George, Steve Holmes, T. Aluillar, Joan John, Michael John, Renate Ely, Gwen DeMott, Sonny Ely, Dale Olsen, Elidia Olsen, Terry J. Bingham, Will Wright, T. Sharon Marble, Don Marble, Geneva L. Woolsey, Tammy Lines, Gary L. Ferguson, Peggy Ferguson, Wendy John, Jace John, Bill Harmon, Clay & Audra Mack, Shawn & Michele Haralson, Jane Dugan, L. Tinney, Barbara Bauer, Dale Bauer, Debbie Kempton, Larry D. Rapier, Richard Whitmore, William A. Ferguson, Alta Nelson, Sharon Kay Nelson, Tracey O’Donnal, Phyllis Montierth, Neal Montierth, Steve Hohulin and other guests that did not sign in.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA:**

The following citizens wish to comment on agenda items and will be heard as each item is read: Will Wright, Terry Bingham, Tracey O’Donnal, Tammy Lines, Shawn Haralson, Harvey E. Ely, Clay Mack, Larry D. Rapier, Steve Holmes and Leverne Tinney. Chairman Tuttle stated that agenda items that wish to be addressed should be identified on the request and read each agenda item to the audience.

4. **MINUTES:**

It was moved by Vice Chair Fowler, seconded by Commissioner Overstreet and carried unanimously (4 – 3 absent) to approve the Minutes of September 25, 2008.

MOTION APPROVED

5. **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES:**

There were no comments to the minutes of the October 6, 2008 Development Review Committee Meeting.

6. **PLANNING AND ZONING CASES:**

Chairman Tuttle stated that the Commission was here at the public hearing today only to hear and bring comment to the Council on annexations and there will be another public hearing before the Council to make a decision on annexations.

6.1 **Case Z-12-08; Welker Farm Annexation Phase 1 Industrial** Application to annex approximately 100 acres of land located east of Highway 191 and south of 8th street continuing east to Highway 70.

Mr. Stasiak introduced the Interim City Manager David Kincaid to the group.

Mr. Stasiak said that item number one on the agenda is a Phase 1 Industrial application for annexation and turned the meeting over to Steve Hohulin with RBF Consulting. Mr. Hohulin identified the property on the map and explained that the City has asked for this portion to be identified as industrial as they have had interested parties that would like to locate their business in that area.

Chairman Tuttle asked Steve Holmes, who is representing approximately 50 homeowners, to address the Commission.

Mr. Holmes presented the following letter and presentation to the Commission:

[Welker.pdf](#) [Development Gone Bad.pptx](#)

Chairman Tuttle asked Tracey O'Donnal to address the Commission:

Ms. O'Donnal explained that she was in support of the annexation and the benefits that will come along with it such as allowing the City of Safford to receive additional tax revenue. She stated that the revenue will benefit the Fire Department and will improve street, water and sewer maintenance. She explained that ADOT is currently working on some of the same areas that were presented in Mr. Holmes' presentation to prepare for future growth and that a CMP brings additional money from the state to meet growth needs. She stated that Arizona is forecasted to have 200,000 people per year move to the state and that many will want to move to a smaller community such as Safford. She further stated that Langley Holdings is an experienced developer and is preparing for future growth.

6.2 Case Z-13-08; Welker Farm Annexation Phase 1 Residential Application to annex approximately 250 acres of land located east of Highway 191 and south of 20th street and north of Solomon Road.

Chairman Tuttle asked Larry Rapier to address the Commission:

Mr. Rapier explained that he is within 300 of the proposed annexation and that it has not been made clear what will happen to his property if the annexation goes through. He stated that he was for planned, controlled growth and that there are many vacant properties within the community at this time. He said the planned 7000 unit development south of town will take care of much of the future growth and that there is not a demand for more new homes now. He stated he would like the Commission not to recommend the annexation until the property owners have more information.

Chairman Tuttle asked Clay Mack to address the Commission:

Mr. Mack stated that the majority of his family lives on Lone Star Road and they are concerned that if the road is widened it will encroach on their property. He explained that he has a small business that started at his home and as the business grew he relocated it so as not to affect his neighbor's quality of life. He said that the reason he lived in that area was to avoid the big city and that he needed more information before the City approves and annexes them in.

Chairman Tuttle asked Harvey Ely to address the Commission:

Mr. Ely stated that several families have lived on 20th Street for up to four generations and he did not want anyone to come and try to make him sell his house to obtain enough property to widen the road. He explained that they should use 26th Street that they already owned and make it the road that goes through to handle all of the traffic instead of using their street which would not be fair to them. He asked the Commission to consider it.

Chairman Tuttle asked Shawn Haralson to address the Commission:

Mr. Haralson explained that he was a deputy with the Sheriff's Department and he feels that Lone Star Road cannot handle the traffic that is expected on a daily basis. He stated that he would like to have more information and that he does not think it is an appropriate area for this kind of growth.

Chairman Tuttle asked Tammy Lines to address the Commission:

Ms. Lines explained that she owns property in the county and that the packet that she received did not provide enough information with it and that she had contacted Langley Holdings regarding the plans for the area and was given a vague response. She compared concerns with the planned community to another in the Phoenix area called Anthem. She expressed concerns with vague information that had been given to her and concerns over what would be located in the industrial area. She encouraged the Commission to visit the Anthem area before they made a recommendation.

Chairman Tuttle asked Terry Bingham to address the Commission:

Mr. Bingham said he would like to see the boundaries of where the annexation would be and had concerns over gerrymandering in the area and where the annexation will border his property.

Chairman Tuttle asked Will Wright to address the Commission:

Mr. Wright stated that he was here on behalf of the Board of Supervisors and that he would like to read the following letter:

[Graham County Board of Supervisors](#)

Mr. Wright explained that there are real concerns with the purposed density almost doubling Safford's population and special care needs to be taken to assure that the City will annex a sufficient area to take care of all of the needs and infrastructure of the development. He added, in response to Ms. O'Donnal's statements, that annexation would not necessarily warrant an improvement with the fire district and infrastructure in the area.

Mr. Stasiak asked that Steve Hohulin be allowed to continue his presentation to provide more information.

Mr. Hohulin stated that Langley owns approximately 7,000 acres in the Gila Valley and they felt that the existing city ordinances did not give the community the control that was needed and assisted the City in creating the Community Master Plan (CMP). He explained that Langley is asking to annex three pieces of property; the first would be an industrial park, the second a mix of residential, school and commercial and the third retail and multi-family. He further explained that if the annexation is passed it does not give them the right to build anything on the properties; it is just the first step in a process to further develop the land. He said that the CMP on anything that is not annexed into the City sets up a specific area plan for the City but is only effective on what is annexed into the City.

Mr. Hohulin stated that they have met with the City, County and ADOT to plan what will be best for future signal lights so that traffic may flow and that the entrance for the industrial park would be a private entrance off of Hwy 70 so the residential area would not be disturbed.

He stated that they did not want to detract from the downtown area so they scaled down the planned commercial areas and that it is designed to satisfy the basic needs for the planned community, not to attract "big box" retailers. He said that economical demands will drive the development and that there is no clear timeframe as to when it will all be in place, but that improvements to infrastructure and to county roadways, if necessary, will be made as it develops. He added that circulation plans have been made based upon the overall plan of the City, County and ADOT.

He explained that there is a plan for several large and small area parks within the community.

He stated that a water, waste water and drainage plans have been studied and designed and that drainage plans will actually be an improvement to the existing drainage plans.

Mr. Hohulin explained that a similar plan has been made for the Mt. Graham Market Place which would include a regional mall, retail, office space, and residential as the demand is there. He stated that the planned land uses could change if changes were made to existing roads. He said that if the annexation passes they would ask for a stipulation from the City that no work grading can be done without a completed master circulation, water and

wastewater plan. He explained that they would like to have a rezone to be able to move forward with the process, but as in the other cases nothing can be built without going through the proper procedures as set by the City. He further explained that the cost of infrastructure would be the responsibility of the developer and if the City wanted upgrades they would be responsible for the materials only.

He stated that the development is for the betterment of the community and that he understands that there are concerns with the densities. He explained that open areas and roads take up much of the land and that there will be a variety of lot sizes with some at 5.3 density, but several will have much less densities.

Mr. Stasiak explained that the City owns three industrial parks that consist of approximately 200 acres total but that the City can only lease or auction those properties and that businesses want properties that they can own. He stated that is why they have asked Langley to designate some of the land as industrial park. He further explained that the type of facilities would be manufacturing, warehousing, commercial office space, but nothing that would cause an unclean or unsightly environment. He stated that the City now has three letters of intent from businesses that want to locate in the industrial park and would bring 165 new jobs to the community.

He explained that the community was not prepared for the last growth spurt as far as housing, lodging, RV Parks, etc and that this CMP is to plan for future growth. He stated that there is a possibility that the college will become a four year college, that there is a plan in place for an LDS Temple to be built, that the mine has growth plans for the future and all of these plans will bring in many more citizens. He explained that affordable starter homes such as townhomes are needed to attract first and core worker homeowners.

He further explained this plan is about the future of the Gila Valley and that it is done correctly and that he hopes everyone has a better understanding of the plan after this meeting so that the initial step in the process can be taken.

Mr. Stasiak stated that items 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 did not require action from the Commission; they were informational public meetings only.

- 6.3 Case Z-14-08; Mount Graham Market Place Annexation** Application to annex approximately 97 acres of land north of Highway 70 and east of 20th Avenue.

Chairman Tuttle stated that this item is for a public hearing item only and will go before the City Council for a decision.

- 6.4 Case Z-15-08: Welker Farm Rezone AG – CMP:** Application for a request for a rezone from AR (Agricultural Residential) to CMP (Community Master Plan). Applicant is requesting the rezone with the purpose of developing a master planned community including industrial, commercial, residential, and public uses. The proposed rezone

incorporates approximately 800 acres of property known as the Welker Farm located east of Highway 191, south of Highway 70, and north of Solomonville Road.

Commissioner Overstreet asked what the next step would be if the rezone is passed as a recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Stasiak explained that the Commission would vote to pass the rezone to recommend it be voted and passed by the City Council. Commissioner Overstreet asked if all of the proposals from this meeting will be passed on to the Council. Mr. Stasiak informed him that it would be passed on to the Council and that there will be another public hearing to be heard before the Council that any person from this meeting can attend and express their concerns. Commissioner Overstreet expressed concern that there were three Commissioners absent at this meeting and asked what the consequences were if the Commission passed the requests to the Council with no recommendation. Mr. Stasiak stated that the applicant could still petition to ask for the request to be heard by the Council. Mr. Stasiak reminded the Commission that the CMP was previously heard by the Commission where all members were present and was unanimously approved to recommend to the Council who also unanimously approved the plan.

Mr. Stasiak read the following from the Interim City Manager as quoted in the Eastern Arizona Courier:

Kincaid said communities either grow or shrink, and those that shrink typically cannot provide services its residents need. "In order to move a community forward, you've got to be able to grow," he said. You've got to be able to have the revenue and the infrastructure to assist so that you can continue to provide quality police service, fire, parks and recreation, libraries (and) good streets, all of the things that people mandate when they move into a community or live in a community." Kincaid said the challenge is to assist the community to grow while maintaining its character.

Mr. Stasiak stated the goal is to assist the community to grow while maintaining its character to make it an even better community.

Chairman Tuttle stated that the community will continue to grow and that this plan will hopefully help it grow in an orderly manner.

Vice Chair Fowler expressed his appreciation for the information given at this meeting and would like more information to be given to the public to ease concerns. He stated that smaller lots and yards are needed as affordable options for new homeowners and those starting out with public service positions. He said that he would like the public to have a better understanding of the CMP and asked if other Commissioners had other opinions.

Commissioner Overstreet asked if this land was within the city limits now (no) and inquired about making a decision on the rezone if they could not make a decision on the

annexation. Mr. Stasiak explained that the Commission would be making a recommendation to the Council who would make the decision on the annexation and the rezone at the same time. Mr. Hohulin explained that Langley Holdings only wants the annexation to apply to the property that they own and does not wish to annex any other citizen's properties. He stated that the state has two requirements for annexation; that 51% of the total value of all the property be in favor of the annexation and that 51% of the property owners be in favor so that someone with a very large piece of property cannot force others to annex their property.

Mr. Hohulin stated that all truck traffic for the industrial park will access Highway 70 and they are currently working with Eastern Arizona Railroad and ADOT regarding the entrance. He added that a barricaded emergency entrance for fire and police emergency situations only will be constructed. He explained that approval of the annexations and the rezones are the first step needed to go forward with the plans. He added that they cannot create a county island with the annexations and is continuing to work with the City to meet their standards and that this is the first step in the design.

It was suggested from the audience that Langley Holdings and RBF Consulting set up meetings with the public so that they may be better informed before the Commission makes a favorable recommendation to the Council. Mr. Hohulin explained that the Commission could approve and send a favorable recommendation to the Council with a stipulation that there will be a neighborhood meeting prior to the items coming before the Council.

Commissioner Overstreet made a motion not to make a favorable recommendation to the Council with the above stated stipulation, but he would like to have further input for the community through meetings scheduled by the City Council or staff.

Chairman Tuttle asked Mr. Overstreet to repeat and clarify his motion.

It was moved by Commissioner Overstreet and seconded by Commissioner Cunningham to recommend further meetings be set up by city staff with notifications by letter, radio and newspaper.

Commissioner Fowler asked if he was proposing that Langley Holdings and RBF meet with the public (yes).

Mr. Stasiak asked if the motion is to have the neighborhood meeting and send it on to the Council or to bring it back to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Commissioner Overstreet stated that the rezone should be brought back before the Commission after the public meetings.

In a response to a question from the audience, Mr. Welker explained that the annexations are on the agenda because they require one public hearing before they go to City Council

and no action will be taken by the Commission at this meeting as only the Council is allowed to approve annexations.

Chairman Tuttle stated that there was a motion on the table which was approved unanimously (4 to 3 absent).

MOTION DENIED

- 6.5 Case Z-16-08: Mount Graham Market Place Rezone AG – CMP:** Application for a request for a rezone from R1-6 (Single Family Residential), PUD (Planned Unit Development), and C-2 (Highway Commercial) to CMP (Community Master Plan). Applicant is requesting the rezone with the purpose of developing a master planned community including commercial, residential, and mixed uses. The proposed rezone incorporates approximately 250 acres of property known as the Mount Graham Market Place located south of the Gila River, west of the 16th Avenue alignment, north of Highway 70, and east of the 20th Avenue alignment.

Mr. Stasiak stated that staff recommends the rezone of the property at this meeting to be sent to the City Council for a decision.

It was moved by Vice Chair Fowler, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham and carried unanimously (4 to 3 absent) to approve a rezone from R1-6 (Single Family Residential), PUD (Planned Unit Development), and C-2 (Highway Commercial) to CMP (Community Master Plan). Applicant is requesting the rezone with the purpose of developing a master planned community including commercial, residential, and mixed uses. The proposed rezone incorporates approximately 250 acres of property known as the Mount Graham Market Place located south of the Gila River, west of the 16th Avenue alignment, north of Highway 70, and east of the 20th Avenue alignment.

MOTION APPROVED

6.6 Project Updates:

Mr. Stasiak updated the following projects:

- Casa Dorada Apartments at 26th St and 20th Avenue have broken ground and a building permit will be issued soon.
- Review and comments for the plans for the Holiday Inn Express/Motel 6 will soon be completed and ground breaking should begin in November.

7. **CALL TO THE PUBLIC:** None

8. **NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING:** October 23, 2008

9. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None
10. **ADJOURN:** The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

APPROVED:

Ray Tuttle, Chairman
Planning and Zoning Commission

ATTEST:

Sandy Findley, Administrative Assistant