



MINUTES

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE HEMET CITY COUNCIL AND HEMET PLANNING COMMISSION

November 3, 2015

6:00 p.m.

City of Hemet Council Chambers
450 E. Latham Avenue

www.cityofhemet.org

Please silence all cell phones

Call to Order

Mayor Krupa called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Roll Call

PRESENT: Council Members Milne and Raver, Mayor Pro Tem Wright and Mayor Krupa
Commissioners Overmyer, Wilhelm and Vasquez, Vice Chairman Perciful and Chairman Gifford

ABSENT: Council Member Youssef

Council Member Milne moved and Mayor Pro Tem Wright seconded a motion to excuse Council Member Youssef. Motion carried 4-0.

OTHERS PRESENT: Interim City Manager Thornhill and City Clerk McComas

Invocation

Invocation was given by Police Chief Brown

Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Community Development Director Elliano

Work Study

Discussion regarding this item, with possible direction to staff

1. Review of Preliminary Land Use, Circulation and Design Concepts for the Downtown Specific Plan – Community Development Director Elliano and Arroyo Group

Deana Elliano, Community Development Director, gave the City Council and Planning Commission an overview of the presentation. The Downtown Specific Plan Area includes 360 acres within the boundaries of Santa Fe Street to the east, Acacia Avenue to the south, Oakland Avenue to the north and Gilbert Street to the west. The benefits of preparing a city-initiated Specific Plan (SP) are to demonstrate a clear vision for new development. A SP is an economic development tool to facilitate development. It includes regulations that ensure long-term change. The SP will be adopted with an EIR that will create certainty for future development by providing environmental clearance for specified levels of development

intensity; and saves future development applicants future time and money by streamlining their CEQA review. The SP will support and enhance any future transit station planned to be located in Downtown by facilitating Transit Oriented Development (TOD). The Administrative Review Draft Specific Plan will be prepared by Fall/Winter 2015/2016. The Public Review of the Draft Specific Plan will be conducted in Winter/Spring 2016. The Public Hearing and Final Specific Plan will be completed by Spring/Summer 2016. Community input to date has been received by stakeholder interviews, Planning Commission Work Study Sessions, meetings with the Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC), Community Workshops and an online Community Survey. Ms. Elliano introduced the team from The Arroyo Group. The Arroyo Group is a 38-year old planning and urban design firm with experience throughout Southern California. A list of the DAC Members and a summary of the Community Survey results were distributed to the City Council and Planning Commission members.

Jean Ward, The Arroyo Group, the Downtown was separated into 7 districts based on existing land uses and geographic locations, some already unique in character. Downtown Village Zone is the historic core of Downtown. The DV zone preserves and builds a "main street" environment. It allows for retail, office, residential uses in a mixed use environment. Retail, restaurant and entertainment uses are encouraged in the DV zone and pedestrian frontage with ground floor display window will be required. Development and design standards intended to retain and compliment historically and architecturally significant buildings. The DV zone will allow for well-designed infill development up to three stories or 40 feet in height (such as a vertical mixed use building with retail on ground floor and residential, live-work, or office on upper stories. The existing single-family residential uses will be allowed to remain without being non-conforming until they transition to another use. The maximum residential density is 18-22 du/acre. Vertical mixed use only, no ground floor residential in this zone. Pictures of the existing land use and the possible façade improvements in the Downtown Village zone were displayed. Examples of other California downtowns with these similar zoning specifications were displayed.

Council Member Youssef arrived at 6:16 p.m.

Ms. Ward, explained the Transit Oriented District (TOD) Zone. This is a mixed use district surrounding the future transit station. This zone allows for retail, office and residential uses in a mixed use environment that encourages transit-supportive uses, such as multi-family residential and employment uses, near the future transit station. The TOD zone would allow for higher density development up to four stories or 50 feet, with appropriate scaling adjacent to the single family neighborhood to the east. The TOD zone requires public gathering spaces in the form of open space, plazas and courtyards in larger developments. It also requires pedestrian linkages to a future transit station and surrounding districts. The zone allows for vertical or horizontal mixed use project. Maximum residential density is 30 du/acre. This zone encourages transition of existing heavy industrial uses to office, retail, hospitality and residential uses. Pictures of the existing land use and examples of TOD zones in other cities were displayed. Pictures of plazas and courtyards were displayed. The Stock Farm Zone is a mixed use district on the Hemet Stock Farm site. This site has unique historic and cultural importance to the community. A Planned Community Development (PCD) application and a Master Plan would be required to ensure unified development that preserves the integrity and character of the stock farm, including the historic entrance drive and farm structures. The SF zone allows for retail, office, residential uses in a mixed use environment ranging from one to three stories in height. Commercial uses are primarily limited to State Street. Mixed housing types, including multi-family and small lot single family is allowed. The development process

would be streamlined for this site because much of the necessary environmental work for new development would be handled through the Downtown Specific Plan CEQA process. Pictures of the existing land uses and artists renderings of the possible uses on the Stock Farm site were displayed. The Office Professional – Mixed Use Zone is a mixed use district that is adjacent to Weston Park and along a portion of Kimball Avenue that allows for professional office and residential uses in a mixed use environment. Currently there are many medical offices that support the hospital to the east. There are currently many home-to-office conversions in this zone. This zone allow for stand-alone residential uses. This zone also allows for well-designed infill development up to three stories around Weston Park, and allows for up to two stories in height in the Kimball Avenue neighborhood. Pictures of the existing land uses were displayed. Examples of development in the Office Professional – Mixed Use Zone were displayed. The General Commercial Zone builds on the existing general commercial uses along a portion of State Street and Florida Avenue on the west and east sides of Downtown. This is a minimal change in zoning to allow for general commercial uses to continue in the Downtown area, and to promote infill commercial development. This zone allow for one to two stories in height. The Mixed Residential Zone builds on existing residential uses in the neighborhood. It allows for both single family and multi-family uses, with a focus on medium density residential to increase housing choices proximate to the historic Downtown core and the future transit station. Stoops, porches, setbacks are required to ensure privacy, attractive development, and compatibility with the single family residences in the neighborhood. Larger minimum lots sizes required for new multi-family development to encourage more unified projects with sufficient useable outdoor space for the residents. This zone allows for one to three stories in height. Examples of Mixed Residential zone development were displayed. The Single Family Residential Zone builds on existing residential uses in the Kimball Avenue, Franklin Street, and West Latham neighborhoods. This includes a minimal change in existing land use. Improved design standards and guidelines to preserve and enhance Downtown’s historic neighborhoods, promote infill single-family development to help stabilize neighborhoods, and improve the housing stock to preserve neighborhood character. This zone allows for one to two stories in height. Examples of Single-Family Residential Zone development were displayed. The Quasi-Public Zone is a big asset to Downtown and is the concentration of government and civic uses, making Downtown the civic heart of the community. The intent is to maintain and enhance a public and quasi-public uses. This zone allows for publicly and privately owned uses which provide services to the community, including library, government offices and services, public utilities, and educational institutions. The DAC supports the mixed use development in the Downtown Village and around the future transit station. They support up to three-story infill development in the Downtown Village Zone. Much of the area is better suited to one and two-stories, which will likely remain, but well-designed three-story mixed use development is appropriate for infill sites. The DAC supports four-story mixed use development around the future transit station in the TOD Zone. They also support providing a variety of housing options in the Downtown in the form of single-family and higher density housing. The Specific Plan will not require affordable housing. Higher density housing can be either market-rate or affordable. It was discussed that much of the housing being developed around existing transit stations in Southern California is market rate. There are opportunities for City-owned properties for infill projects or public purposes.

Viggen Davidian, Iteris, gave the City Council and Planning Commission a presentation on the Circulation/Mobility Plan Elements. Major Elements are: General Plan (GP) Circulation

Network and proposed changes; bikeways; pedestrian: Florida Avenue (SR-74); other roadways; and parking. The GP identifies many streets in Downtown with Class 2 and Class 3 Bike Paths. The lack of existing bike path connections and bike infrastructure is a constraint. Potential for improvements: additional north-south bike connections; bike infrastructure, such as bike parking; enhance future bike lane along Florida Avenue with highly visible street markings; and more emphasis on Class 1 Bike Paths. A map was displayed showing the preliminary circulation concept for Bicycle Facilities. Florida Avenue scores a 82 out of 100 on *Walk-Score.com*, as a highly walkable environment with areas that are walkable to within a 5 to 10 minute walk along and around Florida Avenue. The commercial part of Downtown Hemet area is entirely within a fairly walkable district. The lack of continued sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities is a constraint. The lack of bulb outs and curb extensions is also a constraint. There are no mid-block crossings which are a core part of any downtown walking area. Opportunities for improvement: focus on streetscape improvements along Florida Avenue between State and Santa Fe; utilize signalization, flashing beacons, or other pedestrian safety devices for safer crossings; enhance pedestrian crossings to reduce crossing times (widened sidewalks, bulb outs etc.); and better pedestrian linkages to the Transit Center (location is still undetermined). Pictures of Pedestrian Scramble and High Visibility Crosswalks were displayed. Pictures of Parklets were also displayed. Florida Avenue is already designated as a Divided Secondary (4 lane) with Bike Lanes which provides opportunities to build Florida Avenue to a multimodal divided roadway with amenities. It is recommended and the volume requires that it be maintained as 4 lanes. The constraint is that Florida Avenue acts as a barrier between Harvard Street to the north and south. Sidewalks improvements are needed in many places on both sides of Florida Avenue. Opportunities for improvements are: strategies to narrow the roadway and calm traffic that may discourage high speeds; provide amenities for other modes of transportation in order to create a more complete street that serves multi-modal user groups; need to build bulbouts at the intersections and provide wider sidewalks, especially at Harvard and Florida to provide a better experience for pedestrians on Harvard Street; coordinate traffic signal timing on Florida Avenue which is consistent with GP goals; and confirm availability of ROW to provide landscaped medians, wherever possible. Pictures of complete streets examples were displayed. An artist rendering of Florida Avenue was displayed. Other roadways for east/west travel are: Mr. Davidian displayed artist renderings of State Street (Oakland to Florida), Harvard Street (north of Florida Avenue), Carmalita Street, Juanita Street and Harvard Street (south of Florida Avenue), Devonshire Avenue and Acacia Avenue and discussed recommendations. Parking recommendations and options are: consolidate Parking lots and encourage shared parking; utilize signage to help with wayfinding to major parking facilities; increasing awareness, visibility and better utilization of the available parking options; create visible passageways which allow for access to the rear parking lots; parking strategies that work in conjunction with the overall Downtown development and circulation plan; Parking Districts to help parking supply/demand and financing; "Park-once" concept, reduces auto trips, complements and promotes the Downtown waling concept; and new as well as existing parking facilities will be explored for shared parking possibilities to gain maximum utilization of the future parking supply. Mr. Davidian discussed the input from the DAC on transportation. There is overall support to enhance the pedestrian environment in Downtown core. Need to discuss/coordinate with the School District regarding the extension of Devonshire Avenue and opening up Santa Fe Street. Need to discuss/coordinate with CalTrans about relinquishing Florida Avenue in the Downtown. There is a desire from some members of the DAC to turn Florida into a two lane roadway with

roundabouts and no parking or angled parking. Florida traffic would be diverted to Devonshire and Acacia. Calm traffic on Florida so that people want to come Downtown. The DAC feels that wider sidewalks with no parking is acceptable, which may be undesirable to businesses. The group favors the proposed Harvard changes that increase sidewalk width for dining and adds over 30 parking spaces.

Larry Morrison, The Arroyo Group, gave the City Council and Planning Commission a presentation on the Preliminary Design Concept for Streetscapes and Open Space. Pictures of the existing conditions were displayed. A great downtown is made up of great destinations with a nice walking path between them. Creative pathways make an experience fun and connect the park to the metro station, conceptually called the "Ramona Loop Trail". The Downtown is very compact and walkable. Recommended streetscape improvements: curb bulb-outs and wider sidewalk on key pedestrian streets; street trees; street furniture (benches, trash cans, bike racks, tree grates and lighting); improved crosswalks; wayfinding and signage systems; and Downtown Village gateway monumentation. Examples of streetscape, street furniture, signage and wayfinding; and gateway and monument signs were displayed. A picture of Florida Avenue at Carmalita looking west was displayed along with an artist rendering of what improved streetscapes would look like. Examples of open space (Civic Plaza and Linear Park) were displayed. Pictures of possible improvements to Weston Park Community Park were displayed. Examples of pocket parks were also displayed. The historic features of the Hemet Stock Farm should be recognized. Overall the DAC supports the presented streetscape and open space concepts. The group feels that Weston Park's functionality should include a variety of multi-generational uses to help activate. We need to resolve how to change from existing users and enhance safety and perception. There needs to be connectivity from Weston Park to other uses and the Civic Center. The Civic Center Plaza needs to continue to be the home of the Farmer's market, Holiday events, Community events and should include public plaza/green. There should be plenty of paving to allow for events. The area should include raised planters and shade trees or structures. There should be buildings to frame the space, not adjacent parking lots. The group discussed pocket parks and the potential to include a dog park. It was suggested that the local service clubs provide upgrades to the pocket parks as a community project, such as a community garden. The DAC likes the concept of the "Ramona Loop Trail" and suggested that all areas and trails be branded. The trails can be programmed with a variety of events, such as wine walks, beer walks, and art walks. Signage should demarcate the length of the trail. The DAC recommended working with the Parks Department on tree species. The street tree character should maintain "Old California" historic look where possible. Use existing palms and shade canopy trees. It was recommended that the trees in the Village area be lighted and flower baskets be added on light poles. Currently the area is too dark and lighting should be improved. The parkways and sidewalks need to include tree grates and wells and need to be maintained.

Stan Hoffman, gave the City Council and Planning Commission a presentation on the Economics and Demographic Trends and Analysis and the key socioeconomics, trends and conditions influencing downtown Hemet. The goal is to create a downtown with a livable, walkable environment with a mix of residential and non-residential uses. Influencing trends and conditions are: population, employment and visitor growth conditions; retail competitiveness of Hemet and the strengths and opportunities in downtown to capture strong retail; market conditions and downtown's land supply poised for revitalization; other residential and non-residential land uses; and the role of public private partnerships and economic

incentives. Mr. Hoffman conducted a Downtown Retail Potential Analysis: motor vehicle and parts dealers are limited; home furnishings and appliance stores are moderate; building material, garden equipment and supplies are limited; food and beverage stores are strong; gasoline stations are limited; clothing and clothing accessories stores are moderate; general merchandise stores are limited; food services and drinking places are strong; other retail groups are strong. While current demand potential is not as strong as expected in the future, it is anticipated to increase with the introduction of rail transit, and future residential, retail, office, and related development in the downtown. Retail sector deemed "strong" and "moderate" are those recommended to focus on in Downtown along with health care, office and services uses. Mr. Hoffman presented a graph showing the employment growth sectors for 2012-2040. Education and health care jobs will constitute about 34% of all jobs by 2040. Retail, restaurants, arts, leisure/entertainment will constitute about 24%. Office jobs constitute another 15% by 2040. These jobs are important for Downtown's revitalization. Mr. Hoffman presented a graph indicating the range of potential land uses for downtown revitalization. Retail is short-term and long-term. Restaurant/food service is short-term and long-term. Office-Professional is long-term. Office-Medical is short-term and long-term. Personal services are short-term and long-term. Hotel/Motel is long-term. Education is short-term and long-term. Civic/Public is short-term and long-term. Residential/Mixed use is short-term and long-term. A map showing the 59.36 acres of publically owned properties in the specific plan area was displayed. There is a total of 231 acres estimated in downtown area. Vacant acres estimated to be 49.3 (21%), excluding schools. Acres with ratio less than 25% estimated at 47.8 (21), including the stock farm. These areas are considered important for early redevelopment opportunities. Mr. Hoffman talked about financing and implementation. Some potential innovative financing options are: Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD); Community Revitalization & Investment Authorities (AB2); Business Improvement District (BID); Parking Management District; and other outside grants and loans. Major benefits from investment in the Downtown are: property tax increment; sales taxes; hotel/motel occupancy taxes; property tax in-lieu of Motor Vehicle License Fees; and other development related revenues. Other benefits are: revitalized Downtown Hemet; enhanced quality of life; jobs-housing balance; and transit oriented accessibility.

Staff is seeking feedback and direction on the concept presented. The mixed use zones allow for both single family and multi-family for in-fill lots. The Specific Plan will allow more local control. Concern was expressed with high density and affordable housing. It is recommended that affordable housing not be mandated however, a developer might choose to do so on their property.

The City's need to meet the RHNA's requirements was discussed. The City Council and Planning Commission along with staff discussed the existing and proposed zoning for the districts.

Commissioner Vasquez, likes the idea of the "Ramona Loop Trail" and asked if a bike path is included. Commissioner Vasquez also asked if each zone would have specific architectural standards.

Mr. Morrison, confirmed that the plan includes a combination of bike paths. A specific architectural style is not recommended. Architectural history will be encouraged.

Council Member Raver, asked if solar is being considered.

Mr. Morrison, confirmed that solar will be encouraged on buildings and shade structures. The City can include it as a requirement for development. Most developers are including solar panels and cells in their projects.

Commissioner Wilhelm, expressed concern with the bulb outs on Florida Avenue and that they will cause a problem. The Specific Plan should dictate what we want it to become not let the market define that. The downtown should be designed by us. Let's come up with some branding tonight. We could make a difference in 5 years, if we create a dramatic downtown. Commissioner Wilhelm recommended that Florida Avenue be 2 lanes so the sidewalks can be widened to all for street dining.

Mayor Pro Tem Wright, expressed concerned with the bulb outs on Florida Avenue also. Mayor Pro Tem Wright agreed that branding needs to be considered. Mayor Pro Tem Wright complimented the team.

Parking structures were discussed and at this time specific locations for consolidated parking structures were not determined. The property owners and funding will drive the development priorities. Funding opportunities will be sought and considered for the City owned property to achieve the highest and best use.

Council Member Youssef, feels that there needs to be more than one anchor to attract people either education/entertainment or residential. Council Member Youssef expressed concern with the live/work concept. The employees won't be able to afford market rate and it could become cheap housing.

Mr. Morrison, explained the recommendation to maintain 4 lanes on Florida Avenue. A number of combinations were discussed. Meridians can be removed and bike lanes and parking can be eliminated to allow for wider sidewalks on Florida.

Ms. Ward, the street recommendations for Florida were made after public comments were received. The business owners didn't want to lose their parking. They are willing to lose some to allow for bulb outs and even that was a concern. The residents on Acacia didn't want the traffic moving to their street.

Deanna Elliano, the traffic volume is the biggest concern if Florida were to be reduced to 2 lanes. Even if CalTrans relinquished the street, truck movement on the side streets is a major concern. Cost is also factor, as well, if we want to be able to implement the streetscape in a reasonable timeframe. She favored medians that will add more to the design and allow for monumentation signs, which act to slow vehicles down as they enter the District. Florida Avenue is an important part of the details of the plan moving forward. We want the downtown to have a pedestrian feel that can be accomplished with wider sidewalks, without having to reduce the lanes. Scrambled sidewalks can also help connect the streets on each side of Florida Avenue from north to south.

Mr. Morrison, businesses can't rely on front door parking to fill their business. Strolling along large sidewalks is part of the experience. Florida is best if calmed in a restricted area the goal is to get visitors to park and walk around.

Vice Chairperson Perciful, concurs with the recommended zoning and noted that the majority of the single family homes are already converted into office professional in the core downtown area. If the parking on Florida Avenue is eliminated the team could consider making Carmalita and Juanita one way streets for increased slanted parking similar to Harvard Street.

Chairperson Gifford, likes the districts, however expressed concern with the Transit Zone because it assumes the metrolink is coming. Do we know that it will?

Ms. Elliano, it is on RCTC's adopted plan but likely a number of years away. However, there is potential for other types of transit such as bus or light rail in the interim. We need to confirm with RCTC that this is the location for the transit station. The TOD district allows for office space and mixed use residential.

Mr. Morrison, if you want transit, having it in your plan will help you get it. The City of Pasadena had a Transit Zone in their plan for 10 years before it came. You have an advantage by having representatives from the City on the boards.

Chairperson Gifford, expressed concern that the bulb outs on Florida Avenue will not accomplish what is desired and suggested that the primary entrances for the Florida Avenue businesses should be on the back of the buildings. There is a significant cost and liability to the City in taking over Florida Avenue.

Mr. Morrison, businesses having additional entrances on the back of the buildings would be helpful but the main entrance and sidewalk foot traffic on Florida Avenue is critical.

The group discussed grants for community based plans, specifically funding available for transportation and open space.

The live/work concept was discussed. The market rate housing would be great for employees of the expanding medical park area. The list of properties still in need of seismic retrofits is short since most properties have already been done.

The discussion of Florida Avenue continued. If traffic is diverted to adjacent east/west streets the zoning should be profession/office uses and not residential.

Gary Thornhill, Interim City Manager, experienced this in Temecula. You can walk faster than most cars drive through Old Town and that was the plan. We wanted them to slow down to look at the shops. I agree with interior parking and disagree with rear entrances. There must be windows and openings on Florida Avenue. You need to have walking paseos to move people around the area. Mr. Thornhill talked about the options for Florida Avenue. As the demand rises metered parking is a great revenue generator. A parking structure will be necessary at some time. In hindsight Mr. Thornhill wishes that the City of Temecula would not have agreed to wood sidewalks and that they would have put a sound system in the plaza area. Mr. Thornhill also suggested that the City Council take a good hard look at where the future civic center will be. Hemet has the advantage of a larger area and more opportunity to create a destination without the adjacent freeway. It is his opinion that if you build enough housing and create jobs, the transit will come.

Council Member Raver, expressed concern that the plan is not the design of what the City wants to be. Hemet needs a new Police Facility and Fire Station due to earthquake concerns. We should be looking at creating a civic center that would combine all of the City's facilities together. Council Member Raver doesn't feel wider sidewalks on Florida Avenue are necessary based on the current businesses.

The Group discussed the Ramona Creek project in west Hemet. Ramona Creek is a 200 acre project under one owner that has the ability to attract big box retail and entertainment that would not be possible downtown. Both areas will be destinations with their own distinct character.

The design guidelines will apply to all private and public development in the Downtown SP area. Public buildings should set the standard. The Downtown SP is a long term plan. The goal is to focus on certain streets or areas in small bites.

A Civic Center plan was completed in the early 2000's tying together the Police Department the Public Library.

Ms Elliano, asked for comments or consensus on the land use districts, open space plan, and zoning concepts? **Commissioner Wilhelm** –whatever arterials we think will take traffic off Florida if it is planned to be 2 lanes should be other than single family

Direction to move forward with recommended districts and zoning; and to look at where new public buildings and spaces would be located, such as a new civic

center.

Ms Elliano, requested direction regarding the circulation concepts presented.

The current recommendation for Florida four lanes, a landscaped center median, bulb outs at the corners with limited on-street parking, wider sidewalks and scrambled crosswalks. This would likely require relinquishment of this portion of Florida Avenue from Cal Trans. Discussion ensued amongst the group regarding looking into the possibility of 2 lanes on Florida, if feasible.

Mr. Davidian, expressed concern with the capacity of 30,000 to 31,000 per day on Florida Avenue with projections of upwards to 36,000 per day. If Florida Avenue remains four lanes the growth will need to be diverted to adjacent streets. The current capacity is more than double for a two lane street. That would require the movement of approximately 20,000 trips per day from Florida Avenue to the side streets including truck traffic and that will increase over time. This would change the classification of the arterial streets in the City's transportation element of the General Plan. This will have negative environmental implications and will be impossible if Highway 74 is not relinquished.

Direction was given to start discussions with Cal Trans regarding the potential for relinquishment of a portion of Florida Avenue in the Downtown, and to determine the status of the legislative process that was started 2 years ago when Mr. Bradley was the Interim City Manager.

Direction was given to explore the feasibility and traffic impact analysis of converting Florida Avenue from 4 lanes to 2 lanes in the Downtown, to look at Acacia and Oakland as the alternative east-west diverters for traffic, and to look at converting Carmelita and Juanita to one-way streets. Staff is to return to the Council with a cost estimate for the work to be paid for out of the City's Downtown Specific Plan budget.

Mr. Morrison, recommended that the City Council and Planning Commission take a field trip to Pasadena and look at their successful districts. Colorado Blvd. is four lanes yet their downtown is very walkable.

The Council and Commission expressed interest in a tour of successful downtowns in the area.

Communications from the Public

There were no communications from the public at this time.

Future Agenda Items

There were no future agenda items requested at this time.

Adjournment

Adjourned at 8:38 p.m. to Tuesday, November 10, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.