

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 30, 1997

The General Development Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on January 30, 1997, at 7:31 a.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Wayne Pomeroy, Chairman
Pat Gilbert
Jim Stapley

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Brown

STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster
Pauline Backer
Wayne Balmer
Cindy Barris
Mike Hutchinson
Frank Mizner
Tom Remes
Denise Samuel
Debbie Vickman
Others

OTHERS PRESENT

Debra Duvall
Stephen Earl
Kevin Evans
Bill Jaffa
Andy Kunasek
Sean Lake
Lewis Lenz
Jason Morris
Others

1. Discuss and consider draft residential guidelines.

Planning Director Frank Mizner presented the Committee with a copy of draft residential development guidelines dated January 14, 1997, developed by staff and the Planning and Zoning Board in response to concerns regarding lack of diversity and quality features in various recently proposed residential subdivisions. Mr. Mizner stated that the guidelines are modeled on those adopted in Gilbert and Chandler but incorporate greater flexibility and are intentionally less restrictive. Mr. Mizner noted that single-family residential development in the City of Mesa is currently guided by subdivision and zoning regulations only.

Mr. Mizner stated that the residential development guidelines are being prepared for adoption by resolution and will apply to all single-family developments in Mesa of more than five (5) acres

or ten (10) units (whichever is less). Mr. Mizner said that the guidelines will assist in meeting four specific goals: 1) create residential neighborhoods that are well-designed, cohesive, safe, and provide reasonable opportunities for socialization with neighbors; 2) encourage the utilization of the Planned Area Development (PAD) overlay with a diversity of housing types and styles; 3) integrate the design of functional recreational amenities and usable open space; and 4) combine proposed open space for new developments with existing open space and recreational facilities.

Debra Duvall, Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Board, provided background information regarding the Planning and Zoning Board's determination of a need for residential development guidelines. Ms. Duvall commented that the purpose of the guidelines is to assist developers in preparing well-designed projects that meet the expectations of the Planning and Zoning Board. Ms. Duvall stated that the proposed guidelines could generate an increase in housing costs but noted that the use of features such as varying street scenes, staggered setbacks, and curvilinear streets will contribute to a diversified product.

Discussion ensued regarding target density, the importance of design and balance, flexibility provided by the proposed guidelines, and possible presumption of approval by developers when certain criteria are met.

In response to a question from Committeemember Gilbert, Mr. Mizner stated that proposing the guidelines for adoption as a resolution rather than an ordinance provides an immediate effective date and offers increased flexibility to the applicant, Planning and Zoning Board, staff, and City Council. Ms. Duvall stated that an enforcement mechanism is needed to assist the Planning and Zoning Board in determining approval or denial of projects.

In response to a question from Committeemember Gilbert, Mr. Mizner advised that staff has provided copies of the draft guidelines to developers, the homebuilding association, and various additional interested parties. Mr. Mizner stated that staff will be meeting with the development community and interested parties on Tuesday, February 11, 1997, to obtain comments and suggestions and that the Planning and Zoning Board will hold a public hearing on Thursday, February 20. Mr. Mizner added that a second General Development Committee meeting may be scheduled for the week of March 3 (if necessary) and that presentation of the guidelines for Council consideration is tentatively set for March 17.

Committeemember Stapley encouraged adherence to the General Plan and emphasized lot size and product as key issues relative to the proposed guidelines. Committeemember Stapley spoke concerning the availability of affordable housing, home size, project design, and amenities.

In response to a question from Chairman Pomeroy, Mr. Mizner noted the possibility of a slowdown in single-family residence start-ups and a potential increase in alternative housing should the proposed guidelines be adopted.

Ms. Duvall expressed the opinion that the residential guidelines are important to the community and provide a flexible regulatory mechanism to improve the quality of residential development in Mesa.

Chairman Pomeroy indicated support for a resolution versus an ordinance due to the flexibility offered by a resolution.

Community Development Manager Wayne Balmer spoke regarding the positive effects of diversity and the importance of creating uniqueness within the community.

Committeemember Gilbert encouraged future discussion regarding various types of housing products.

2. Discuss and consider citrus area development policy.

Mr. Mizner referred to a draft citrus area development policy dated January 14, 1997, designed to provide a consistent basis for land use decisions relative to Mesa's citrus area. Mr. Mizner explained that the proposed policy establishes a target range of 1 to 1.2 units per acre and suggests a minimum lot size of 18,000 square feet.

Mr. Mizner stated that the proposed policy addresses five specific goals: 1) support the adopted goals and objectives of the Mesa General Plan; 2) enhance the citrus area of Mesa as one of the community's high-end, executive-style residential areas; 3) preserve the citrus character of the area as an environmental, aesthetic, and economic asset to Mesa; 4) allow for new residential development that is consistent with the General Plan, compatible with existing development, and in keeping with the intent of the policy; and 5) balance the community goals of preserving and enhancing the citrus character of the area with anticipated residential development and the rights of individual private property owners.

Ms. Duvall spoke regarding residents' requests for a minimum lot size of 35,000 square feet, accommodation of executive-style homes, the balance of community interests and the rights of property owners, and the utilization of rows of citrus trees as a buffer between subdivisions. Ms. Duvall commented that the proposed policy may generate potential conflict relative to lot size and the City's role in attempting to regulate citrus development.

Chairman Pomeroy expressed the opinion that many property owners may be selling their citrus groves in the near future due to the aging of trees and the inability of the owner to obtain a profit.

In response to a question from Committeemember Gilbert, Ms. Duvall indicated that the Planning and Zoning Board considers compatibility with surrounding uses as well as future needs of the neighborhood in determining approval of a project.

Mr. Balmer spoke concerning the importance of possibly establishing a larger lot size, noting that developers often create neighborhoods containing lots at or near the minimum. Mr. Balmer explained the relationship of lot size to selling price.

In response to questions from Chairman Pomeroy concerning the proposed policy, Mr. Mizner said that in order to maintain the citrus tree atmosphere, it is suggested that trees be replaced by property owners as necessary. Mr. Mizner explained that many developers are clearing land utilizing an 'envelope concept' whereby only the land necessary to build a home and driveway is graded.

Mr. Mizner noted that several new home developments north of Brown Road are zoned R1-35-PAD and contain lots of approximately 35,000 square feet, while new developments south of Brown Road are zoned R1-15 and contain oversized lots. Mr. Balmer advised that many of Mesa's citrus areas were zoned R1-35 as County parcels and upon annexation, the City chose to establish similar zoning.

Committeemember Gilbert indicated support of a target lot size greater than 18,000 square feet. Committeemember Gilbert commented that zoning the entire area as R1-35 may be the most appropriate and consistent solution.

Mr. Mizner stated that it is anticipated that the policy for citrus area development will be submitted for public input and Planning and Zoning Board and Council consideration simultaneously with the proposed residential development guidelines.

The Committee recommended proceeding with the proposed schedule. Chairman Pomeroy stated that the need for a future General Development Committee meeting will be determined following the public hearing to be held before the Planning and Zoning Board on February 20, 1997.

Chairman Pomeroy thanked Mr. Mizner and Ms. Duvall for the presentation and expressed appreciation to staff and the Planning and Zoning Board for their efforts.

3. Adjournment.

It was moved by Committeemember Stapley, seconded by Committeemember Gilbert, that the General Development Committee meeting adjourn at 8:46 a.m.

Carried unanimously.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the General Development Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 30th day of January, 1997. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 14th day of February 1997

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK