

CITY OF MERCED
General Plan Update – Vision 2030
Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

MINUTES

Merced City Council Chambers
Wednesday, February 7, 2007

Chairman SHANKLAND called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Bob Acheson, Dwight Amey, Henry Fisher, Mary Ward, Walter Burr, and Chairman Larry Shankland

Committee Members Absent: None (one vacancy)

Staff Present: Director of Development Services Lesch; Planning Manager Espinosa; Quad Knopf Consultants, Kim Hudson, Greg Abramson, and Josh McDonnell; Chief Deputy City Attorney Schechter; and Recording Secretary Lane

Planning Manager ESPINOSA introduced the General Plan Citizens Advisory Committee, comprised of the members of the Planning Commission, and KIM HUDSON, consultant from Quad Knopf.

Ms. HUDSON explained what the update of the General Plan is designed to do such as identify planning issues, provide guidance in the planning and evaluation of future land and resource decisions, and provide a vision and framework for the future growth of the City.

Ms. HUDSON went over the specific locations and constraints of the General Plan SUDP (Specific Urban Development Plan) study areas.

[Secretary's Note: The Committee recessed from 5:49 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.]

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The public comment period began at 6:00 p.m.

RICK TELEGAN, 9 River Park Place East, Fresno, asked if there was any significance to the numbers assigned to the General Plan SUDP Study Areas. Ms. ESPINOSA replied that they are arbitrary numbers used for identification purposes and do not indicate priority.

Mr. TELEGAN asked if the City was in receipt of letter from the primary property owner of Area 3A requesting to opt out of the process. Ms. ESPINOSA replied that the property owner made this request at the City Council meeting when they adopted the Draft SUDP back in July 2006. The City Council decided it was important to include this as a study area. Later at the same meeting, the property owner indicated that he was amenable to being included, but wanted to ensure that there would be no conflict since he was currently working with the County on his plans for the area. He was assured that the City and County would continue to work together.

Mr. TELEGAN commented that he disagreed with "lack of access" being identified as a constraint for Area 7.

RICHARD HARRIMAN, 3495 San Bruno Ct, Merced, recommended that a permissive agricultural element be considered as part of the permanent open space element. He suggested that flooding concerns could be avoided by designating certain flood-prone areas as permanent open space. He also urged the Committee to look at air quality and circulation issues, and possibly mandating solar energy.

JEANETTE BENSON, 460 S. Whelan, Le Grand, spoke out against the preservation of agricultural land. She is a farmer herself and thinks that the Committee should hear from more farmers to determine what is good for them and their farmland. She stated that just because agricultural land is preserved, doesn't guarantee that it will be a viable source of income to the farmer.

RICHARD HARRIMAN, 3495 San Bruno Ct, Merced, stated that he is on the State Bar Agribusiness Committee and that we need to preserve the open

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space for economic uses. He observed that the value of agricultural land depends on what you grow on it. He suggested that incentives could be given, using environmental mitigations, for using organic or natural products in close proximity to the City, which could produce more dollars per acre than conventional agricultural crops. He added that he doesn't support confiscatory land use or zoning.

JEANETTE BENSON, 460 S. Whelan, Le Grand, responded that she loves her agricultural land. However, we should look at how well we are managing the ample open space that we already have before we decided to preserve more.

KRISTY HENDRICKS, 1520 W. Main, Merced, asked that the Committee consider child care centers both in planned developments and transportation centers.

JOHN WILBANKS, RRM Design Group, 210 E. S Street, Oakdale, representing the proponents of the Castle Farms Master Plan Area, questioned the use of the term "Airport land use conflicts" as a constraint for Area 12. He believes that "Airport land use plan constraints or guidance" would be more accurate since the Airport Land Use Plan permits land use on the property. He also disagreed with "access" being listed as a constraint.

The public comment period ended at 6:17 p.m.

Ms. HUDSON went over the next steps in the process, such as stakeholder meetings, community workshops, working with the TAC (Technical Advisory Committee), joint City Council/Planning Commission study sessions, etc. She also urged the public to participate in the process and express their views.

Chairman SHANKLAND introduced new Planning Commissioner, TENA WILLIAMS.

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The meeting concluded at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jack D. Lesch".

JACK D. LESCH, Secretary
General Plan Update Citizens Advisory Committee
(Merced City Planning Commission)

APPROVED:

LARRY SHANKLAND, Chairman
General Plan Update Citizens
Advisory Committee
(Merced City Planning Commission)