



Comprehensive Plan Committee

Regular Meeting

October 30, 2014 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Northern Arizona Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology (NACET)
2225 N. Gemini Drive, Flagstaff, AZ 86001 (928) 213-9234

Draft Minutes

Prepared 12/2/2014

CPC Members Present:

Geoff Barnard	Patty Garcia	Leo Gishie	Laura Huenneke
David McKee	Wendell Johnson	Jamie Neilson	Judy Prosser
John Ruggles	Maggie Sacher		

Core Planning Team Members Present:

Jay Christelman, Director of Community Development
John Aber, Assistant Director
Jeanne Trupiano, Principal Planner
Bob Short, Senior Planner
Zach Schwartz, Planner
Kate Morley, Planner
Amanda Acheson, Sustainable Building Program Manager
Hannah R. Griscom, Urban Wildlife Planner, Arizona Game and Fish Department and Coconino County

Guests Present

Scott Anderson, Coconino County Parks and Recreation
Rick Miller, Chair, City of Flagstaff, Open Space Commission
Sean Thomas, Coconino County Health District

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jeanne Trupiano called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. She began the process for everyone in attendance to introduce themselves.

2. Planning Team Update

Kate Morley briefed the group on the proposed revisions to the Zoning Ordinance and input from the Community Development Advisory Group (CDAG). All sections of the Zoning Ordinance will be amended. The sections on signage and lighting will be the first to go to the Board of Supervisors for a Work Session. Ms. Morley stated that it had been suggested by the US Naval Observatory that some of the lighting zones be expanded and new ones added. Another possible change to the lighting ordinance would be that unshielded fixtures may be banned altogether. Ms. Morley went on to say that the revisions to the sign section were not as substantive, but it would be revised and reformatted to make it easier to read and understand.

Maggie Sacher asked what the City of Flagstaff's lighting ordinance is like.

Ms. Morley explained the small differences between the two ordinances, stating that they were similar.

Ms. Sacher stated that Home Depot seems not to carry dark skies compliant fixtures.

Ms. Morley stated that she had contacted some of the local stores and that she thought it would be a little harder to convince Home Depot and other large chains to carry them.

Wendell Johnson wondered as to the extent of input for the sign section revisions, considering that he had not heard of any outreach for input for it so far.

Ms. Morley stated that she had contacted the sign companies and realtors, had received input from CDAG, and had uploaded the necessary sections to the County website with a contact number for additional input.

Mr. Johnson asked if the County was proposing many changes to the sign section.

Ms. Morley stated that the input that she had received did not call for many.

Judy Prosser stated that the rest areas along highways within the County's jurisdiction need to have adequate light, and she wondered if that was County jurisdiction.

Ms. Morley stated that the I-40 and I-17 rest areas lie within Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) jurisdiction.

John Ruggles stated that there are state standards for lighting and they are pretty wide open. He mentioned that ADOT and other transportation agencies always err on the side of more lighting than necessary for safety reasons. State Statute allows for it.

Ms. Sacher stated that at the junction of Highway 89 and Highway 89A (Marble Canyon Area) had always had much more lighting than needed.

Geoff Barnard asked how new lighting technologies such as LEDs will be addressed in the new lighting ordinance.

Ms. Morley stated that those new technologies will be addressed, and added that some lighting sources such as LEDs include a wide color range and that LED are not a panacea and may be problematic with respect to the observatories. The specialists from the observatories are willing to work with the County to find a way to include them in the ordinance while providing compliance with dark sky standards.

Jamie Neilson asked for clarification on the lighting ordinance changes, specifically, the changes to shielding requirements.

Ms. Morley stated that unshielded lights may be banned. She stated that based on the input she received, most responders agree that unshielded lights are unnecessary.

Mr. Johnson asked if excessive Christmas lighting is regulated by the County.

Ms. Morley stated that Christmas lighting and other similar temporary lighting is mostly exempt from the lighting ordinance. She also stated that the CPC is welcome to give any other comments that they have on revisions to the Zoning Ordinance over the next few months. The next sections to be updated, she said, will be the industrial zones and/or the larger acreage residential zones.

Following her presentation, Ms. Morley passed out an article to the group from American Planning Association Magazine related to Comprehensive/General Plan and Zoning Ordinance consistency.

3. Discussion on revisions to Community Service and Parks and Recreation elements.

Ms. Prosser referenced page 9 of the Minutes from September 19, specifically the goals, policies, and definition. She was wondering if they included the old or new versions of them.

Ms. Trupiano mentioned that she needed to amend the minutes to reflect the revisions to the Sustainability Element, including the Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) agreed upon definition.

Ms. Trupiano began her presentation by explaining the proposed changes to the Community Services element to this point.

Mr. Barnard wanted the wording within the education section to explain that the County would support new subdivisions in places where education could be provided. He also stated that the Plan should explain the limitations of the County for ensuring this.

Mr. Ruggles thought that the goal statement should include the word 'affordable' regarding availability of higher education, or perhaps that the wording should read that the County would 'advocate for affordable higher education'.

Laura Huenneke mentioned that the State Constitution included the wording 'as nearly free as possible' in regards to Mr. Ruggles' comment. She thought that the County would not have complete control over where educational services would be. She thought that the current Plan's discussion of educational services could be updated, and possibly result in policies that would

mention sharing of infrastructural costs between different institutions or help to provide for infrastructure that would aid in serving educational institutions.

Mr. Ruggles stated that he still believed that a goal should include the affordability aspect in regard to education because it is important for people from different backgrounds to be able to have access to education.

Ms. Trupiano asked the group to vote on the proposed wording using the ‘fist of five’ approach. She counted the votes and saw some twos, so she decided that more discussion was still needed.

Mr. Barnard thought that the word ‘advocate’ was not strong enough, and that the County could perhaps do something more.

Ms. Trupiano thought that ‘promote’ was possibly a better word choice.

Ms. Huenneke thought that the word ‘provide’ was possibly more substantial.

Mr. Johnson wondered if perhaps it is not the County’s role to provide education, and probably that it is the State’s responsibility.

Mr. Barnard stated that the County actually does provide some education and that it should continue to do so.

Mr. Johnson stated that he did not want the Plan to sound like it was trying to do more than it was jurisdictionally mandated.

Mr. Barnard wanted the Plan to state that the County would provide for education where it has jurisdiction, and it should probably state that the County would support education where it does not have jurisdiction. He then proposed wording; ‘promote and support efforts to provide for education where the County has jurisdiction, and in areas where others have jurisdiction, broadly support coordination to provide for educational services’.

Mr. Johnson stated that sort of language was already in the Plan.

Ms. Sacher referenced page 6, noting that the Plan should include promoting compatible waste disposal methods. She wanted it to be clear that the County would promote new wastewater technology.

David McKee stated that he also thought that the County should be more embracing of new/er wastewater technology.

Ms. Sacher stated that she would like to see constructed wetlands specifically identified.

Ms. Trupiano then started the discussion on the Parks and Recreation Element, noting that it the title should be expanded to include the words Open Space and Trails. She noted that County Parks and Recreation Department provided input on proposed changes to the Plan and is noted in Version 1 of the document. She also stated that there have been many changes regarding Open Space since the last Comprehensive Plan in 2003, and that those changes would be outlined in the Comprehensive Plan Update. She asked guest Rick Miller to add more, and discuss the recent Open Space Symposium.

Rick Miller stated that he is the Chair of the City of Flagstaff's, Open Space Commission. This was the 3rd annual Open Space Symposium and one of the main goals was to encourage coordination between different jurisdictions of the area. He noted that one third of the areas identified at the symposium were within County jurisdiction and not within the City's jurisdiction. He also noted 'hub' and 'portal' areas where it was discussed that parking, water fountain, and other infrastructure should be added near Flagstaff Urban Trail System (FUTS) trails.

Ms. Trupiano added that the Land Use element would also include open space ideas. She thought that it should include the idea of connectivity in new subdivisions. She also discussed the 'Growing Smarter' legislation that brought some new funding for trails at one point, but now that funding is gone.

Mr. Miller stated that there is an economic element to the idea of connectivity between different parks and open space areas. He stated that the Flagstaff area is in competition with other mountain towns as far as having those sorts of connections for a complete system approach for tourism. He stated that this area has some advantages that other mountain towns do not have but those mountain towns have running water. By making connections, we would make the Flagstaff area better for residents, visitors and businesses.

Ms. Trupiano stated that by doing those sorts of things it would show that the jurisdiction was invested in natural parks and open space and it would make it easier to receive grant funding for continued improvements.

Ms. Sacher stated that she would like to have more discussion in the Plan about federal and state interaction beyond Forest Service. She specifically wanted to see language dealing with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Where the County interfaces with BLM land, such as in the northern parts of the County, added trails would greatly benefit businesses.

Mr. Miller liked that idea, and mentioned that the City of Albuquerque in New Mexico had coordinated with BLM. He thought it important to mention all of the different jurisdictions that might work together in regard to parks and open space.

Mr. Johnson noted that he was particularly fond of shorter distance trails. He thought that the quantity of trails was also important, and thought that small fixes to existing trails may be better than new trails altogether. He referenced page 3 of the handout and noted that it should say 'should be enhanced' rather than 'could be enhanced'. Also, on page 5 where it states that the County 'shall coordinate' with the State Land Department, that it should also include ADOT and the County Public Works Department. He thought that the language of the Plan should include the wording regarding the creation of more trails and crossings. He thought it would be relatively inexpensive for the County to help provide for trails along right-of-ways in many places within County jurisdiction. He mentioned that the Highway 180 and Highway 64 to the Grand Canyon corridors would benefit from a trail, and that it could be a substantial economic benefit.

Ms. Sacher stated that Highway 89A near Vermillion Cliffs could use support from the County and from ADOT to create some trails. She thought it was a great route.

Ms. Neilson asked if people knew about the 'string of pearls' idea in Grand Junction, Colorado which had a similar idea related to connection of open space. The idea was extremely successful. She stated that leaders in the Verde Valley area were considering similar ideas.

David McKee added that trails through greenbelts are an important aspect of parks and open space, e.g. Rio de Flag.

Mr. Barnard asked if the Arizona Trail was mentioned in the current Comprehensive Plan (2003). He stated that this idea should be expressed more explicitly in the Plan because the largest section of the Arizona Trail is located in the Coconino County and Flagstaff area. He stated that Flagstaff is one of the only communities that the Arizona Trail runs through and that highlighting this asset could be a large economic booster.

Mr. Johnson added that the asset of Mount Elden could make the Flagstaff area the 'new Moab', but the Forest Service does not allow bikes up to the top of Mount Elden. He also added that the ability for people to use trails to bike from the Flagstaff area to the Grand Canyon could be a great boost as far as tourism from biking enthusiasts. Mr. Johnson also added that language along the lines of advocating for such trails and working with the Forest Service should be mentioned in the Plan.

Mr. McKee wanted to stress that watchable wildlife areas bring in more money than a great deal of the businesses in Flagstaff, so those areas should be stressed in the Plan. He thought that the Plan should also try to promote new and/or enhanced existing watchable wildlife areas.

Mr. Miller wanted to emphasize the importance of connecting areas such as watchable wildlife areas, open spaces, parks and trails.

Ms. Huenneke noted policy number 6, stating that she thought that there could be a separate section to emphasize that the County has the ability to strongly encourage non-motorized commuting and travel on trails for purposes other than just recreation. She thought that such encouragement could relieve some infrastructural costs and add to the quality of County residents' lives. She thought that this idea was somewhat unique to the Flagstaff area and the County as a whole.

Mr. Johnson stated that the wording could include '...to enhance community quality of life and for recreation', which would blend the ideas of recreation and commuting as well as other reasons for travel using trails.

Ms. Trupiano thought that there could be a vision statement as far as coming up with funding from the County's different partners to provide for these ideas. She stated that there are places in the County where multimodal studies had been conducted, but the results of those studies could not be implemented because of lack of funding.

Leo Gishie thought that more specifics could be mentioned on page 5, number 4. He stated for example that ceremonial plants should be mentioned.

Mr. Miller stated that that idea was mentioned in the Flagstaff Regional Plan under 'unique and sensitive areas'.

Ms. Prosser stated that number 4 should not include a high level of use by the general public in some of the more sensitive areas.

Mr. Barnard stated that the words 'appropriate level of use' should be used.

Mr. Ruggles thought that 'to accommodate use' was perhaps a good way to word it.

Mr. Johnson thought that in the context of number 4, 'social trails' could be problematic.

Mr. Miller thought that the words 'appropriate level of use' was the best wording, so that in certain areas there would be little to no use and in others there could be a high level of use, as appropriate. He thought that that wording would help in the thought process as far as what the appropriate level of use would be for a specific area.

Mr. Barnard thought that it should say that the trails should try to minimize impacts to important resources. He thought that the wording should include 'designed to minimize negative impacts' to those resources.

Mr. Miller asked about policies 7 and 8 on pages 5 and 7. He was thinking that the wording would permit the County to work with people in the ways that the group was discussing. However, he thought that the wording could be strengthened a little bit so that the County would actively work with the other jurisdictions.

Ms. Sacher agreed with Mr. Miller, and wanted to see the County support these ideas.

Ms. Garcia thought that the wording should read 'actively promote' or 'actively encourage'.

Ms. Prosser thought that it would be appropriate to add more agencies to the list of partnerships for number 7.

Scott Anderson mentioned that Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and other explicit agreements between jurisdictions might help the different jurisdictions work together in regard to parks and open space.

Mr. Miller added that he liked Ms. Sacher's idea of the County supporting the intergovernmental relationships.

Ms. Trupiano added that if there were people who would specifically worked on the ideas stated, that it might help to gain funds from higher level jurisdictions.

Mr. Barnard thought that the wording of number 7 should be more active rather than passive.

Ms. Sacher stated that the Navajo Nation should be added, as there is so much open space through the County in those areas. She stated that that could be an economic driver.

Mr. McKee wanted to see the word 'connectivity' in number 7.

Ms. Prosser noted that page 3, second paragraph, second sentence is too long and it did not make much sense to her. She thought that that sentence could use some work.

Mr. Johnson noted page 4, that some of the information should be updated.

Mr. Thomas said that the word 'sovereignty' would be good as far as the interface between jurisdictions and trail connectivity.

Mr. Gishie was wondering about page 3 where there is a goal to provide for conservation and

stewardship of important natural areas. He wanted to know if that part had anything to do with development plans in the Grand Canyon where there are new plans for the Escalade hotel.

Ms. Trupiano stated that the County does not have planning jurisdiction over areas within the Grand Canyon, but the County could try and influence happenings there through partnership possibly.

Mr. Ruggles mentioned that the word 'advocate' is an important one in this aspect, especially considering places where the County has no planning jurisdiction.

4. CPC Member Roundtable

Ms. Trupiano passed out the proposed updates Sustainability Element.

There was no discussion

5. Call to the Public

No members of the public were present.

6. Set Next Meeting

The next meeting was set for November 20, 2014 and the meeting adjourned at 5pm.

Notes: