

MINUTES

SAN MARCOS CREEK SPECIFIC PLAN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

VALLEY OF DISCOVERY ROOM
CITY HALL, 1 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE
SAN MARCOS, CALIFORNIA
MONDAY, JULY 24, 2017 – 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Steve Kildoo (Chair) called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

PRESENT: COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Crews, Engert, Garcia, Harris, Hyde, Kildoo, Russo, Simmons, Tilton

ABSENT: COMMITTEE MEMBER: Arnold, Caltabiano, Hayes, Morelos, Smith, Zahl

PRESENT: CITY STAFF: Development Services Director Lynch, Planning Manager Brindley, Sr. Management Analyst Herzog, Office Specialist III Kiss.

CITY CONSULTANTS: Michael Baker International (MBI): Howard Blackson, Stephanie Cheng,

OTHERS: Jim Hernandez, Rob Tilton, Chris Berarducci, Greg Whistler, Randy Walton

1. Welcome – Handouts, Meeting Overview

Introductions were made and PowerPoint presentation distributed.

2. Approval of Minutes – 6/19/17

MOTION: ENGERT MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED; SECONDED BY HYDE AND CARRIED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE WITH CREWS AND GARCIA ABSTAINING.

3. Recap of June 27, 2017 Progress Report to City Council

Kildoo: Reminded group they can watch the presentation via the Council meeting video available on City website.


Lynch: Thanked Mr. Kildoo for his presentation to Council. Felt he brought a lot of positivity and realism to it. Staff's objective was to put together a factual layout of where we've been, where we are now and where we're going, in terms of the schedule moving forward. Steve talked about the committee's progress, and recognition of what we have to work with. They've all accepted it's a different environment now, and the Committee wants to make something special out of it. She feels

AGENDA ITEM

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City Council has confidence in the Committee; they do understand the challenges and are looking forward to hearing an update in November.

Simmons: Indicated he was in attendance and feels Council was appreciative of the presentation and Committee's efforts. Their reactions were similar to the Committee's when seeing the reduced retail opportunities and increased residential. They understand it's evolving and are looking forward to the next presentation.

Tilton: Agreed with Matt.

Russo: Agreed. He doesn't think Council was surprised by it, and they're eager to see next steps.

Kildoo: Felt one reaction was a little different than the rest.

Hyde: Commented that they were not happy about the floodplain. He thought they were all aware, but they seemed surprised. They did give the impression they want the Committee to find a solution and not just wait.

Kildoo: The group will continue to explore possibilities.

Garcia: Concurred with Richard.

Engert: Commented he was impressed with the content. It's nice to hear that Council is interested in their input.

Kildoo: Added that Council's reaction was one that he was anticipating. One member wants it sooner rather than later, but it's not a quick fix. It's almost redesigning it from scratch. Council understands the group is committed and wants to come up with a plan that works, but we won't shortcut success for expediency.

Tilton: Asked what he thinks is the pressure?

Kildoo: Council feels the City has lost time.

Tilton: Inquired if any private interest, a potential developer, is putting pressure on it?

Lynch: Commented that would be fabulous, but is not currently the case.

Kildoo: He felt that everyone's presentation went well. The land use concepts will be huge over the next few meetings. Next Council presentation is November, and they indicated they want to see the

new plan before end of year, which will be a challenge. The Committee will do the best they can. Hopefully it will be ready, but he has no problem telling them if it's not ready.

Garcia: Vice Mayor Jones mentioned the need for community feedback because of the changes, and wants to see if they'll be behind the new plan. It's an important piece, because if it can't be constructed the way we want to, maybe the City doesn't build it now? He'd like public feedback also.

Kildoo: Indicated there'd be a public workshop, and maybe more than one. This plan has been the single most talked about project in the City. The residents liked the public spaces and walkability, which has to be toned down now, but they wish to maintain as much as possible.

Harris: Commented that the November timeline doesn't include a full outreach to community.

Cheng: Responded that the workshop would be in September, and City Council in November.

Kildoo: Suggested they may need to move up September's meeting so they have time for the September workshop.

Simmons: Pointed out that public feedback could be gathered at Street Fair in October.

Harris: Earlier discussions included the idea that it's not just for residents of San Marcos, but regionally. The Street Fair does allow a larger outreach.


Engert: Commented that he gets inquiries from Lake San Marcos residents and why it's taking so long.

4. Preliminary Conceptual Land Use Alternatives

Blackson: Thanked staff for hiring new Principal Planner Joe Farace. He's happy to see him working for the City; he's very experienced and familiar with Form Based Codes. PowerPoint presentation shown. Discussed status to date. Core area has shifted (pointed out). Draft concept plan shown. Discussed land use alternative considerations, constraints, block & street grids, revised ground floor uses, massing and new levy area. Indicated they're waiting for information regarding volume of potential flooding. Once they get it, they'll be able to give estimates to develop. Discussed June '17 concept plan. The road would be along edge of floodway. You can build a road in the floodway and along parcel lines.

Tilton: Asked why it's important that current lot lines are part of the constraints?

Blackson: Responded that they don't have the ability to say exactly where the streets will go in certain areas and they don't have a plan for Creekside Drive west of Via Vera Cruz. The



implementation plan will have subdivision rules to help place streets and lots so you get a mixed-use, walkable village.

Kildoo: Commented if they do the meandering street, and channelize the west end in the future, then the land would be above flood plain and developable.

Blackson: Explained with Redevelopment you could assemble lots and condemn properties which you can't do now. They must work with land owners and parcelization.

Simmons: Indicated the previous plan had condemnation and redevelopment. You can't just go in and take people's land.

Tilton: Responded that they never envisioned condemnation for profit, but did for right-of-way, so what's changed?

Blackson: The ability to fund that.

Tilton: Asked why that's so important and why not create the ideal street alignment?

Blackson: Responded that's what they're proposing, but you lose the southern part. Discussed Draft Districts Plan. Retail is focused on the node idea, but maintains the streetscape. Perhaps a bridge or AZ crossing may be an option for the problem area, don't know yet. Block pattern still works.

Garcia: Asked for explanation why losing that area?

Blackson: Replied it's in floodway, next to berm and water pipe.

Russo: They don't know if it's six inches of water or six feet.

Blackson: Correct.

Harris: Commented there's more development with a meandering road.

Cheng: Pointed out the hashed area would be Phase 2.

Engert: Asked how much land City owns?

Blackson: Pointed out area and indicated there's an ownership map available.



Kildoo: Commented that traffic will impact this. If kept straight and reasonable, there will be some pull off of San Marcos Blvd.

Harris: Asked where walkable area is?

Blackson: Pointed to small, interconnected blocks. You lose some development space with this plan. They have to figure out where a new sewer line goes into the backside of the berm. They just found out about it, must stay off of it and its 20' wide.

Kildoo: Stated he was on the VWD water board and doesn't recall that on VWD maps. Asked how this occurred?

Lynch: Replied that it's possible it was on other plans and City's engineers may be aware of it. There's a lot of history.

Kildoo: Expressed frustration after giving up so much land to other agencies also.

Russo: Inquired if the sewer line going in is for this development area?

Lynch: Believes it's for a much larger area.

Russo: Asked if any other sewer lines would need to go in once developed?

Lynch: Not sure.


Blackson: Indicated it's just for this area and there would be infrastructure coming to Phase 2.

Tilton: Assuming Creekside Drive would be pushed as far south as possible, asked the advantages or drawbacks to the east of Via Vera Cruz, to combine the lots and not have a Main Street through there, but create bigger chunks?

Blackson: Commented that is the discussion.

Tilton: Inquired what their understanding is of the developer's desire? Would they rather have standard blocks or a super block and make their own access/ingress?

Blackson: He understood that the predictability in a plan was most important to developers.



Simmons: Commented about super blocks, there is more to configure and potentially condemn. He sees a more realistic approach for a private developer with smaller blocks. They can't rely on someone to tear down.

Harris: Added that it differs with size of developer.

Simmons: Even the larger ones have hesitation when constraints are known.

Blackson: Asked Mr. Hernandez what he'd like to see.

Hernandez: Predictability.

Farace: Agreed that predictability of knowing what to build and building quickly and efficiently is what folks are looking for.

Engert: Asked where open space would be?

Blackson: Commented that this plan would change the parks. (Pointed out).

Harris: Concerned about disconnects, stopping, turning and all the right turns. With the meandering road, the streets almost mimic the creek.

Blackson: For walking, they can have trails to link to berm trail system. For shopping, everything is on Via Vera Cruz.

Harris: Worried it would be a traffic jam, unless you do roundabout.

Hyde: Mentioned the meandering road concept and what happens later when it fills in? It may cause some incompatible lots because of size and shape.


Blackson: Replied it would be more of a European model, a less formal plan.

Crews: Asked if all retail along San Marcos Blvd. is gone?

Blackson: No, the discussion is how to make districts out of it.

Cheng: Clarified there are three different layers or components, districts are first and talk about identity of area. They're broken into a series of maps.

Engert: He supports as many roundabouts as possible because they really move traffic.



Cheng: Explained the original plan had one in the center, but traffic staff doesn't feel it is necessary now due to less volume.

Simmons: Asked if that considers the future west side expansion?

Blackson: No.

Crews: She is surprised they don't think traffic will be significant. It's a major thoroughfare.

Cheng: Indicated the previous plan had a much higher amount of commercial development and roundabouts take up a lot of right-of-way.

Blackson: Added that there would be fewer trips now. Continued with presentation discussing draft districts plan, sub-districts, color-codes and patterns. He's wondering if it should be done by phases. He feels the high impact flood areas should have their own districts with different sets of rules and regulations, and incentives that don't need to happen in other areas. Asked for thoughts on putting it by constraints or by place? Examples, San Marcos Blvd. to San Marcos Creek, "Flood District #1," and Flood District #2, and Core Districts #1, Sub-Core District #2.

Kildoo: Inquired what constraints he's thinking of?

Blackson: Need to allow them to do a ground floor that's off the floor, maybe six feet up? Or, different building configurations. If in that property, they could go to that section and get all bulk scale, height, densities, flexibilities and incentives. Indicated he did work in Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina where they helped them build off the ground 13 feet. They put storage or parking under. The real structure with the building code was 13 feet above.

Lynch: Commented the City has started to explore the idea. One of the Engineers checked with a FEMA contact and asked if they've seen anything locally or regionally. They hadn't seen it done, but it does happen throughout the country. Maybe there are other ideas and perhaps the City will pioneer it?

Blackson: In Flood District #1, you could re-do that plan when the flooding goes away, so you don't have to re-do the whole plan.

Simmons: Agreed, for that purpose alone it makes sense to put those areas in a separate Flood District.

Blackson: Or, allowing legal, non-conforming, so that the stuff here today can stay or do something.



Kildoo: Asked for feedback from everyone.

Harris: Likes the idea of keeping it separate, so could start to move on developable area now and also likes flexibility.

Hyde: Agreed. Until you know the water volume coming through, that could change the game plan. By separating, you can move forward. It's in the future and still in the plan.

Russo: Loves the idea. Asked if there's an option for a park there?

Blackson: Yes, but its private property now. It could be a park if the area is manageable with a ditch, landscaping or pond. It would have to be a bigger part of a parks plan.

Harris: Asked if you could build in an "if/then" scenario?

Simmons: Cautioned everyone if a park goes in, it will never come out. There would be public outcry.

Blackson: Replied there could be "if/then" scenarios in the sub-districts which they'll discuss later.

Engert: Asked about installing an attractive landscape barrier to contain water?

Blackson: A weir system.


Kildoo: Explained it's been a requirement to keep water that falls on your property on your land for past 15-20 years. The ability to control that is critical. The challenge is it's not just general rainfall; it's a creek, with potential to overflow because culvert is undersized. They need to know the volume.

Lynch: Indicated they're looking at implementing some tools with MBI in terms of evaluating it. They don't have a timetable yet, but should have some rough information by next Committee meeting. Detailed analysis will take longer.

Hyde: Commented they don't have to do all of it now, who cares about floodplain area right now?

Crews: It's a no-brainer, but they must incentivize that area. If left out it will be an eyesore as legal, non-conforming, as the rest of the area gets developed.

Garcia: Thinks Howard's idea is great.



Tilton: Stated he is neither here nor there on separating it out. If it's a benefit to the neighborhood, he would be for it, but his preference is they're a year or two early for the Committee, because there are unspecified physical issues with the neighborhood that are not known.

Kildoo: Asked what he was thinking, other than water volume?

Tilton: Replied that the floodway area should not be abandoned in the design and solution. There are all kinds of physical solutions, bulldozers, pavement, and infrastructure that will happen even in the reduced plan. Why have they not quantified the cost of solving that issue? He wishes the process would have happened a year ago then they wouldn't be discussing eliminating the neighborhood from plan. He's ambivalent about it.

Kildoo: Inquired if he's trying to quantify the volume of water, or the cost of improving the culvert?

Tilton: Responded volume of water and possible solutions.


Crews: Asked if he's suggesting a fund be set up after they find out cost where everyone who develops contributes?

Tilton: Replied no, there will be a set price developers can pay. No one will pay anything if the City doesn't have a suggested solution so that someone will invest. The Committee should meet a year from now, after this has really been looked at. The hurry-up on this mystifies him.

Lynch: Commented that they all know a huge amount of water near SR-78 has to be addressed and Caltrans needs to take the lead on that. They're looking at whether it's a river or a stream. Either way, it's a challenging site and even under the best case scenario, it will take extreme creativity. It won't provide us that kind of opportunity to be that downtown. She understands the frustration, it's valuable and they can't let it go, but it makes sense to focus more on the others.

Kildoo: Expressed that whatever they can do to minimize the footprint of that flood is critical. They'll need to wait for more information.

Simmons: Commented that \$100 million fixes all of those problems, but is there a \$5M fix for that land in particular that could make it more useable? The drainage on the far side from Pacific Street is a 10'-15' channel now and the whole corner is flooded because of the drainage. If you put a channel in, until you know volume, it's not big enough to make an effect on the overall design. A separate district allows flexibility to keep moving forward, address concerns when we get them and hopefully not affect the rest of the plan. They must be cautious about spreading the cost to that fix to all in this area. The problem exists today. Some land owners today don't have a problem and we can't make it their problem.



Blackson: Responded that it could have been done when you had redevelopment. Two districts need “if/then” scenarios.

Kildoo: Agreed it’s the right approach so they can move forward. He hopes they can figure out a way to get money, maybe redevelopment will eventually come back or the City will receive a grant.

Blackson: Continued with presentation, discussed ground floor land use plan, required, allowed and residential areas. Need to maintain flexibility and reduce required retail/commercial.

Harris: Asked the rationale for decreasing to 50,000 s.f. “required”?

Blackson: They measured it, 60’ deep by length of blocks and found what is supportable for 2,300 dwelling units. It would be more urban retail, first floor retail with residential on top. It can be made flexible so you can switch between commercial/residential.

Kildoo: Agreed, in those areas where they’re not requiring it, want to maintain flexibility so can switch commercial/residential if market changes.

Cheng: Clarified the required and allowed areas.

Lynch: Indicated she’s fine with that, but there are areas it won’t happen. There should be an area where at a certain point commercial may not be allowed, but there could be a very broad area where it would be if that’s what committee wishes to see.

Blackson: Asked where commercial should not be allowed?

Crews: Feels it should be allowed anywhere.

Harris: Concerned about the one small area by itself that seems out of place.

Kildoo: The marketplace is setting those ground rules. There’s empty retail and commercial now.

Blackson: Pointed out there’s a difference between retail and commercial. Commercial is office and craft stores, etc., and this is about retail, shops, services and food. The burgundy color is retail, which is shown wrong and will be corrected.

Kildoo: Asked Stephanie to correct for next meeting.

Engert: Inquired how many stories?

Blackson: Three to six.

Engert: Commented you'd satisfy low income.

Blackson: Can get a density bonus.

Crews: The low income is already built.

Harris: Every development must have 10% affordable, either on site or pay in lieu fee.

Simmons: Committee should also talk about flexibility for residential.

Crews: Expressed that she likes residential along San Marcos Blvd.

Blackson: They should be able to allow for more of that along San Marcos Blvd. Two – five stories along Creek and East/West ends, along floodplain, with wood-frame construction. Three-six stories at the center, and on Via Vera Cruz and San Marcos Blvd., with stacked flats and wood-frame construction. Variable heights along the edges. Discussed using 2015 Engineering Master Plan, roads and network.

Simmons: Asked about San Marcos Multi-way Blvd. and dedication of 18' on each side, and if there'd be further take of properties?

Blackson: Indicated it's been covered and they've known about that for a while. They keep designing a slip lane on south side, but it's not funded and may not be the plan. Discussed parks and open space. There's Phase 1 Park Promenade, open space, McMahr Park and Paseo Park along aqueduct. He thinks there should be a Main Square on Main Street with a gateway sign, paving patterns and bollards. Asked for input on parks, is there enough?

Kildoo: Commented that the creek was always people's perception of open space.

Tilton: Asked the site requirement for landscaping?

Simmons: Responded for every 1,000 residents you need 5 acres of park.

Blackson: They're proposing 2,000-3,000 people.

Simmons: With 3.2 residents per house, that's over 6,000 residents which equal 35 acres.

Blackson: Over 90% of site is creek and open space.



Tilton: Asked about on site landscaping?

Blackson: Commented that they didn't have a lot of that in the Form Based Code. It's in the Zoning Ordinance. They had it by frontages; build to the setback lines. They're not really changing a lot about the block patterns, so whatever it was before will probably stay the same.

Tilton: Inquired what's required for storm water retention and are they doing it in a landscape way?

Blackson: Each site would need BMP's. Group continued to discuss.

Harris: Indicated City of San Diego is working on a park equivalency right now. Perhaps they can look at it and follow suit? It's a fee and an in lieu. It's hard on infill projects to put in a park.

Russo: Asked the definition of a park? Why could the creek and open space not satisfy park needs?

Hyde: Mentioned they haven't looked at the walking bridge along McMahr or park area along Discovery.

Blackson: It was done differently in Specific Plan (SP) than the equivalency and ratio in General Plan (GP). The parks were fairly conceptually designed in the plan, so they could be built by City when it came time. That's part of the difference of a Form Based Code to the rest of City's zoning.

Kildoo: Commented the long stretch of park along Discovery side of creek should count.

Harris: Asked if there's a difference in open space and park?

Blackson: Yes.

Harris: Existing open space doesn't constitute a park.

Kildoo: He recalls the southern side of the creek was park and not open space.

Blackson: Indicated they don't have any planned parks now except the Plaza and Promenade.

Engert: Inquired if a portion has to be kept for wildlife?

Blackson: Yes, it's part of the creek corridor. That's why they got Fish & Game permits.

Hernandez: Recalls a park along Discovery?



Blackson: Indicated it's there.

Harris: Asked if it would suffice if on the other side of open space?

Simmons: There will be new connectivity with bridge on Via Vera Cruz. It might suffice the total requirement but probably not on acreage. But in combination, walkable areas of open space, parks along Discovery, and the park on north side of creek, all that would add into it.

Harris: Asked if park ratio is set by city or state?

Blackson: City.

Simmons: Added that there are also state requirements.

Blackson: State gives requirements for GP.

Simmons: Commented that the question is what the previous EIR analyzed and are we relying on that?

Brindley: Indicated it's the same ratio.

Lynch: Commented as they start to look at infill, they need to look at it city-wide. There is a GP goal and objective city-wide. Must ask what makes a great place, is there enough green space for the area? It might be less, but is it better for the area? There's no expectation from her on getting 10 acres park in the middle, when we're barely getting our downtown area.

Blackson: That's the value of the SP.

Russo: Commented that San Elijo Lagoon is clearly a park even though there's no playground. He doesn't see why open space/creek area can't be called "park."

Lynch: They've been a little narrow on interpretation of park for this purpose. Some developments have required open space area that you can't walk in or touch. It must be something residents can access and enjoy. Believes that the Council wants the Committee to know the community and have a vision, then let City know what works from a green space perspective.

Kildoo: The group has several large issues. They need to focus on coming up with land use concepts, patterns, heights, etc., so they can make a November recommendation.

Blackson: Added that they need to figure parks out too.

Kildoo: Stated that it comes back to the water volume.

Engert: Asked about pink house?

Kildoo: Replied it was moved at the request of Army Corp.

Blackson: Pointed out natural park area that was lost and need to discuss.

Kildoo: Suggested waiting until next meeting when they have the answer that impacts that area.

Hyde: They went through a hassle with Army Corp over the pedestrian bridge.

Cheng: Indicated she'd find out those details from Dan Wery and let everyone know.

Hyde: Believes there was an issue with an aqueduct. Need to know reason for taking it out, maybe it was cost? It's a crucial point between the park along Discovery. They should leave it on plan if they can.

Harris: Inquired if Committee can do anything before next meeting?

Blackson: Asked them to think about parks and patterns. What do they want? Creekside Park is huge.

Kildoo: Feels the group is not quite locked on meandering or straight and will need to decide at next meeting. Also need to review the retail vs. commercial, and node vs. strip. Will talk next time about preliminary recommendation and figure out what they can and can't agree on.

5. Outreach and Engagement Update

Harris: Asked when the public workshop is?

Kildoo: Before next meeting.

Tilton: Asked about density, 2,200 or 3,600 residents?

Kildoo: Need to define that so they can be in a position to answer traffic questions.

Blackson: Indicated they're just fewer than 3,000.

Engert: Inquired if Discovery would be widened as part of the project?

Kildoo: Yes, from Via Vera Cruz east.

Engert: Asked if it can it be done anytime? Lake San Marcos residents ask about this.

Lynch: Explained that there will be portions done as other developments occur over time. It will probably be sooner than Creek District.

Kildoo: Reminded group that it only starts at Via Vera Cruz, and going west, not so much.

6. Next Steps

Cheng: Asked for clarification regarding density and whether they should consider a higher level of residential? She thought people didn't want too much residential.

Tilton: Commented there's a political aspect to it. He sees Palomar Station and envisions that transplanted here and he doesn't have a good opinion of it. It's too much and this could be a very heavily populated area. Need to make a positive decision that this is what the Committee wants.

7. Public Input

Jim Hernandez: 1). Roundabout. Commented that the roundabout in middle of Via Vera Cruz is unique and special and should be retained. The engineers shouldn't be shortsighted about the population. Sooner or later it will come. Build now or won't get built in future. 2). Diagonal parking on San Marcos Blvd. Asked if it's still a viable design if moving towards residential with allowable commercial? You could park there all day.

Blackson: Indicated he hopes so, because it gives thru-traffic in the middle and would flow better.

Hernandez: 3). Public Park. He thought there was a public park towards the west? It made the district unique. If you're in the west mode, you're two-three blocks away from a park. 4). Flexibility. He hopes they retain flexibility. He has a developer interested in a block long retail center with a theatre. 5). Storm water. Feels this is going to be a problem and they should get input from knowledgeable people.

Chris Berarducci: Appreciate what Committee is doing and commented they should do it right rather than fast.

Greg Whistler: The plan looks good but keep in mind commercial with units above is a different type of loan which is pricier. He understands the flow of water varies during the year, but the biggest problem he encounters is flood insurance. If you can't tell them the flood insurance is not on their property, the cost would be exorbitant. He's in favor of parks, but prefers trails. Probably can't do a bridge if there's an aqueduct.



Hyde: Commented that the road bridge was moved and they did approve for a pedestrian bridge.

Whistler: Could then tie in to walking area.

Randy Walton: Thanked Committee, and agreed they should do it right rather than fast. He senses the pressure to get it done, but urged them to resist that. They should only pass on to Council if they feel good about it. He's also a member of the governing board of the San Marcos Unified School District, where they're having a serious growth issue on the south side of town. New high school is already at capacity, along with several elementary and middle schools. There are many projects impacting the area, Brookfield/Tesoro, University District, HG Fenton, and this one. The district is doing a needs assessment now and he expects it will say they need two schools in this area. They're the last growing district in San Diego County. They have no land now, but are talking to people. Schools can be beautiful additions to neighborhoods. A large part is grass; maybe there is a way to incorporate a school? He can't overstate it; the problem is very big now and next 5-10 years.

8. Adjournment / Next Meeting

Kildoo: Adjourned meeting at 7:58 p.m. Next meeting: August 28, 2017.

Steve Kildoo, San Marcos Creek
Specific Plan Oversight Committee Chair

ATTEST:

Lisa Kiss
Office Specialist III