

**MINUTES**  
**SAN MARCOS CREEK SPECIFIC PLAN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING**

Valley of Discovery Room  
CITY HALL, 1 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE  
SAN MARCOS, CALIFORNIA  
**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2018 – 6:00 PM**

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Steve Kildoo (Chair) called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**PRESENT: COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Caltabiano, Crews, Engert, Garcia, Harris, Hayes, Hyde, Kildoo, Russo, Simmons, Smith, Tilton, Zahl

Arrived at 7:02 pm

**ABSENT: COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** None

**PRESENT: CITY STAFF:** City Manager Griffin, Development Services Director Lynch, Planning Manager Brindley, Administrative Services Manager Herzog, Office Specialist Gallegos.

**CITY CONSULTANTS:** Michael Baker International (MBI): Dan Wery

**OTHERS:** Ash Hayes, Jim Turrell, Tara Bennett, Paul Suacina

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

CREWS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 27, 2017 AS PRESENTED, SECONDED BY RUSSO AND CARRIED BY A MAJORITY VOTE WITH HARRIS ABSTAINING.

**2. DISCUSS PROJECT STATUS AND NEXT STEPS**

**Kildoo:** Stated that at the last City Council meeting one of the Council members brought up her concerns about the Creek project, not in terms of its need for success or failure, but she wanted to put it on hold. It was not an agendized item, so no action was taken. He spoke with various Council members and no one he spoke with really said they wanted to stop the project, but they did want to put it on pause while it's reassessed. He asked the committee members to share their thoughts.

**Smith:** Indicated that at this point he has no firm comment one way or other.

**Harris:** Stated that unfortunately the City of San Marcos is moving in a direction where development is an evil word. With elections coming up there are a lot of things that are going on. His hope is that they can focus on one particular area knowing this is a recommendation only that can be changed by the Planning Commission or City Council. If they do move on, would like to have more conversations with developers and the land owners.

**Hyde:** Stated that no matter how slow they move, they've got to keep moving forward. The bottom line is there's going to be development in the creek area. If they don't get the ground work laid and get it set up for them and have some kind of guide, they are going to wind up with 3 or 4 developments and then a disaster that they don't know what to do with or how to do the rest.

**Russo:** Agreed. If they don't do anything, it will wind up being just another housing development which is something they don't want. Maybe the focus changes, maybe they come up with more of a foundational type plan or an infrastructure plan rather than specifics.

**Crews:** Commented that there is nothing to gain by forging ahead and have everything to gain by following the lead of the City Council. It's not a bad idea to wait to see what the temperature is. Right now 2,300 homes is what the public is hearing and it could jeopardize the rest of our city.

**Garcia:** Explained that the committee was put together to try to come up with what they thought would be the best plan of action. It doesn't mean that it's going to be built in the next 24 months. It's just a road map to try to see what can be done with all this acreage of land. If it needs to be put on pause, he would be bummed because they've all put in a lot of time, work and effort. But if it was on pause for a year or two until the bridges got put in and Discovery started to go through, he would be okay with that. He would prefer to see them continue with a plan that they come up with that they can move forward. They've all been talking 10, 15, 20 year build out not 24 months that these 2,300 homes are coming in. It's been his experience that things take a long time to get going around here so if they stop now and then they start it in 2 or 3 years it would be 5 years before they could even present something to Council.

**Simmons:** He shares similar opinions as those raised by others. They are at a crossroad with the timing, right now it is horrible. This temperature, this climate has dramatically shifted in the last several months. Rules and regulations and constraints only get tighter and tighter over time. It's tough to say what needs to be done.

**Engert:** Commented he is surprised to hear that because a lot of work has been done to develop a plan. He would like to know the reason why the Council wants to put it on hold. It's fortunate for the City to have a committee to work on it, to make the plan, to make sure that nothing is left out. It's a big mistake to put it on hold.

**Tilton:** Stated that the pressure to do this now, to change the plan now, he thinks was ill conceived in that there's an 800 pound gorilla in town and that's North City. The trouble to develop the Creekside makes it totally obvious that until North City is complete or developed, there's no interest in our neighborhood because assemblage of property is necessary. He still doesn't understand why this was a hurry up deal in light of the fact that as somebody said things don't happen overnight. He is happy that the public improvements are going to proceed because that will help sell this. There's already a plan in place that they spent a lot of money on. In 3 to 5 years it's going to be clearer and North City is going to be developed and he trusts there will be developer interest then.

**Hayes:** Stated that this started out as a walkable downtown and everybody got excited because you didn't have to leave this community. All of a sudden they had different dynamics of housing and there are 80 property owners. What they haven't done is summarize where they started to where they are now. Also haven't done any polling to find out what it is that people actually do want. With respect to the developers, she feels they need to engage them more and get their input. North City is going to have a great impact on the Creekside project with what they are able to put in there and how they can connect back and forth. Once the bridges are done, the developers will see this whole area as something that is viable. She would like to know how much money has been spent from day one to today because eventually City Council is going to ask for that. She said they can't stop now because the bridges are there. She thinks they should look at where they are and what's

going to happen in the next 5 years so they are ready when the developers see what a great thing North City is and what they're going to be doing on Grand Avenue because that will be a great connector to Creekside project.

**Kildoo:** Stated there is an existing plan in place. If they stop meeting that plan does not go away. Unfortunately it's a plan that is no longer very practical. It asks for 1.2 million square feet of retail, office and industrial which they know is not supportable in today's climate. He explained the reason they also started to meet was to address the fact that the plan had flaws based on changing conditions (loss of redevelopment, change in retail). The bridges they got with a grant and although nobody is quite positive whether the bridges are dependent on the plan as part of the grant or not, he doesn't know if they want to take a chance. So the plan's got to stay in place at least to support the building of the bridges because they're important whether this Creek ever gets developed or not. His suggestion is that they ask for a joint workshop with the Council. The workshop would take the place of his periodic report to the Council.

**Hyde:** Stated that both groups need to get on the same wave length and have a face to face discussion.

**Engert:** Commented that if you don't make stuff happen nothing happens. But if you start something, then all of a sudden developers will want to be a part of it. Also, the City needs to put together a budget to have continuous money to continue to develop and to make sure that when a builder comes in there's a spot for them. He said you can't just put it on hold then go back and say times have changed. Times, yes they change as you move along and as you do that the City needs to continue to have the support from the community.

**Hayes:** Stated that in most instances she would agree to a joint meeting but the City Council appointed them to do all the grunt work and sift through all these problems and situations. If they bring them in, it throws in another dynamic.

**Hyde:** Stated that what they are really doing is bringing both groups together to find out what the other is thinking so that they can continue to move forward. He said bottom line it sounds like they want to kill it.

**Kildoo:** Commented they want to pause not kill the effort.

**Hyde:** Stated that as far as this committee goes pause is kill unless they keep at least a small group that is constantly monitoring, evaluating and informing.

**Kildoo:** Indicated that he is due to give his report to Council. Whether they have a workshop or he gives the report, the Council still has the option of making a decision about whether they pause them or not.

**Harris:** Commented that from a marketing perspective one of the worst things a company can do is to wait too long to launch a product or service because ultimately what happens is somebody else does it instead, hence University City or someone doesn't want it and the target audience is lost. He looks at this as what can we do. They are the City Council's consultants and they are here to tell them what they think they should do with this project. Let's move forward and say look we may not be able to do the entire plan now. The temperature and the marketplace have taken that out. Maybe in 3 to 5 years they can relook at. If they develop that one central area, is that feasible? If they can let's not wait because we're going to be left way over there and we're never going to get this started.

**Russo:** Stated it's a project road map with a 20 year build out. He is still trying to figure out what the problem is. He knows things have changed and things are different, but it's such a long build out.

**Kildoo:** Commented that at the end of day it's about growth and using that as a fulcrum in an election.

**Harris:** Stated that everything that they are going to propose is just that, a proposal. Things can change based on Planning Commission or City Council, or developers might have different ideas. In a couple of years if they need to adjust it then they get permission from City Council to make that adjustment.

**Smith:** Stated that they absolutely have to have a recommendation to the City Council. Perhaps they tell the Council to redirect them, and in 6 or 9 months after the bridges are well under construction, they'd like to come together and report back to Council.

**Russo:** Commented they are not developing everything right now. They can give them some sort of recommendation of what it is they think should be done over the long term.

**Crews:** Stated she is very much for pausing. They serve at the pleasure of the City Council and she wants to do what the Council wants them to do. The committee has done some really good work. When things get started it will be exciting. There are so many things that they still haven't done that need to be addressed but she doesn't think it's the right time to address them.

**Garcia:** Indicated he is okay either way. He wondered if they could pause until after the election because that is the driving force.

**Simmons:** Suggested that they use the workshop with the Council to fine tune these details they're talking about right now and then make a determination after that workshop of the next steps. Do they keep going full force or do they stop? He understands it's a 20 year road map but they're technically 12 years into that road map right now and nothing's been built on it. It was approved in 2007 and what's been built is a fraction of what they hoped would have been built. Getting clearer direction is probably their best bet right now.

**Griffin:** Stated that the direction that staff took from Council was that they wanted to talk about this at the Council meeting at some point in the not too distant future and for staff to figure out what the best avenue for that was. He informed the Council that the Chair was due to give them an update. He discussed three options: 1) the Committee Chair makes his scheduled report to Council, 2) agendize the item and get direction, or 3) an informal workshop between both groups.

**Kildoo:** Stated that if they don't have a workshop and he does his report to Council then he would like them to meet so they can give him the information that needs to be presented to Council.

**Tilton:** Stated that the plan as he sees it is not palatable. There is a plan in place and they should move forward with the reality. He doesn't want to quit. He said that perhaps when the public improvements are done there will be some action. Right now not happening and it probably won't happen until North City is more or less complete.

**Hayes:** Agreed.

**Kildoo:** Stated that the majority want to move forward. What was not as clear was whether he should give the report at the Council meeting or hold a workshop.

**Russo, Hyde, Engert, Garcia, Tilton, and Simmons:** Are in favor of a workshop.

**Harris and Smith:** Stated they are on the fence.

**Crews:** Stated she is in favor of the report to Council and whatever Council says is what she wants to do.

**Hayes:** Indicated that before it becomes more of a hot button for the election, they need to look at the timing for this.

**Hyde:** Commented that what he is hearing tonight is full steam ahead or pause stop. He thinks that what they should do is slow down. Keep the committee and keep things on track so if an opportunity comes up they're ready to address it rather than put it on pause and an opportunity is missed.

**Kildoo:** Stated that in his mind to pause was never that they were going away.

**Kildoo:** Asked City Manager Griffin that when he has the briefings with Council can he let them know that a majority would like to have a workshop. The alternative would be that he does the presentation at the Council meeting.

**Griffin:** Replied that he would let them know the Chair will be prepared to make the regular update to them and that a majority want to have a workshop. Whether the Council wants to do that, he does not know.

**Harris:** Indicated that one of the key stakeholders in all of this really hasn't been talked with and that's the land owners.

**Kildoo:** Explained that one of the challenges with many of the land owners is they are not local and perhaps they can send them a questionnaire.

**Harris:** Stated that if they could even 10 property owners it would be great to get their perspective. He wants to at least attempt to get their input.

**Kildoo:** Thinks it's a great idea but doesn't know if it precedes this other discussion.

**Simmons:** Asked Michael if he was suggesting inviting the land owners to the committee meetings or meet with them prior to the meeting.

**Harris:** Replied that it might throw more weight if it were at a City Council meeting. All of the discussions they've had mean nothing if the land owners are not on board and added that they haven't received the buy in from any of the players that have the most to gain on this.

**Kildoo:** Stated it is a valid perspective and probably should be done. But they have a priority to do before that.

**Harris:** Agreed.

**Kildoo:** Stated that at the next meeting which is March 26 they will discuss what they will present to Council. He wants to make sure they are all on the same page for either the workshop or the presentation.

**Simmons:** Commented he would like to hear from staff on what Council's perspective is on the workshop or presentation.

**Harris:** Asked if they would be able to find that out before the next meeting.

**Griffin:** Responded yes. Staff will be briefing with Council over the next two weeks.

**Harris:** Stated he would like to know ahead of time so that at the next meeting they are not just rehashing everything that has gone on in the last year but to actually come up with a game plan for the Chair's presentation or for the workshop.

**3. PUBLIC INPUT**

None

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 7:17 pm.

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Steve Kildoo, San Marcos Creek  
Specific Plan Oversight Committee Chair

ATTEST:

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Sandra Gallegos, Senior Office Specialist  
City of San Marcos