

**ST. GEORGE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
WORK MEETING
OCTOBER 22, 2015, 4:00 P.M.
ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE ROOM**

PRESENT:

**Mayor Jon Pike
Councilmember Gil Almquist
Councilmember Jimmie Hughes
Councilmember Michele Randall
Councilmember Joe Bowcutt
Councilmember Bette Arial
City Manager Gary Esplin
City Attorney Shawn Guzman
City Recorder Christina Fernandez**

OPENING:

Mayor Pike called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Carol Hollowell and the invocation was offered by Reverend Alex Wilkie.

TOUR THE SWITCHPOINT RESOURCE CENTER AND NEW FOOD PANTRY:

SwitchPoint Director Carol Hollowell led the Council on a tour of the Resource Center and Food Pantry.

PRESENTATION REGARDING THE MASTER PLAN FOR THE RIDGE TOP COMPLEX:

City Manager Gary Esplin showed two different proposals for the Ridge Top Complex. He explained the difference between the two conceptual plans and mentioned that staff recommends going with the boulevard type. The challenge is the landscaping on the hill with regard to water draining off the sides of the ridge. He stated that the proposed roadway already exists in most areas; however, some may need to be extended.

The consensus of the Council is to move forward with staff's recommendation.

City Manager Gary Esplin stated that the property will be zoned Planned Development; therefore, the Council will see what is being built on the property and approve the uses.

City Attorney Shawn Guzman commented that staff is working on changes to the Planned Development zone ordinance.

City Manager Gary Esplin explained that there are a few requests for the property. This proposal will go to the Planning Commission for a General Plan amendment. Bob Nicholson is working on uses, Rick Rosenberg is working on the easements and staff is working on utility lines. He mentioned that a 50' setback will be required for one-story buildings while a 100' setback will be required for two-story buildings.

Mayor Pike commented that further down the road, it would be nice to have a handout for marketing purposes.

DISCUSSION WITH THE BLM REGARDING THEIR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN:

Brian Tritle, Field Manager of the St. George BLM office, handed out a list of frequently asked questions. He explained the plan is a large document with a lot of St. George

information. When the plan was presented in June, things did not go well. They are meeting with the County weekly at this time; progress is being made. The BLM is not proposing to acquire all of the water within the Red Cliffs National Conservation Area (NCA). The draft does not include the commitments to local communities. Since it is lacking, people assume the worst. The language pertaining to not being allowed to be take water out of the NCA is standard language which came from upper management in the BLM; they are not married to that language. Under the Public Land Policy Management Act, they have a commitment to renew the permits for taking water out of the NCA. He is not sure if there will be additional stipulations or mitigation requirements. In the range of alternatives, a section proposes to push rights of way to the corridors.

City Manager Gary Esplin inquired about projects currently in process. He provided an example - the City Creek Well which has been there for almost 40-years; the plan was to take the water to The Ledges development. He asked if the City can submit an application at this time.

Mr. Tritle explained that the BLM would like to get these situations taken care of prior to the plan's approval. Further, he explained that the range of alternatives could change the rules for this type of project.

Water Services Director Scott Taylor stated that staff made an application approximately six years ago but retracted it because of the economy.

Mr. Tritle commented that it would not hurt to submit the application. For the last 20 years, most of the reserve has been managed as avoidance zone and required certain utility protocols. He explained Alternatives A and B; the preferred being Alternative B. His understanding is that the BLM consulted with utility managers asking which projects they have over the next 40-50 years.

Mayor Pike commented that the City's preference is Alternative A.

City Manager Gary Esplin noted that although the Lands Bill states that Washington County and the City of St. George would be consulted; however, they have not been. The Northern Corridor has to be addressed - it is not included in Alternatives A, B, or C, it is only in Alternative D.

Mr. Tritle explained that the hard thing about the Northern Corridor is that the County is a party to the HCP. The Lands Bill lacked a specific location; leaving it up to the BLM to figure it out. What is shown in Alternative D for lands and realty could be selected along with some aspects of the other alternatives. There is room for decisions.

City Manager Gary Esplin stated the City cannot support Alternative B. The proposed document does not reflect what the feeling the City had when it gave up on the Lands Bill.

Mr. Tritle mentioned that he would love to see a document that states where the Northern Corridor was going to be built as many agencies have mentioned this.

City Manager Gary Esplin explained that when the discussion took place years ago, there was not an agreement on a location; however, the consensus was that the corridors could not be given up. He noted that he was at the meeting.

Councilmember Arial commented that she was at the meeting also.

A discussion took place regarding Condor re-introduction in Washington County. City Manager Gary Esplin stated that they would not have agreed to an NCA without having the provisions of the HCP. Now, it is being requested to extend the HCP; impact fees will be charged.

Councilmember Arial commented that before the Lands Bill, BLM did their initial inventory on 1.5 million acres of wilderness areas in Washington County. Wells and water sources were left out.

City Manager Gary Esplin explained that Alternative B does not address the HCP or the Northern Corridor. There is a specific protocol for utilities in that area. It is refreshing to him that someone is willing to talk to the Council as that has not happened in the past.

Councilmember Almquist stated that he been involved with the HCP from the beginning. When these negotiations were taking place, it was never that they would not help work it out; it was saying that they saw the future of growth. At that time, City Manager Gary Esplin and others determined flexibility would be needed, one of which was the Northern Corridor.

Mr. Tritle explained that it would help if there were minutes acknowledging the intent of that flexibility.

City Manager Gary Esplin noted that the corridor was always intended to be south of The Ledges, in fact, they were told they were going to have to build a boardwalk.

Councilmember Arial commented that two things during that time were not negotiable – trade with private property and the corridor. It is without question that this County has been cooperative. The HCP has been a positive thing in the community.

City Manager Gary Esplin explained that cities in Washington County have put in excess of \$10 million into the protection and preservation of the Desert Tortoise Reserve.

Mayor Pike commented that the City will have to come out solid against what is written. The City will be with the County, Water Conservancy District and any cities that want to team up to pursue all means necessary. Things have to be in writing as there is lack of trust.

Councilmember Randall noted that it is frustrating that the proposal is so large.

City Manager Gary Esplin stated that as far as he knows, the proposal has no protection for utilities corridors or for a chance to manipulate that. It needs to be in writing as those around now may not be around in the future.

Mr. Tritle explained they are not working on a supplemental draft; he will not say they can't as it will depend on how heated the final proposal gets. They have convinced their attorneys to extend the deadline for submitting responses and they do not believe they need to do a supplemental draft because of all of the alternatives. He noted that Alternative A would work for the BLM.

Mayor Pike stated that most involved feel like it was working very well and like it the way it is. He thanked Mr. Tritle for being willing to have this discussion.

Mr. Tritle noted that he will voice the concerns heard tonight. Further, he stated that he sees that his role is to communicate with those affected.

City Manager Gary Esplin added that the City never had a chance to express concerns or give input. When he found out, there were two weeks left for comment. People appear to make decisions for the residents of St. George as if they have not been good stewards of the land; the City has protected its land pretty well.

Mr. Tritle encouraged the Council and County Commissioners to ask for updates.

Mayor Pike commented that the City should be represented at these meetings.

REPORTS FROM MAYOR, COUNCILMEMBERS AND CITY MANAGER:

Councilmember Bowcutt reported that the Planning Commission denied a subdivision request near 450 North; the applicant has appealed to the City Council. He suggests the Council look at the area.

A discussion took place regarding the November 5th meeting; Mayor Pike and the Councilmembers decided to cancel the meeting due to lack of a quorum.

Councilmember Almquist mentioned that he and Councilmember Randall attended the Shade Tree Board; a few members are needed.

Councilmember Randall asked City Attorney Shawn Guzman if his office has said that the City's Arborist could not give opinions to residents regarding trees that are not City trees.

City Attorney Shawn Guzman replied that he does not remember anyone calling to inquire about that.

A discussion took place regarding trees at SunTran bus stops.

Councilmember Randall mentioned that trees from the City's tree farm will no longer be planted by anyone other than City staff. She also asked for a copy of the ordinance outlining the role of the Shade Tree Board. The Veteran's Stand Down helped 10 veterans.

Councilmember Arial reported that Angie Mason and Gary Sanders are ready to move into the Electric Theater. Alicia Burton has resigned as Chairman of the Arts Commission; Dr. Paul Abegg was suggested. She reported that the County has received \$1.1 million in requests for RAP tax funds. Per Gary Sanders, the Electric Theater closes at 11:00; therefore, he does not believe the George Streetfest can hold movies as they have requested. Additionally, Mr. Sanders mentioned that tours of the Theater will not be offered.

City Manager Gary Esplin and Mayor Pike stated that volunteers can be found to offer tours and movies can take place in conjunction with special events.

Councilmember Hughes mentioned the Animal Control Board meeting. They have identified issues to work on, one of which is to promote owner responsibility. Additionally, they want to increase awareness for spay/neuter programs.

Mayor Pike commented that the Police Department personnel have done a fantastic job at the Shelter; Todd Jones has done great as the Board chair. The Board talked through an unfortunate situation that took place at one of the rescue groups over the weekend.

Ed Baca, citizen, asked if the City is doing anything for Veteran's Day.

The Council explained that the City has never held a Veteran's Day event; however, others throughout the community such as SunRiver. Additionally, the City agreed to allow Washington City to hold a County-wide Veteran's parade. The City contributes to the cost of putting on the parade.

City Attorney Shawn Guzman clarified that the Shade Tree Board ordinance requires all nine members to be residents of St. George - it needs to be updated.

A discussion took place regarding board members that are needed for several boards.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:45 p.m.