

**City of Cottonwood
Annexation Stakeholder's Meeting
January 14, 2009 Minutes**

Meeting started at 10:05 a.m.

Present:

Edward Dietrich	Kyla Allen	Linda Norman
Margie Beach	Gayle Mabery	Goe Galli
Bob Rothrock	Morgan Scott	David Snyder
Phil Terbell	Tom Bienek	Kirk Waddle
Vickie Baumgarner	Hans Epprecht	Doug Von Gausig
Diane Joens	Jay Stuckey	Chip Davis
Les Bovee	Kathy Davis	Ken Robertson
George Christianson	Judy Adams	Jody Fanning
Dick Dobbin	Judy Miller	Alison Zelms
Rob Adams	Deanna King	Carole Mackler
Joseph Sciarrotta	Tim Costello	Karen Pfeifer
Joan McClelland	George Gehlert	Mike Casson

Meeting was opened by Doug Bartosh with brief introductions made by everyone in attendance. Doug Bartosh began, stating that activities within the outlying communities from Cottonwood impact the City of Cottonwood's (COC) service, retail and recreation demands. That the COC wants to ensure whatever develops in those areas meets smart growth standards. This is an opportunity for conservation through development and as much preservation as we can achieve. The COC is looking to meet the State Trust Land requirements (STL), PAD requirements along with topographical and wildlife needs, etc. This move is scary for some and an opportunity for others. We hope to eventually reach a compromise with all the stakeholders involved. Doug Bartosh then introduced Curt Johnson and Dave Coble of Coe and Van Loo.

Dave Coble began with a power point presentation (which can be found on the COC website at <http://ci.cottonwood.az.us>). He stated the majority of what was presented is just a starting place. Comments and ideas received from this meeting will be taken back with them. They will go "back to the drawing board" to incorporate the suggestions and desires voiced at this meeting.

Ed Dietrich from the State Land Department spoke, informing attendees that it is the State Land Department's function to manage State Trust Land as a fiduciary, meaning they have to make as much profit on the land as they can for their beneficiaries. With that being said, they also want the best use of the land. They want to work collaboratively with the impacted communities so that both beneficiaries and the nearby communities benefit. Planning infrastructure at this time is very appropriate. They are looking to develop a consensus with all impacted parties.

Phil Terbell began with a question about some state land property already annexed within the COC. Information on the history of the land was unavailable however, Doug Bartosh stated there are two State Land sections within the city with no development plans, which is illustrative

of the changes and evolution of the processes we now must follow to annex state trust land. Cities must now have plans, zoning, and community consensus, to name only a few of the requirements, before State Trust Land annexations can proceed.

Edward Dietrich clarified that State Trust Land is not “sold” to a city upon annexation. Once annexed, the City has regulations developers of the land are required to meet within its jurisdiction. The annexed property is still owned by the State Land Department until it is sold at auction. For example, if land is annexed into Cottonwood, this means there is a committed zoning with the idea that developers will know what can be done on this land.

Doug VonGausig stated that it was unclear on the map and was there the opportunity for “Master Planning” rather than zoning. George Gehlert stated that a pre-requisite is to have a Master Plan.

Doug Bartosh briefly addressed a query regarding the portion of forest service land under annexation by the City. He stated the ultimate goal of the City is for it to remain open space.

Alison Zelms asked if State Land has open space requirements. Ed Dietrich stated no. It is not State Land’s mission to preserve open space. They have constitutional constraints.

Rob Adams asked if there was a sense of how much of the 6000 acres is developable. This was a speculative question and unable to be answered.

Margie Beach asked what the definition of a “404 Wash” was. Curt Johnson responded, in general terms it is a wash to be preserved.

Judy Miller, as a representative of the Cornville Association, stated that this land was not only included in the City of Cottonwood’s General Plan. It was included in the 2005 Cornville Association Plans as well. She requested State Land work with the unincorporated area stakeholders as well, as this process develops.

Joseph Sciarrotta asked why the land should be annexed then worry about keeping it open. He commented further on the wildlife corridor and antelope, stating they don’t always work as intended.

Vickie Baumgarner stated she heard a lot more positive thinking than she has in the past. Spring Creek and Rio Bonito Ranch developed property then decreased density and had left certain lots of land open for Canadian Geese. She was very impressed with the plans and now feels the COC are being good stewards. We need planned growth. Developers are also committing to use green technologies as well.

Bob Rothrock asked about Yavapai County’s open space priorities on the map

Diane Joens stated that the property targeting for preservation match the failed Proposition 106 outlines, had it passed. In fact 1,406 +/- acres are targeting which is actually more than requested by Prop 106. She also stated that this is pushing the envelope with the State Land Department when it comes to open space, as State Land is bound by constitutional requirements.

Curt Johnson stated the topography is being seriously considered meaning there are many areas that are being set aside as open space right now, in their plans.

Doug VonGausig asked that planning consider and recognize the need for grassland habitats in this area as well. They are necessary for numerous birds and when they are reduced, it drastically affects these bird populations.

Judy Miller asked that the Sheeps Head Wash area be included in those areas that are being set aside as open land now.

Gayle Mabery stated the current zoning by Yavapai County for this area is a 2 acre minimum standard and asked if there is a current SLD policy that looks negatively on open space or recognizes it adds value to property.

Ed Dietrich responded that there is no policy. It is understood that it adds value. In reality, as it currently stands, it can not provide the infrastructure necessary unless the development is “clustered”. It would not be realistic. The reason for this meeting is to create balance and develop a master plan. If current standards were reasonable, State Land would not even consider annexation.

Curt Johnson again stated this is a fluid document. This may change in 5 years with new green technologies. However we need input today to know what commitments to adhere to in the future. Once decided, if a change is desired or required, another public meeting would be required to change it, once developed.

Kathy Davis commented on the wildlife corridor plans. Her past experience was that developed property funneled the wildlife along narrow washes. She asked that we ensure there is a wider wildlife corridor. Curt Johnson stated that plans are to have the corridor be beyond the wash banks, to meet existing vegetation. Adding public trails to that may increase it to create 30 foot wide corridor. Retention areas are also planned which can increase these corridors even further. Possibly adjacent to the washes to be best for drainage and save existing vegetation.

Curt Johnson returned to the power point presentation and moved forward with discussion regarding infrastructure.

Dan Lueder addressed the water needs. Using current required calculation figures, this property would require an estimated 7.4 million gallons of water a day. With dual plumbing and the use of reclaimed water, this can be cut nearly in half, to 3.8 million gallons a day. Retrofitting structures is extremely costly and a “nightmare”. To plan it in advance is as simple as dropping a purple pipe during construction. Dan Lueder also addressed wastewater needs. He presented two current options, these being 3 large regional wastewater facilities or 8 satellite plants. He felt the 8 satellite plans were preferred. It gives more flexibility on the needs each plant is serving. If it is required to have A+ facility it can be constructed with the needs of a B facility met on the same trust land with a different satellite plant. There is also the potential to use the

satellite plant in the northeast quadrant for wetlands treatment. An example of this is the Kachina village wetlands. This also minimizes our impacts on wildlife.

Mayor VonGausig urged that we look even further into water conservation efforts, i.e., no outside landscaping, reclaimed water to recharge the Verde River etc, to have as little impact on the Verde as possible. Dan Lueder reassured members that the water numbers he used to illustrate possible needs in the annexed are were via a formula required by ADEQ. That we anticipate lower numbers. George Gehlert is also currently working on a landscape ordinance. That the protection of the Verde River is near and dear to the COC's Councils heart.

Doug Bartosh again stated this is all preliminary discussion. Alison Zelms asked if there is a preliminary date for completion of this plan. Doug Bartosh answered No. This is a very fluid document to take into account the publics desires. He further encouraging community members to continue to attend these public meetings as well as encourage any others they feel would want to contribute or be educated further on the process. There is no set timeline. We want to do it right and keep it a very open, transparent community process.

Bob Rothrock suggested a tax be initiated to allow the City to purchase the property outright to avoid all development. Another suggestion was to encourage the solar industry to buy State Trust land. He stated we should look at all other avenues to preserve this land with development of the property being last on the list.

Rob Adams suggested looking at offering alternative development codes.

Dave Coble stated that we are already looking at developing solar sights and Doug Bartosh stated the City may, in the future, be interested in getting involved in this industry.

Joseph Sciarrotta asked that equestrian needs also be considered when planning trails, etc. Dave Coble assured him that is already in the works. They are looking at a lot of different trails and parking needs that are adequate to fill the needs of horse trailers, etc.

Judy Miller commented on the 10-mile gap on State Route 89A asking that a view-point pull-out be considered along that gap. It would be a huge value to construct this but keep it below the ridge line.

Diane Joens stated Supervisor Davis has talked for many years about a tax to preserve the land. Because State Trust Land is not in the business of preserving open space, how can we pay for it. It goes to auction and the City would have to bid against developers to preserve it. As Cottonwood is the economic hub, a tax may be the answer.

Chip Davis asked what the process is to sell state trust land. Ed Dietrich briefly explained the process in general and further stated they do not "market" property. It would be very speculative of him to comment on how this land will be auctioned.

An attendee asked what was to keep developers from purchasing high density parcels, leaving the low density parcels unpurchased/undeveloped. Gorge Gehlert informed members that the

planning process will establish a density map to be followed, which can be done in this process with State Land.

Curt Johnson stated other Master Communities include open space within each parcel. In Cottonwood the open space is also included with each parcel.

Another query posed was how would future initiatives affect this process. Ed Dietrich stated it would affect it. If a reform came through he we would have to be subject to those changes and joyfully so.

Doug Bartosh stated it is the City of Cottonwood's interest to maintain forest land and be assured that if the land is traded, there is some control over the development.

Mayor Joens stated that she had recently met with Ann Kirkpatrick regarding constructing a bill to preserve it in perpetuity.

Chip Davis stated that we would need to work with ADOT on access plans etc. Tim Costello stated he was aware of ADOTs existing access plans and we will have to work with them. Chip Davis asked that we involve Verde Sante Fe North and the North West side of 89A & Cornville involved to see how it affects these communities as well.

Bob Rothrock asked if State Land would ever consider a benefit or finance plan to allow the City to purchase the land. Ed Dietrich stated the only finance plan State Land currently has is a 25 year plan with a considerable rate of interest (Cities generally find better interest rates with bonds, etc.) and payable in full in 7 years. But again, this is an auction bid process. It is unrealistic to assume that a municipality would be able to outbid a developer.

Vickie Baumgarner asked about projected growth for the area. Dave Coble stated we could look at the current growth or developer growth rates. A 3% growth rate would take 100 years to build up. The growth rate is difficult to forecast. Vickie Baumgarner stated we will have to be visionary to plan for the future.

Les Bovee expressed his appreciation to the Cottonwood City Council for presenting this public meeting and listed numerous descriptions of times the City has shown to be a good steward to neighboring communities. It is important to understand Yavapai County has a wide range of interests in the communities it encompasses. We all have only the Verde Valley's interest at this meeting. He encouraged the Council to move forward with this annexation and continue the public process.

Doug Bartosh closed, encouraging the public to continue with their input. If items come to mind after the meeting, he asked that they please feel free to call or e-mail Curt Johnson or himself and he will be sure that it is passed along. Diane Joens thanked everyone for their input.

Meeting ended at 11:58 a.m.

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