

MINUTES
SPECIAL WORKSESSION/ROUNDTABLE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA
CONFERENCE ROOM 190, YUMA CITY HALL
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA
September 8, 2009
3:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Nelson called the City Council meeting to order.

Councilmembers Present: Shoop, Mendoza, Beeson, McClendon, Nicholls, Johnson and Mayor Nelson
Councilmembers Absent: none
Staffmembers Present: City Administrator, Mark S. Watson
Deputy City Administrator, Bob Stull
Various Department Heads or their representative
City Clerk, Brigitta M. Kuiper

I. QUECHAN RIVERFRONT MASTER PLAN

Mayor Nelson introduced Michael Jackson, Sr., President of the Quechan Indian Tribe, and Brian Golding, Quechan Riverfront Project Manager.

Golding noted that the location of the project lies on the north shore of the Colorado River from the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Bridge to the area across the river from the West Wetlands.

Allyson Collins, Quechan Economic Development Administration Specialist, outlined the key elements of conceptual plan, as follows:

- Four major elements
 - Gathering area – large grassy area and ramada for group activities; parking
 - Dry RV/camp park – no electricity or running water as the area lies in a floodplain
 - Tree farm – mesquite and willows
 - Eagle Plaza and Terrace View
 - Eagle Plaza plantings will create an area resembling an eagle's beak that will face south towards the Pivot Point; the two slightly curved walls will represent the eagle's wings. Its placement is intended to correlate with the City's historic crossing interpretative site.
- Other amenities
 - Two beach sites – volleyball courts
 - Fishing pier accessible to the handicapped.
 - Additional walking and bike paths – connecting to the existing Quechan Walking Trail and Gateway Park
 - Possible connection to Sunrise Point, a Quechan nature park located across the river from the East Wetlands.
- Non-native vegetation will need to be removed in favor of native re-plantings.
- A biological evaluation of the project is underway to ensure no wildlife habitat will be endangered.

- Once the conceptual plan, biological evaluation and delineation is completed, the tribe will be able to apply for a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 Permit to do work on the river.
- The Quechans are erecting an historic elder village in the area across the river from the East Wetlands, which will be enhanced by this Riverfront development.
- This master plan has been presented to the Quechan Tribal Council and tribal members. Project staffmembers are continuing to gather information and incorporating it into the final *Quechan River Front Master Plan*; thereafter, funding will be sought.

Fred Phillips, Fred Phillips Consulting, project consultant, stated that one of the biggest challenges for the project is removal of the non-native cane along the river's edge – removing it will allow a visual connection to the river.

Jackson: In 1999, the Quechan Tribe partnered with the City of Yuma for the first time in reopening the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Bridge. What are the City's plans for Downtown development? The Quechans have a vested interest in Yuma's Downtown; the Quechans want to promote year 'round tourism. **Watson**: Several major projects on the Riverfront are underway with Craig Clark. The City is actively lobbying for the construction of a new \$25 million federal courthouse on the Riverfront. Next week, the City Council will review and begin an update of its 10-year-old plan for the downtown, including discussions about the future of the San Carlos Hotel, the Gandolfo Annex and possible solar energy usage.

Jackson: Tourists don't come to a place for a federal courthouse. Yuma has one of the richest histories in the state. **Mayor Nelson**: A courthouse will stimulate other development by increasing the number of people in the Downtown, which will bring retail to the area. **Watson**: Downtown has been envisioned as a bustling night life area. So far, the City has successfully defended its disallowance of a church in the Downtown in Federal District Court, which would have restricted the uses possible in a third of the Downtown area. The City has invested in the former Kress building. There is a great demand for arts and cultural activities and the City is looking into expanding the Art Center. The City is also looking at ways to include the Downtown in the local bus system and will pursue any grants that might be available. **Jackson**: The Quechan Tribe owns buildings in the Downtown; however, their re-use is on hold, pending the recovery of the economy. The Quechan's appreciate their good relationship with the City and want to keep it alive. Development of the Riverfront is key to the success of both sides of the river. The Quechan's are currently working to bring fishing and boating to the Riverfront.

Discussion

- Does the tribe see any specific areas for improvement the City might be missing? The Downtown cannot be redeveloped with the current clientele in the San Carlos Hotel. The Downtown needs to return to the activity it experienced in the 1960's, when it was a bustling Main Street.
- What are the tribe's plans for Monarch's Rest and the Main Street Cinema? Plans for Monarch's Rest are to develop something that will compliment the cinema – something that would add to the attractions available to those using the conference center or staying in the hotel.
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- The City of Yuma understands the economic value of its history.
 - The Native American trade routes in the region need to be identified and brought into play.
 - There is a state-wide movement to mark all historic trails in Arizona in conjunction with the State's centennial celebration.
 - Books have been written that identify the trails.
 - There is archaeological evidence of Native American playgrounds in this area, too.
 - A complicating factor is that the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) has indicated it wants to lay double tracks on its current tracks, running them through Riverfront Park.
 - The Quechans have refused UPRR the right to do so.
- The Arizona State Parks Association will be voting on a lease of the Quartermaster Depot to the City of Yuma for three 3-year terms, a total of nine years. This will allow the City to use Hospitality Tax revenues to keep the park open and easily accessible for special events.
- Does the tribe envision the construction of an amphitheater? Nothing larger than the Gathering Place in the conceptual schematic is planned at this time.
- Plans are essential to reaching your dreams, but they must be acted upon; don't let Yuma be the last outpost. Be vocal and get Yuma's history noticed.
- Arizona's Congressional delegation has been very supportive of the East Wetlands. They are hoping to get \$2 million allocated in next year's Congressional budget to, not to the "East Wetlands," but "Wetlands." Should that be the case, the City could use the funds for projects needed in the West and East Wetlands.

Watson publicly thanked the Quechan Indian Tribe for their partnership; it means local jobs to local people. He expressed appreciation for the tribe working with City staff to determine which non-profits will receive gaming revenue disbursements. These dollars go to support public safety, and public services that serve both populations.

Mayor Nelson presented a framed photograph of the original construction of the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway bridge to Jackson in appreciation for the Quechan Indian Nation's assistance to the City.

II. MAJOR ROADWAYS PLAN - none

III. CENSUS 2010 COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE

Watson handed out a list of possible appointees to the Census 2010 Complete Count Committee who have been recommended by various City Councilmembers and staff. This committee will be the public face of the census, working specifically on targeted problem areas. The goal is to reach a 70% counted level; in 2000, the counted percentage in Arizona was estimated at 55%. The census count determines future Federal funding – every person represents \$1,200 to \$1,300 annually in State and Federal funds – and Congressional legislative districts. The committee needs to begin its work by the end of September, so initial appointments should be made at tomorrow's meeting, with others following later as necessary. An official count day is April 1, 2010. Transient residents who spend most of their year in Yuma should be counted in Yuma.

Kuiper: Resolution R2009-63 states the committee shall be made up of 14 members. **Watson:** The resolution could be amended to allow more members.

IV. MAYOR AND COUNCIL OFFICE PRACTICES - none

V. UPDATES

Watson provided the following updates:

- Finances: State revenues continue to be down. The number of State Department of Revenue auditors is down to 250, which will narrow their focus.
- Hilton Garden Inn and Pivot Point Conference Center contractor payments: The City received notice from Craig Clark that funds have been sent to the contractor, Summit Builders, who will disburse the payments this week. This represents the final billing, leaving only the retention funds.


VI. ADJOURNMENT/EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion (Beeson/Nicholls): To adjourn to Executive Session. Voice vote: **adopted** 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 3:54 p.m.



Brigitta M. Kuiper, City Clerk

APPROVED:



Lawrence K. Nelson, Mayor

Approved at the City Council Meeting of:
10.7.2009
DEPUTY
City Clerk: 