

**CITY OF SURPRISE
GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY GROUP
MEETING NO. 6
MEETING MINUTES**

**April 11, 2023
6:00-8:00 PM**

**Council Chambers Community Room
16000 N Civic Center Plaza, Surprise, AZ 85374**

GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #6

GPAG MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anthony Robinson, Parks & Recreation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jeff Gibbs, COS Resident | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mitchell Rosenbaum, Planning & Zoning Comm. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chris McComb, Imagine Prep. Academy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Breading-Goodrich, COS Resident | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Phillips, Developer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daniel Gyorffy, COS Resident | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kent Xander, Land Broker | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Doolittle, COS Resident |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dennis Tyner, Ottawa University | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Margaret Lieu, Arts Commission | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Susan Draper, COS Resident |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holly Medina, West Mec | <input type="checkbox"/> Mark James, Luke AFB | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Taylor Earl, Land Use Attorney |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jay Leonard, COS Resident | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Boule, COS Water Resource Mgmt. Director | <input type="checkbox"/> William Lally, Land Use Attorney |

CITY OF SURPRISE STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jason Moquin, Planning Manager | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lloyd Abrams, Comm. Dev. Director |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trever Fleetham, Planner-Senior | |

MICHAEL BAKER INTERNATIONAL (CONSULTANT STAFF) IN ATTENDANCE:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Matthew Klyszeiko, Consultant Project Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> Steven Sifferman, Consultant Planner |
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General Plan Advisory Group (GPAG) Meeting convened at 6:00 P.M.

Current Events and Reports:

Planning Manager Moquin reviewed recent, current, and planned efforts outlined below:
Joint City Council/Planning and Zoning Commission Workshop on February 23, 2023
State of the City Address on March 30, 2023

Consent Agenda:

Item No 1. Consideration and action to approve the General Plan Advisory Group Meeting Minutes of February 15, 2023.

Approved

Regular Agenda Item – Non-Public Hearing:

Item No 2. Arts & Culture – Arts & Culture presentation and Discussion.

Consultant Klyszeiko of Michael Baker International introduced Connie Whitlock of WHAM Art Association who presented on the impact that Arts & Culture activities have for a community. She put forth that nonprofit arts and culture organizations act as economic drivers, creating an industry that supports jobs, generates government revenue, and is the cornerstone of the tourism industry. She stated that cities that emphasize art benefit through more civic engagement, better child welfare, and lower poverty rates. Additionally, arts and culture have a great impact in economic development terms

since participation in arts by fostering and incubating the essential skills and leadership needed in today's world. Ultimately, art organizations are funded from a combination of earned income and contributed revenue mostly from private organizations, but a small percentage from government support. Investing in art locally helps further the creative economy and the expansion of creative enterprises and occupations. Art organizations in Surprise include Groundfloor Artists, Musical Surprise, Stage Left Productions, West Valley Arts HQ, and WHAM.

Arts & Culture Discussion

The open discussion among the GPAG committee began in agreement that there has been a recent loss of interest in locally supporting art, however, the committee agreed that the Surprise community needs to emphasize art in order to generate local support, especially among young people. The definition of Art as understood by the City should include music and culture. This expanded definition should come across in the General Plan. Margaret Lieu, who sits on the Surprise Art Commission, expressed her vision of building an art center as a landmark for the City of Surprise.

Item No 3. OPEN SPACE – Open Space Presentation and Discussion.

Consultant Klyszeiko of Michael Baker International introduced the Open Space Component of the current General Plan. He summarized the six opportunities for open space conservation and access and the current trails framework of greenways, wash corridors, and created corridors that connected the community together and connect the people to the natural surroundings. Wildlife corridors were also discussed in light of the threat of total isolation of the White Tanks Mountains. Natural corridors to and through the mountain range are critical to a healthy ecosystem and thriving community. Within the land use of the current General Plan is the Open Space designation, which includes public and privately held lands that are intended to be preserved for natural areas, conservation areas and/or trail and other regional recreational facilities. Additionally, the Scenic Lands Development Sub Area is noted in the land use plan and consists of approximately 68,000 acres (over one-third of the Surprise Planning Area) of unique and scenic qualities that are only found in these pristine natural settings

Open Space Discussion

The GPAG committee discussed on how there is no need for drastically changing the approach to open space preservation and wildlife corridors from the current General Plan. While the current General Plan is good, the open space land needs to be protected. This is due in part to the developed portions of the City not having as much open space as compared to the more rural areas. Perhaps Surprise should look to ways for transitioning land along McMicken Dam to preserve that area as open space. Also, the updated General Plan should include clarifying language between created and natural open space.

Item No 4. HOUSING – HOUSING Presentation and Discussion.

Consultant Klyszeiko of Michael Baker International summarized the City's resources for housing and the most recent statistics available for housing in the community. The current median sale price is \$406,000, according to Redfin as of April 2023. A recent study in November 2022 of the top 200 cities from SmartAsset ranked Surprise as the #1 destination where more young residents are buying homes. The presentation also delineated the difference between Housing Affordability and Housing Opportunity. Housing Affordability is when the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities as defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Housing Opportunity is focused on secure, stable, and attainable housing in areas of opportunity. Provides for a range of housing that considers neighborhood characteristics such as transportation options, proximity to jobs, educational resources, etc. to balance all needs associated with housing (including affordability).

Housing Discussion

The GPAG committee endorsed the phrasing of the goal for Surprise to “be a home for everyone.” The committee further noted how it is interesting that there is broad community acceptance of the terms “affordable/attainable/workforce” housing. It only becomes locally contentious when discussing the siting of these types of housing options. While there is more acceptance of these terms than anticipated, they should be used cautiously since some people may interpret the terms as a subtle way of promoting increased density in the City. The committee concluded this discussion by settling that it is important for the General Plan to define a framework for addressing a diversity of housing options for all people as well as including a path for how all types of housing can “fit” in the community.

Item No. 5: SELECTION OF GPAG CHAIR & VICE CHAIR

After closing last discussion topic on Housing, Consultant Klyszeiko of Michael Baker International turned the meeting back over to Planning Manager Moquin who introduced next agenda item selecting Chair and Vice Chair for the GPAG.

Planning Manager Moquin explained completion of the series of GPAG informational meetings (mtgs 1-6). At this point the General Plan Update process is transitioning to a Committee led approach for remaining time of the General Plan development and ratification process. Planning Manager Moquin then explained what the role of the Chair and Vice Chair would include.

- After group discussion, a motion was made to recommend Mr. Steve Doolittle as GPAG Committee Chair.
- Mr. Doolittle thanked the Committee for the recommendation and followed up with clarifying questions on his newly accepted role and its responsibilities.
- Following further discussion, a motion was made and seconded to elect Mr. Doolittle as GPAG Committee Chair. There was unanimous approval from the committee.
- The group discussion then transitioned to electing a Vice-Chair. A motion was made and seconded to elect Ms. Margaret Lieu as GPAG Committee Vice Chair. There was unanimous approval from the committee.

To close the meeting Planning Manager Moquin then facilitated a brief discussion with the Committee to help guide discussions with the newly appointed Chair and Vice-Chair regarding the agenda and format of GPAG Mtg #7.

ADJOURNMENT:

General Plan Advisory Group adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

The foregoing instrument is a full, true and correct copy of the original document.

ATTEST BY: _____
Jason Moquin, Planning Manager

DATE: May 2, 2023