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Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

The following are summary minutes for the meeting of the **Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee** for Tuesday, August 13, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at the City of Las Cruces, City Hall, Room 3138, 700 North Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Members Present:

- Harvey Gordon, Member
- Sharon Thomas, Chair
- Mary Ann Hendrickson, Vice Chair
- Luis Armando Guerrero, Member
- Russ Smith, Member
- Heather Watenpaugh, Member
- John Moscato, Member
- George Vescovo, Member
- Todd Stuve, Member

Members Absent:

- James Bennett, Member
- Abraham Sanchez, Member
- La Vonne Muniz, Member
- Christina Ainsworth, Member

Staff Present:

- Larry Nichols, Community Development
- David Weir, Community Development
- Srijana Basnyat, Community Development
- John Castillo, Community Development
- Dominic Loya, Community Development
- Mark Miller, Community Development
- Marie Helwig, Community Development
- Robert Cabello, City Attorney

Others Present:

- Jim Carrillo, Halff Associates
- Christian Lentz, Halff Associates
- Kendall Howard, Halff Associates

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes

1 **1. May 29, 2019**

2 Mary Ann Hendrickson motioned to table the minutes until next meeting to add
3 additional clarification. Harvey Gordon seconded the motion. The motion
4 passed 7-2.

5
6 **III. Project Status and Update**

7
8 **1. May Design Workshop**

9 Halff Associates reviewed the project status and discussed their ongoing tasks.
10 They recapped the design workshop that took place in May and discussed the
11 big ideas. The big ideas that they noted were making downtown vibrant and
12 multi-generational, new development should create great places, streets
13 should be safe, comfortable and interesting for walkers and bikers, there should
14 be increased access to nature and buildings should be sustainable, and a
15 promoting a prosperous, but affordable city.

16
17 Jim Carrillo presented sample policies and actions that would help make
18 downtown scenarios a reality. He noted that the policies and actions are the
19 heart of the Comprehensive Plan moving forward and will need the citizen
20 board to tie it all together. Christian Lentz stated that as the place types evolve,
21 more information will be provided. Halff noted that the final document will
22 incorporate images and captions to help visually guide.

23
24 CPAC members asked for clarification on the connection between zoning and
25 place types and asked if there would be rezoning conflicts down the road. Halff
26 Associates briefly went over the differences and clarified that the
27 Comprehensive Plan would not invalidate zoning but would guide future
28 development with continual review and updates.

29
30 Another CPAC member asked what would happen if the market trends are
31 contrary to what the Comprehensive Plan and place types are showing. Halff
32 Associates expressed that every city needs to provide guidance to steer the
33 ship and this is the process in which the City provides direction. They noted
34 that this plan is long-range but will continually be reviewed and updated.

35
36 Halff Associates presented a sample conservation neighborhood shown
37 previously at the design workshop which included clustered homes, green
38 space, preserved arroyos, and potential commercial or retail options centrally
39 located. They noted the importance of creating complete neighborhoods with a
40 sense of community and discussed a handful of policies that would encourage
41 development in line with conservation neighborhoods.

42
43 Halff Associates presented street-views of Solano Drive/Idaho Avenue and
44 Telshor Boulevard with potential urban corridor development and suggested
45 policies. They showed the Mesilla Valley Mall as an example of a potential town

1 center after a phased transition. They noted that these examples all represent
2 changes that could be viable in the future and noted that the specific policies
3 and action items would direct people towards these types of changes.
4

5 **IV. Discussion Items –**

6 **1. Future Development Map**

7
8 **a. Review of Committee and Staff Comments:** Jim Carrillo briefly noted that
9 comments received from the CPAC prior to the meeting had been included
10 in their packets. He stated that there had been some updates made to
11 address some of the concerns.
12

13 **b. Review of Input from Citizen Survey:** Halff Associates noted that they will
14 provide a public engagement summary to provide an overview of the survey
15 responses.
16

17 **c. Place Type Refinements:** Halff Associates presented an updated version
18 of the Future Development Map and noted the place type changes made
19 from the version shown at the May meeting: industrial park/airport at the
20 request of City Administration and future plans; outside city limits in the river
21 valley changed from Rural Reserve to Rural Neighborhood; Regional
22 Commercial on N. Main, E. Lohman and Valley Drive. They pointed out a
23 noticeable change in the East Mesa area of the city where the Rural
24 Neighborhood and Rural Reserve place types were expanded further to the
25 east. They pointed out that the distribution of neighborhood centers was
26 another significant change.
27

28 There was discussion as to how the neighborhood center locations were
29 identified: existing conditions, future active transportation network, public
30 transportation and other existing overlays and plans. Halff Associates noted
31 that they had roughly one mile spacing between centers which was
32 consistent with the growth potential and development patterns of the city.
33

34 **d. Proposed Future Development Map Refinements for Discussion:**

35 There was a lengthy discussion regarding the East Mesa area and whether
36 the Suburban Neighborhood place type should be extended further east.
37 Halff Associates expressed concerns with extending the place type further.
38 Halff Associates noted that they believed that the projected growth could be
39 captured within the shown boundary with a mixture and balance of housing
40 types. They reminded the CPAC that the concentration of growth shown in
41 the Future Development Map is related to the scenario planning done with
42 City Council and that the consensus reached is reflected in the map. Some

1 CPAC members expressed concerns that this was restricting future
2 development demands. Other CPAC members were concerned that
3 expanding the suburban neighborhood place type in this section would take
4 focus away from infill and downtown development.
5

6 There were various opinions of the CPAC members regarding the East
7 Mesa. Jim Carrillo asked each CPAC member to express their opinions on
8 this matter:

- 9 • Todd Stuve noted the importance of creating a plan that would give
10 guidance to City officials to encourage different types of development
11 and thought that the only area that should be switched to suburban
12 neighborhood is around Centennial High School.
- 13 • George Vescovo recommended shifting each place type slightly
14 towards the east to transition into the open space. He believed that
15 the small section around Centennial High School should be included
16 in the place type as well.
- 17 • John Moscato recognized the shortage of affordable housing and
18 asked for greater City support with these projects. He expressed his
19 belief that the future land use map should include suburban growth
20 along the East Mesa extending entirely to the city limits to ensure
21 development is not restricted.
- 22 • Heather Watenpaugh stated she agrees with the map as shown to
23 allow for the support of the town and neighborhood centers.
- 24 • Russ Smith stated that the suburban neighborhood line should be
25 pushed to City limits, while still advocating for infill development.
- 26 • Luis Armando Guerrero stated he would like to see more focus on
27 infill development to allow for more options closer to downtown. He
28 recommended moving the suburban neighborhood place type further
29 east.
- 30 • Mary Ann Hendrickson addressed her concerns including the lack of
31 affordable housing, the need for a variety of housing types, climate
32 change and resource conservation. She stated she agrees with the
33 current representation in the future development.
- 34 • Sharon Thomas asked to see more incentives and opportunities for
35 infill development and alternative housing options and additional
36 ways to encourage affordable housing. She stated she supports
37 moving the suburban neighborhood line slightly to the east.
- 38 • Harvey Gordon said he supports moving the suburban neighborhood
39 line east completely to the City limits to avoid having to change it in
40 the future.

41
42 SHORT RECESS - 11:03-11:09

43
44 **2. Working Plan Actions Review**

1 **a. Purpose and Organization of Action Items:** Halff Associates provided an
2 overview of the remaining portion of the meeting. They noted the
3 importance of the policies and actions which provide guidance for
4 implementation moving forward. They noted the three subcommittees
5 corresponding to the themes of Elevate Las Cruces: prosperity, livability and
6 environment. They noted that these subcommittees would meet the same
7 week to discuss goals, policies, and actions.
8

9 **b. Review of Working Action Items (by theme) and comments by CPAC**
10 **members**

- 11 • **Community Prosperity:** the CPAC discussed adding creative
12 partnerships (intergovernmental, private-private, City-private) as
13 well as including the Chamber and MVEDA to Policy 4.2. They
14 discussed focusing on growth and attraction in addition to
15 retention in Policy 4.1. The CPAC discussed considering the
16 entire region in terms of economic prosperity throughout this
17 section.
- 18 • **Community Livability:** The CPAC asked for added emphasis on
19 community identity in Goal 12. They noted the need for improved
20 connection to the university and art community in Goal 24. Also
21 noted was the potential to open art studios without business
22 licenses to increase opportunities for the art community. They
23 also expressed the need for cool corridors throughout the entire
24 city, not just particular areas (action 20.4.2). They discussed
25 certain developments, including the Hacienda Acres, where
26 emergency services access needed improvement.
- 27 • **Community Environment:** The CPAC recommended providing
28 incentives for alternative energy sources in Goals 38 and 39.
29 They discussed allowing for flexibility regarding upper floor
30 housing in action 34.1.4 since it may not be economically feasible
31 in all situations. Some CPAC members expressed concerns
32 about the economic impact of added regulations on development.
33 Other CPAC members wanted the focus on infill development
34 with the emphasis on the downtown district. The CPAC asked for
35 food deserts to be addressed and added to the policies or goals.
36 The CPAC asked for clarification regarding building orientation
37 towards the street (35.1.6). Halff Associates clarified that the
38 intent of this section is to create a sense of enclosure and to
39 conceal parking areas. The CPAC questioned whether screening
40 of rooftop units is necessary and noted the importance of water
41 resource conservation. They asked for improved connectivity
42 between neighborhoods to be addressed in Goal 33.
43

44 **V. Public Comment Period**
45

1 No public comments were received.

2

3 **VI. Next Steps**

4

5 Half Associates requested that any additional comments be sent to Staff by
6 Wednesday, August 21st.

7

8 **VII. Adjournment**

9

10 Russ Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. George Vescovo seconded the motion.
11 The motion passed 8-0. The meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

12

DRAFT