



# CITY OF MERCED ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE FOCUS GROUP

## MINUTES

Merced Civic Center  
First Floor Sam Pipes Room

678 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Thursday, January 30, 2014  
8:15 a.m.

### **Mission of Focus Group**

Update the Zoning Ordinance to be more user-friendly and easier to understand for the Community.

#### A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson LOGUE called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m.

#### B. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Christina Alley, Ann Andersen, Todd Bender, Kenra Bragonier, Adam Cox, Loren Gonella, Flip Hassett, Jack Lesch, Bruce Logue, Elmer Lorenzi, and Stan Thurston

Members Absent: Jim Abbate, Ron Ewing, Tony Dossetti, Ron Ewing, Forrest Hansen, Guy Maxwell, Carol McCoy, Michelle Paloutzian, Garth Pecchenino, Joe Ramirez, Mike Salvadori, Brandon Williams, and Jim Xu

Staff Present: Director of Development Services David Gonzalves, Planning Manager Kim Espinosa, and Recording Secretary Terri Lucas

#### C. APPROVAL OF ACTION MINUTES

M/S LORENZI-HASSETT, and carried by unanimous voice vote (13 absent), to approve the Minutes of December 12, 2013, as submitted.

#### C1. COMMUNICATIONS

Chairperson LOGUE allowed a member of the audience to speak to the group.

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Sharon DICKER, representing LWH Farms, LLC, Merced, read into the record a letter encouraging the group to take the opportunity to allow more flexibility in the zoning, design guidelines and master plans rather than forcing development into a stricter Urban Village concept. For further information, refer to the letter submitted by Ms. HUNT.

### D. ITEMS

#### 1. Finish Review of Modified Ordinance for Commercial, Industrial, Public Use/Agricultural, and Special Use Zoning Districts.

The Group discussed the Industrial Zoning Districts and whether there should be a minimum lot size for Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial to preclude an industrial use building on a small lot adjacent to residential. They also discussed the performance standards and a definition for infrequent noise and what kind of mitigation could be required to address any noise issues.

The Group next discussed Public Use and Agricultural Zoning Districts. In response to questions from the group, Planning Manager ESPINOSA explained that there is not currently a zone for public use and the uses sometimes do not fit well in a commercial or residential zone. With a new zone of Public Use, uses such as parks or fire departments would have a specific zone applicable to the use. Currently most are zoned residential.

Regarding Special Use Zoning Districts, Ms. ESPINOSA explained that the only change to Urban Transition was to reorganize it so it was easier to understand. Regarding Planning Development zoning, the process for a revision would be streamlined.

The Group had previously discussed still requiring the Conditional Use Permit process for projects that are built sometime after the original Site Utilization Plan was adopted. Group Member ALLEY said that it sometimes takes several years to put together the financing for a project and suggested a longer period of time than the two years previously suggested. The Group felt that if the project is still consistent with the original plan then a longer period of time to proceed could be allowed with the ability to allow extensions at staff level, allowing 1-3 years more.

Regarding the Glossary, the Focus Group made the following suggestions:

- Add a definition for Community Gardens;

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- Add a definition for Farmers Market (distinct from Flea Market);
- Define appropriate areas for horticultural nurseries;
- Street and Sidewalk Vending definition narrowed to food vending; and,
- Consider making Bike Rentals separate from Vehicle Sales and Rentals.

Ms. ESPINOSA noted that the consultant had included some definitions that are not necessary and staff will likely remove some definitions.

## 2. Review of Draft Downtown & Urban Village Districts and Possible Re-Zonings in Downtown Area

The Focus Group discussed the design and setback requirements for the downtown zoning districts. The Group felt that there should be more flexibility regarding setbacks, number of windows, etc. to fit the project and location.

## 3. Overview of Draft Parts 3 (General Regulations) & 4 (Permits & Administration)

Chairperson LOGUE asked staff to prepare questions for the next meeting so the Focus Group can be prepared to discuss those specific items to move through the review of these sections more quickly.

The Group discussed the comments made by Ms. HUNT regarding the Urban Village Concept. Focus Group Member THURSTON said that the Village Concept was too restrictive and that this Focus Group should see the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan before making final recommendations on the Zoning Ordinance Update. Focus Group Members GONELLA and ALLEY said that staff should proceed with a draft and Ms. ALLEY suggested a notation that it was a draft only and there would still be opportunity for review and modification later.

Focus Group Member LESCH noted that without the Urban Village Zone, the only zoning alternative would be Planned Developments.

Director of Development Services GONZALVES explained that the Focus Group code review is just a step in the process and the Group should not recommend a zoning code without including all the land uses defined in the General Plan. One of the goals of the Zoning Code Update was to establish zoning districts for Business Parks, Urban Villages, etc., that are in the

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General Plan but not in the current code. That gives more options to developers when requesting zoning.

4. Scheduling Future Meetings

The Group discussed meeting again on February 13, and set a tentative date of March 6, 2014, if an additional meeting is needed. Focus Group Member GONELLA agreed with staff's recommendation that they put together a full draft document so the Group can still have input and comment but have the ability to be flexible and move forward with their review.

E. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 a.m. to the next meeting on Thursday, February 13, 2014, at 8:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*/s/ David Gonzalves*

David Gonzalves, Secretary  
Zoning Ordinance Update

APPROVED:

Bruce Logue, Chairperson  
Zoning Ordinance Update