

**TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY
JOINT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
TOWN COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION
DECEMBER 17, 2013**

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor Abel called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Council Members Present: Abel, Huntington, Leone, Rowe and Mayor Lombardo

Planning Commissioners Present: Bridenstine, Drozd, Lavender, Whitten, and Chair Humphreville

Staff Present: Deputy Town Manager Stueckle, Administrative Services Director Yakimow, Police Captain Boswell, Town Attorney Laymon, and Town Clerk Copeland

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council Member Huntington moved to approve the Agenda for the Special Joint Meeting of the Yucca Valley Town Council and the Yucca Valley Planning Commission. Council Member Leone seconded. Motion carried 5-0 (Town Council), 5-0 (Planning Commission) on a voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Lombardo opened public comment on items not on the agenda. With no members of the public wishing to speak, Mayor Lombardo closed public comments.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Town of Yucca Valley General Plan Update and Draft Environmental Impact Report

Mayor Lombardo opened the public hearing for the Town of Yucca Valley General Plan Update and Draft Environmental Impact Report.

Deputy Town Manager Stueckle presented an overview of previous General Plan Update document review and introduced Wendy Grant and Nicole Vermilion from the Planning Center.

Wendy Grant and Nicole Vermilion explained that they are bringing back items of discussion from the prior public hearing. These items include the wildlife corridor evaluation area, biological resources, water supply and demand, scenic highway designation and existing and proposed bicycle facilities. A comparison of goals and policies of Biological Resources between the 1995 version of the General Plan and the proposed update were presented.

Deputy Town Manager Stueckle expressed that it is staff's recommendation to continue the public

hearing until the meeting of January 7, 2014 to allow for staff to consider comments and feedback from the public hearing and bring back an updated draft document on January 7, 2014.

Mayor Lombardo opened public comment.

John Pavelak, Rialto, CA spoke of the complexity of the document, and suggested an additional review of the biological resource area near the corner of La Contenta and Yucca Trail.

Art Miller, Jr., Yucca Valley commented on the biological corridor designations and the process of development in these areas.

Ramon Mendoza, Morongo Valley spoke of concern of the process, as the community isn't following the original General Plan and stated he is in favor of the Alternative B option for recommendation.

Fritz Koenig, Yucca Valley spoke of designated biking lanes, especially along SR 247 and commented on street locations identified on the General Plan maps.

Margo Sturges commented on the lack of collaboration and public outreach in creating the updated General Plan and questioned special policy area designations.

With no other members of the public wishing to speak, Mayor Lombardo closed the public hearing.

Wendy Grant commented on the benefits of using graphics and maps within the General Plan for ease of use, and transparency

Greg Mason, a biologist working with the Planning Center, explained the biological study process how biological findings relate to the corridors included in the General Plan.

Council Member Rowe commented on the lack of designated bike lanes in specific areas and questioned the cost of additional study requirements for developers of property in designated biological corridor areas.

Planning Chair Humphreville commented on property owner's rights.

Planning Commissioner Bridenstine suggested including reference to specific agency requirement for biological area designations.

Planning Commissioner Drozd suggested using a geological map for the biological areas to explain unique land characteristics.

Wendy Grant clarified that the wildlife corridor areas are based on recent biological studies by the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project and the California Desert Connectivity Project. Council Member Leone gave examples of Department of Fish and Game requirements.

Council Member Abel inquired on the feasibility of conducting a more specific study to get a higher level of detail within the biological corridor areas.

Greg Mason explained that the biological corridor designations came directly from a federal study and described the process of studies and how they relate to individual projects.

Mayor Pro Tem Huntington stated the benefits of including these maps within the General Plan and noted that the requirements of developing property within biological areas will need to be defined.

Planning Commissioner Lavender questioned the mileage between the Town of Yucca Valley limits and the Marine Base. Deputy Town Manager explained that the mileage is “as the crow flies” at the nearest point.

Planning Commissioner Bridenstine commented on the challenges of Scenic Highway Designations and was in favor of the document’s current language.

Planning Commissioner Whitten commented on the lack of equestrian trails toward the Pioneertown area and questioned the updated acreage totals. Wendy Grant explained with technology advances, the updated totals are more accurate than previous documentation.

Mayor Lombardo reopened the public hearing to continue until January 7, 2014 at 6 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Huntington moved to continue the public hearing for the Town of Yucca Valley General Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report until Tuesday, January 7, 2014 at 6 p.m. Council Member Leone seconded. Motion carried Motion carried 5-0 (Town Council), 5-0 (Planning Commission) on a voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Mayor Lombardo adjourned the Special Joint Meeting at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lesley Copeland, CMC
Town Clerk