

**GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 20, 2004 MINUTES
7:00 P.M. to 9:35 P.M.**

The regularly scheduled Planning Commission hearing was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Vice-Chairman Roland Cole. The public hearing was held in the City Hall Auditorium.

In attendance, representing the City Planning Commission, were Roland Cole (Vice-Chairman), John Evans, John Redifer, Bill Pitts, Travis Cox (alternate) and Tom Lowrey (alternate). Chairman Paul Dibble, John Paulson and William Putnam were absent.

In attendance, representing the City's Community Development Department, were Bob Blanchard (Community Development Director), Kathy Portner (Planning Manager), Lori Cox (Senior Planner), Scott Peterson (Associate Planner), Senta Costello (Associate Planner) and Ronnie Edwards (Associate Planner).

Also present were Jamie Kreiling (Staff Attorney) and Rick Dorris and Eric Hahn (Development Engineers).

Terri Troutner was present to record the minutes.

There were 27 interested citizens present during the course of the hearing.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Available for consideration were the minutes from the March 9, 2004 public hearing.

MOTION: (Commissioner Pitts) "Mr. Chairman, I move that we accept the minutes of March 9, 2004 as written."

Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS, PRESENTATIONS AND/OR VISITORS

There were no announcements, presentations and/or visitors.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

Offered for placement on the Consent Agenda were items PP-2003-122 (Preliminary Plan--Antietam Subdivision), CUP-2004-033 (Conditional Use Permit--Mesa State T-Mobile Co-Locate), VE-2004-015 (Vacation of an Easement and Plan Amendment--Spanish Trails), ANX-2004-032 (Zone of Annexation--Chipeta Glenn Annexation), ANX-2004-052 (Zone of Annexation--Grand Valley Audubon Annexation), RZ-2004-023 (Rezone--Old Orchard Estates), and CUP-2004-005 (Conditional Use Permit--Community First National Bank). At citizen request, items PP-2003-122, ANX-2004-052, RZ-2004-023, and CUP-2004-005 were pulled from Consent and placed on the Full Hearing Agenda.

MOTION: (Commissioner Pitts) "Mr. Chairman, I move for the approval of items 2, 3, and 4 (CUP-2004-033, VE-2004-015, and ANX-2004-032), [that they] be approved as written."

Commissioner Cox seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

IV. FULL HEARING

PP-2003-122 PRELIMINARY PLAN--ANTIETAM SUBDIVISION

A request for approval to develop 23 lots on 9.06 acres.

Petitioner: Dale Cole

Location: 260 and 262 26 1/4 Road

STAFF'S PRESENTATION

Scott Peterson gave a PowerPoint presentation containing the following slides: 1) site location map; 2) aerial location map; 3) Existing City and County Zoning Map; 4) Preliminary Plan; 5) Future Land Use Map; 6) findings and conclusions, and 7) recommendation. Gettysburg Street would serve as the development's primary access, with a street stub (Vicksburg Avenue) to the east also proposed. Detention areas and easements were also noted. The property had undergone recent annexation into the City. A letter of opposition had been received from Loretta Danford (268 26 1/4 Road, Grand Junction) whose objections included: 1) 26 1/4 Road was a privately used street and City-posted with No Trespassing signage; 2) safety of pedestrians and school children who are forced to utilize Canon Street, which was a minimally-maintained roadway; 3) limited sight distance from the proposed subdivision onto 26 1/4 Road; 4) traffic impacts to 26 1/4 Road; 5) wildlife impacts; and 6) adverse impacts to the character of the area. Ms. Danford also asked that if the item were approved, that the developer be responsible for constructing a 6-foot-high privacy fence along her property line to buffer her property from the development.

Having determined that the request met both Code criteria and Growth Plan recommendations, staff recommended approval.

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Pat O'Connor, representing the petitioner, offered nothing further but availed himself for questions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

FOR:

There were no comments for the request.

AGAINST:

Mark Danford (268 26 1/4 Road, Grand Junction, CO 81503) expressed concerns over the loss of views, increases in noise, impacts to wildlife habitat, loss of security and privacy, and quality of life impacts. He reiterated the request of his wife, that if the item were approved, the developer construct a 6-foot-high privacy fence to screen the development along his property line. He felt that the City would incur an additional financial burden resulting from the increased maintenance of 26 1/4 Road. He asked that primary access into the site be via Vicksburg Avenue to the east. Mr. Danford noted the presence of an irrigation pipe on the site, which delivered irrigation water to him and other neighbors. He wanted some assurance that water delivery would not be interrupted. There were many unresolved issues associated with the request, he said; a decision on the request should be postponed until all outstanding concerns were resolved.

Cindy Rogers (256 26 1/4 Road, Grand Junction, CO 81503) said that in some places 26 1/4 Road was only 13-foot wide. The corner near her home afforded insufficient sight distance, posing a danger to pedestrians and vehicular traffic alike. She wondered how such a narrow road would be able to handle

traffic increases when the road could barely handle current traffic flows. On Memorial Day people already had a difficult time finding parking spaces along 26 1/4 Road. It was unreasonable to force the elderly to walk greater distances to the cemetery.

Larry Neilson (256 26 1/4 Road, Grand Junction, CO 81503) noted the location of his property said that hydrologic testing had been undertaken to the south of his property approximately 3 years prior. The report received pointed out areas of instability and underground seepage, which could impact the proposed development.

PETITIONER'S REBUTTAL

Mr. O'Connor suggested that City engineering staff respond to citizen traffic safety concerns. With approximately 20 feet of asphalt, he felt that 26 1/4 Road was capable of handling the traffic needs of current and future property owners. No privacy fencing was proposed by the petitioner to buffer the Danford's property. The Vicksburg street stub could not connect to the adjacent Cimarron Mesa Subdivision until the westernmost portion of that parcel developed. Irrigation lines and easements would be respected; there would be no disturbance of downstream flows.

QUESTIONS

Vice-Chairman Cole asked Mr. O'Connor if he was aware of any of the hydrologic issues referenced previously by Mr. Neilson. Mr. O'Connor responded that the subject property had undergone analysis, with nothing adverse found.

When Vice-Chairman Cole asked if homes would all be single story, Mr. O'Connor replied that he was unsure.

Eric Hahn addressed 26 1/4 Road issues by saying that the asphalt mat width was between 20 and 22 feet, the approximate width of a standard county road. He agreed that the development would probably result in doubling traffic counts along 26 1/4 Road. Referencing tracts D and E, he noted that the 50-foot spacing between them was sufficient to accommodate both shared driveways.

Commissioner Cox asked if expected increases in 26 1/4 Road traffic took into account future traffic impacts generated by the Cimarron Mesa project. Mr. Hahn responded negatively, adding that while he had not personally conducted the analysis of 26 1/4 Road, Traffic Department staff had told him that resultant traffic increases should be "easily" handled.

Commissioner Cox asked if any City-sponsored street improvements were planned for 26 1/4 Road. Mr. Hahn said that nothing had been included in the City's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) budget. He predicted that additional traffic volumes would generate an increase in citizen requests for improvements, which would then be reviewed by the City.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Pitts agreed with staff's position that the request met both Code criteria and Growth Plan recommendations, and that it represented good infill. However, given the number and scope of citizen concerns, he agreed that additional mitigation of 26 1/4 Road concerns was warranted. There were driveways that looked better than the present condition of 26 1/4 Road.

Commissioner Pitts hoped that if the project were approved, some of the traffic impact fees would go towards mitigation of safety concerns, and that the necessary improvements would be made to 26 1/4 Road. He expressed support for the project.

Commissioner Cox concurred, also voicing his support for the project.

Vice-Chairman Cole said that with regard to concerns expressed about on-street parking during Memorial Day, it would be unfair to deny a project based on the traffic impacts of a single holiday. Approval of any development request had to consider its overall benefits to the community. He felt confident that any outstanding issues would be mitigated by staff during the Final Plan development stage.

MOTION: (Commissioner Cox) "Mr. Chairman, on item PP-2003-122, request for Preliminary Plat approval for the Antietam Subdivision, I move that we approve the Preliminary Plat subject to staff conditions, with the findings and conclusions as outlined by staff."

Commissioner Pitts seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

ANX-2004-052 ZONE OF ANNEXATION--GRAND VALLEY AUDUBON ANNEXATION

A request for approval to zone 55 acres from County RSF-R (Residential Single-Family, Rural) to a City CSR (Community Services and Recreation) zone district.

Petitioner: Grand Valley Audubon Society, Steve Watson

Location: 605, 607, 608, and 610 Dike Road

STAFF'S PRESENTATION

Senta Costello gave a PowerPoint presentation containing the following slides: 1) site location map; 2) aerial photo map; 3) Future Land Use Map; and 4) an Existing City and County Zoning Map. She briefly overviewed the request. Having concluded that it met both Code criteria and Growth Plan recommendations, staff recommended approval.

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Steve Watson, current president of the Audubon Society (720 Wedge Drive, Grand Junction CO 81506), said that between 30 and 50 percent of the property was under water. Thus, it was perfectly suited for a wildlife and bird habitat. Approximately 5 to 6 acres of Tamarisk and other unwanted vegetation had been removed to make room for plantings of native vegetation. The site was perfect for educating school children.

QUESTIONS

When Commissioner Cox asked how the site would be accessed, Mr. Watson provided clarification.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

FOR:

There were no comments for the request.

AGAINST:

Jane Maxin (600 Dike Road, Grand Junction) said that a meeting was held last year by State of Colorado staff, who were proposing to install a gate in the dike (location noted) to help preserve endangered fish. She was concerned that the area would be subject to additional flooding, and questioned whether the Audubon Society really owned the property. When she expressed confusion over what assigning a Zone of Annexation meant, Vice-Chairman Cole provided clarification. He added that this was the wrong forum for voicing opposition to a State-proposed program.

PETITIONER'S REBUTTAL

Mr. Watson reaffirmed the Audubon's ownership of the subject property and clarified that the meeting of which Ms. Maxin spoke was one hosted by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation as part of their fish recovery project for endangered fish. The dike gate and resultant flooding of adjacent ponds had been proposed so that fish would have a place to spawn. That proposed program had nothing to do with the Zone of Annexation request.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Pitts agreed that the request met both Code requirements and Growth Plan recommendations and saw no reason to withhold support.

Commissioner Evans agreed.

MOTION: (Commissioner Evans) "Mr. Chairman, on Zone of Annexation ANX-2004-052, I move that the Planning Commission forward the Zone of Annexation to City Council with the recommendation of the Community Services and Recreation (CSR) district for the Grand Valley Audubon Annexation, with the facts and conclusions listed in the staff report."

Commissioner Pitts seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

RZ-2004-023 REZONE--OLD ORCHARD ESTATES

A request for approval to rezone 13 acres from RSF-R (Residential Single-Family, Rural) to an RSFR-2 (Residential Single-Family, 2 units/acre) zone district.

Petitioner: Northwest Plateau Development, Inc.--Steve Hejl

Location: 774 Old Orchard Road

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Tom Dixon, (405 Ridges Blvd, Grand Junction CO 81503) representing the petitioner, referenced the site's location on a map entitled "Existing City and County Zoning Map," and briefly overviewed the request. As part of the Paradise Hills #2 Annexation in 1994, parcels with redevelopment potential had been annexed into the City with their existing County zoning designations, with the understanding that a rezone would be necessary at the time of development. The subject property had been annexed with the County zoning designation of RSF-R. The proposed City RSF-2 zone district was consistent with Growth Plan recommendations, and it had received staff's support.

STAFF'S PRESENTATION

Lisa Cox gave a PowerPoint presentation containing the following slides: 1) site location map; 2) aerial photo map; 3) Future Land Use Map; 4) Existing City and County Zoning Map; 5) background; 6) findings and conclusions. Having concluded that the request met both Code criteria and Growth Plan recommendations, staff recommended forwarding a recommendation of approval on to City Council.

QUESTIONS

Commissioner Pitts wondered why available maps referenced Old Orchard Road and G 3/4 Road when, in fact, neither road existed. Ms. Cox answered that a single-lane private driveway originating from 26 1/2 Road served as access to the petitioner's home situated on the property. The Old Orchard Road had never been constructed but there was some evidence that the right-of-way once existed in the County. A right-of-way vacation request had at one time been submitted to Mesa County and approved with conditions; however, the conditions had never been met. Although the actual right-of-way was never constructed, the petitioner would have to demonstrate prior to development of the property that a

vacation had actually been completed. If there remained any question, the City would require the petitioner to undergo its own right-of-way vacation process.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

FOR:

There were no comments for the request.

AGAINST:

Robert Ruth (773 26 ½ Road, Grand Junction, CO 81506) noted the location of his property to the east of the site and said that he and his wife had granted the property's former owner, Cliff Mays, an access easement through their property solely to accommodate a driveway to his home. There had been no remunerations requested at the time. Clearly, this was a different situation, and he objected to the easement being used a primary access for multiple home sites. Additional discussions with the developer were warranted. Mr. Ruth also expressed objection to the density the RSF-2 zone district would allow. He felt it inconsistent with the surrounding area.

Helen Stenmark (2633 Clarkdell, Grand Junction CO 81506) noted the location of her property to the south. She also felt the proposed density was too high. Most of the surrounding properties, she said, were at least an acre in size. She felt that an RSF-1 zone district was more appropriate and would be more compatible with surrounding densities. She also wanted assurances that her home would not be impacted by the development.

Herb Mooney (2613 Kelly, Grand Junction CO 81506) agreed with previous comments and said that he'd moved to the area because of its more rural character. The majority of parcels in the area were larger than a half-acre. He felt that so dense a development would adversely impact the quality of life for area residents. Referencing the location of a pond in the lower southwest corner of the property, he recollected that the previous owner had used public funding to construct the pond and related infrastructure, and had received such funding conditioned upon dedicating the pond as a wildlife sanctuary or preserve for a finite number of years.

Caryl Rudofcky (780 26 1/2 Road, Grand Junction CO 81506) noted her property's location and said that current traffic numbers in the area were already high. Only one bike lane existed up to H Road, and nothing existed beyond that. She too felt that the density associated with the RSF-2 zone district was too high, was incompatible with surrounding densities, and would negatively impact the quality of life for existing area residents.

Cheryl Ray (2635 H Road, Grand Junction CO 81506) noted the location of her property to the north of the site. She concurred with previous comments and said that even the nearby church was situated on larger acreage. The RSF-2 zone district permitted densities that would be incompatible with the surrounding area. She also wondered why she and other area residents had never been notified of the evening's meeting, even though they all lived so close to the site and would be directly impacted. She asked that she and her neighbors be kept apprised of any development of the property.

Bob Blanchard explained the City's notification process and said that he would make sure that all nearby residents along the south side of H Road would be included in any future development request notification.

Chris King (2610 Kelley Drive, Grand Junction CO 81506) said that his main concern was density. So many homes would certainly change the character of the area. It was unlikely that area streets could accommodate so large a traffic increase.

Dan Mundy (2625 H Road, Grand Junction CO 81506) mirrored previously stated concerns regarding density. The higher density could set an undesirable precedent for future development requests. He hoped the Planning Commission would take note of the number of people who had come out in opposition to the request.

PETITIONER'S REBUTTAL

Mr. Dixon said that while the area had once been agricultural in nature, over time it had become more suburban. A lot of thought and input had gone into the Growth Plan, and the current zone request was consistent with that Plan. Earlier in the day he'd gone by the site to check on the site's posting; the sign was still there. And while the area had seen increases in traffic, some street widening had also occurred. People may move to more rural areas to get away from the City but they were still very much dependent upon City services. During the Preliminary Planning process another neighborhood meeting would be held, and neighbors would have a chance to see and comment on the actual design proposal.

Mr. Dixon added that with regard to G 3/4 Road, which was presently just a driveway, he was currently discussing with City Parks Planner Shawn Cooper the possibility of constructing a road on the City's park property. In return, the developer would construct a parking area, which would help "springboard" the park's development. The exchange would result in a win-win situation for the City, the developer, and the public.

QUESTIONS

Vice-Chairman Cole asked Mr. Dixon if the petitioner would be satisfied with a less dense zone district. Mr. Dixon said that the petitioner was unsure at this point how the project would ultimately look. Given geologic constraints and other variables, the RSF-2 zone district would afford greater design flexibility. It was unlikely that the project would develop out to the maximum allowable density.

Ms. Cox reminded planning commissioners that the Code and Growth Plan supported a range of zone districts for the site (*i.e.*, RSF-E, RSF-1 and RSF-2). It was within the Planning Commission's purview to consider any one of those zone district options.

When Vice-Chairman Cole asked about the density of property located directly west of the site, Ms. Cox said that it was zoned Planned Development but constructed to a density of approximately 2 acres per dwelling unit.

Commissioner Cox asked for clarification on the minimum lot size for RSF-2 lots, which was provided.

Commissioner Cox asked if future development notification extended to the neighborhood meetings as well as the Preliminary Plan. Mr. Blanchard confirmed that it would.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Pitts commended staff for their excellent work, but he felt that the RSF-2 zone district was too big a jump from RSF-R. It was clear to him from public comment that the zone district did not meet Code criteria #3 and #7 regarding neighborhood compatibility and community benefit, and he felt he could not support the request.

Commissioner Cox disagreed and felt the RSF-2 zone to be compatible with surrounding densities. He agreed with Mr. Dixon that the project would probably not develop out to the maximum allowable density, and that the RSF-2 zone district did afford additional design flexibility. He expressed support for the request.

Commissioner Lowrey felt that the compatibility issue would be better determined during the Preliminary Plan stage. He too agreed that the RSF-2 zone district was compatible with the area, especially given the site's close proximity to the interstate.

Commissioner Redifer agreed with comments made by Commissioner Pitts. For the same reasons, he could not support the request.

Commissioner Evans agreed with comments expressed by Commissioner Cox. He felt he could support the request given that it did meet Code criteria and Growth Plan recommendations.

MOTION: (Commissioner Cox) "Mr. Chairman, on item RZ-2004-023, Old Orchard Estates, I move that we forward a recommendation of approval to City Council with the finding of facts and conclusions listed in the staff report."

Commissioner Lowrey seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed by a vote of 4-2, with Commissioners Pitts and Redifer opposing.

A brief recess was called at 8:35 P.M. The public hearing reconvened at 8:42 P.M.

CUP-2004-005 CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT--COMMUNITY FIRST NATIONAL BANK
A request for approval for a Conditional Use Permit to allow a parking lot expansion for an existing bank facility in an RO (Residential Office) zone district.
Petitioner: Richard E. Dewey
Location: 1223 North 7th Street

STAFF'S PRESENTATION

Ronnie Edwards gave a PowerPoint presentation containing the following slides: 1) site location map; 2) aerial photo map; 3) Existing City and County Zoning Map; 4) site plan. She briefly overviewed the request as outlined in the April 20, 2004 staff report. Having concluded that the request met both Code criteria and Growth Plan recommendations, staff recommended approval.

QUESTIONS

Commissioner Pitts asked for clarification on what appeared to be the multiple lot lines of several different properties. Ms. Edwards said that those would be eliminated during a simple subdivision process, resulting in only one parcel.

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Matt Ward, (1211 N 7th Street, Grand Junction CO 81505) representing the petitioner, said that the property's entrance would be located further to the north. The site's current entrance, located within close proximity to the bank, was "an accident just waiting to happen." That entrance would ultimately be closed off. Referencing the available site plan, he pointed out that the new entrance would be wider and provide for more rounded turns. Unfortunately, students from the high school were illegally parking in the bank's parking lot. The parking lot expansion would provide for additional patron parking. He said the house on the site would be donated to Habitat for Humanity and relocated from the site prior to construction of the parking lot.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

FOR:

There were no comments for the request.

AGAINST:

Pam Noonan (1337 North 7th Street, Grand Junction CO 81501) wondered why banking officials did not exercise their right to ticket or remove illegally parked vehicles from their existing parking lot. If they did so, perhaps a parking lot expansion would be unnecessary. She also did not feel that moving the currently vacant house referenced by Mr. Ward was in the best interest of the community. A low-income family would be better served, she said, if they were located closer to the college and/or City services. The house was better situated right where it was.

PETITIONER'S REBUTTAL

Mr. Ward said that bank officials had been working with the Grand Junction High School campus police on the problem of illegal student parking; however, since the lot could not be constantly monitored, the problem was difficult to stop. He elaborated briefly on the variety of services offered by the bank, many of which were expanding in scope. The parking expansion would help facilitate the bank's growing clientele. With regard to relocation of the vacant house, he felt that it would still be situated someplace within the City limits. The gift would still serve a family in need, regardless of where it was located.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Pitts said that he'd heard no issue to compel him to withhold his support of the request. It met both Code criteria and Growth Plan recommendations.

Commissioner Lowrey felt that Ms. Munich made a good point with regard to relocating the vacant house; however, Habitat for Humanity was more concerned about providing affordable housing to low-income families.

Commissioner Cox said that without approval of the current project request there would be one less home available to a low-income family. Likely the house would stay rented to college students. Relocating the site's entrance would improve the safety of vehicular and pedestrian traffic entering from and exiting on to 7th Street. He added that expansion of the bank's services and parking area would provide an overall community benefit.

MOTION: (Commissioner Evans) "Mr. Chairman, on Conditional Use Permit, CUP-2004-005, I move that we approve the Conditional Use Permit, CUP-2004-005 with the findings of fact and conclusions listed above."

Commissioner Pitts seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

TAC-2004-040 TEXT AMENDMENT--ZONING & DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 6.5

A request for approval of various amendments to section 6.5, Landscape, Buffering and Screening Standards

Petitioner: City of Grand Junction

STAFF'S PRESENTATION

Ms. Portner gave a PowerPoint presentation containing the following slides: 1) goals, policies and action items; 2) Strategic Plan goals and objectives; 3) review process; 4) Appendix C: Schlumberger site final approved landscaping plan; 5) photos of perimeter fences along major arterials; 6) xeriscaping encouraged; 7) additional options; 8) other recommendations.

Ms. Portner provided planning commissioners with a brief historical synopsis of the proposal. Consultants helped identify aspects of the current Development Code that did not meet the City's overall goals for quality development, as stated in the Growth Plan and the Strategic Plan. Workshops had been held over a five-month period, with Mesa County and City of Grand Junction staff and various focus groups in attendance. Perhaps the greatest change occurred in the Code section involving landscaping within Industrial zone districts. Proposed changes would require developers of Industrially-zoned properties to landscape their street frontages as well as 50 feet back along side yard property lines. They would still be responsible for their parking lot planting lot requirement, but the overall number of required plantings would be significantly reduced.

Another significant change would occur in the area of perimeter fencing for lots abutting collector, minor arterial, and major arterial streets. The current Code required a 5-foot landscape buffer between an attached sidewalk and perimeter fencing. The consultants had recommended increasing that width to 14 feet, to coincide with the width of a typical multi-purpose easement. The result would be a more open corridor and would give plantings a greater chance of survival. The landscape strip could be reduced back down to 5 feet if a detached sidewalk were constructed.

Xeriscaping, she said, would be encouraged and was actually defined differently than many people thought. Xeriscaping incentives had been investigated but nothing definitive had been formulated.

The installation of public art and other aesthetics would result in lowering the overall landscaping requirement. Trades (*e.g.*, walls for vegetation, trees for shrubs) were incorporated into the amendment to provide alternatives. An exception process had been discussed but staff felt it was not needed. Consultants had recommended that all landscaping proposals be reviewed by a landscape professional; however, the City felt that they had the expertise necessary on staff to provide for effective review.

The acquisition of a water tap solely for the purpose of landscaping was still an issue, one that was probably better discussed outside of the Development Code process.

QUESTIONS

Commissioner Cox wondered about the rationale behind the 14-foot landscaping strip requirement. Fourteen feet seemed excessive and he felt it would be very costly to developers. Since developers always passed their costs on to homebuyers, this extra cost would drive up the price of a new home, making them less affordable. The excessive width almost seemed akin to parks and open space. If required by the City, shouldn't the developer receive credit against the City's parks and open space fees requirement?

Commissioner Pitts agreed. A 10-foot-wide landscape strip requirement would be more reasonable. Since Grand Junction was classified as a desert, and given that the area had undergone years of drought conditions, he wondered why there was such a big push for more landscaping and more irrigation. While he felt there were many good aspects to the proposed text amendment (*e.g.*, Industrial zone landscaping and xeriscaping), to require additional plantings and upkeep seemed contrary to water conservation goals.

Commissioner Cox wondered if the Planning Commission could approve selective aspects of the text amendment.

Vice-Chairman Cole suggested that approval could be given to all sections but the one requiring the 14-foot landscape strip. He agreed that parks and open space credit should be given to developers subjected to that particular landscaping requirement. Perhaps staff could rework section G.5.

Ms. Portner asked that some kind of recommendation be given to City Council on the landscaping strip: to have no requirement, to stick with the current 5 feet, or select some other more appropriate number. If the Planning Commission wanted to recommend some kind of parks and open space credit, it would require approval of another Code amendment, since currently the 10 percent requirement applied solely to parks dedication. She noted that the consultants had actually recommended the 14-foot figure, to coincide with the width of multi-purpose easements.

Commissioner Lowrey felt that the 14-foot landscape strip requirement was fine as proposed. It had been supported by consultants and focus groups, and it didn't appear that much negative input had been received from the public. Besides what drove up the pricing of new homes was demand, not developer fees.

Commissioner Evans agreed. He didn't feel that the added width would result in much impact to home prices.

Commissioner Cox said that a letter opposing the 14-foot requirement had been received earlier in the day from Larry Rasmussen, representing AMGD, a group of builders and developers. Mr. Rasmussen felt that parks and open space credit should be given if so much additional landscaping were required. Commissioner Cox felt that 10 feet represented a more reasonable figure, be less costly to a developer, and still help prevent a "tunnel" effect along major roadways. He added that, overall, the text amendment contained many positive elements, especially in terms of the Industrial zone.

Commissioner Lowrey agreed.

Vice-Chairman Cole took a straw poll to see how many were opposed to the 14-foot landscaping requirement as written. Commissioners Cox and Pitts were the only ones to express opposition.

Commissioner Redifer said that while xeriscaping should be encouraged, it was important to a community on many levels not to diminish landscaping requirements. He hoped that City Council would consider hiring a landscaping professional, one qualified to teach the public how to xeriscape and improve their landscaping designs. He felt that having such a professional attend public hearings would also be beneficial.

MOTION: (Commissioner Pitts) "Mr. Chairman, on item TAC-2004-040, amendments to section 6.5 of the Zoning and Development Code, I move we forward a recommendation of approval to the City Council."

Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed by a vote of 5-1, with Commissioner Cox opposing.

With no further business to discuss, the public hearing was adjourned at 9:35 P.M.