

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL  
WORKSHOP SUMMARY**

**OCTOBER 4, 2004**

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado met on Monday, October 4, 2004 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium to discuss workshop items. Those present were Councilmembers Harry Butler, Cindy Enos-Martinez, Dennis Kirtland, Bill McCurry, Gregg Palmer, Jim Spehar and President of the Council Bruce Hill.

**Summaries and action on the following topics:**

1. **GJEP INCENTIVE REQUEST:** The Grand Junction Economic Partnership is recruiting a California company and is asking for the City's participation through the economic development fund. Ann Driggers, President of GJEP, and Denny Granum, GJEP Board member, addressed the City Council on the recruitment of this company that manufactures industrial gases for a variety of uses. The company is looking to move their manufacturing operation to Grand Junction. The company has been in operation since 1971. The average wage without benefits is \$16.59 per hour and all ten employees proposed will be from the local market. They will be investing in a new facility in the amount of \$775,000. Others are being asked to participate in this recruitment. The incentive being requested from Grand Junction City Council is a total of \$15,500, that is, \$1,550 per job. Mr. Granum advised that GJEP has visited the California facility and they have been working with the company for a couple of years. It is anticipated that more of the operations will be moved here and eventually the owner will also relocate to Grand Junction. Councilmember Spehar asked about time frame. Mr. Granum thought construction of the facility would occur before the end of the year.

**Action summary:** The City Council was supportive of the request which will be brought back to Council for formal approval at the appropriate time.

**The City Council adjourned to Mesa County Multi-Purpose Room - First Floor, Administrative Annex of Old Courthouse, 544 Rood Ave at 6:55**

2. **JOINT MEETING CONCERNING THE MESA COUNTY COOPERATIVE PLANNING AGREEMENT WITH FRUITA, PALISADE AND MESA COUNTY:** County Staff will review the current Intergovernmental Agreement and present the annual update of the program.

The meeting convened in the Old Courthouse at 7:05 p.m.

Those present from the City included Councilmembers Harry Butler, Cindy Enos-Martinez, Dennis Kirtland, Bill McCurry, Gregg Palmer, Jim Spehar and President of the Council Bruce Hill. City Staff also present was City Manager Kelly Arnold, City Attorney John Shaver, Assistant City Manager David Varley, Community Development Director Bob Blanchard, Assistant to the City Manager Sheryl Trent, Management Intern Seth Hoffman, Communications Coordinator Sam Rainquet, Planning Manager Kathy Portner and City Clerk Stephanie Tuin.

Those present from the County were County Commissioners Tilman Bishop, Jim Baughman and Chair Doralyn Genova. County staff present was County Administrator Bob Jasper, Assistant County Attorney Valerie Robinson, Planning Director Kurt Larson, Director of Long Rang Planning Keith Fife, Long Range Planner Michael Warren and Clerk to the Board Bert Raley.

From the Town of Palisade was Trustee Galen Wallace and from the City of Fruita were Councilmembers Nick Kohls, David Karisny and Mayor Jim Adams. Also from Fruita was City Manager Clint Kinney.

Tom Latousek, Land Protection Specialist with the Mesa Land Trust, was also present.

Commission Chair Doralyn Genova called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. Then she turned the meeting over to the County Director of Long Range Planning Keith Fife.

### **Overview of Review Process/ Outcomes**

Mr. Fife reviewed the Cooperative Planning/Buffer Area/PDR program and how it came to be, including the development of the Cooperative Planning Agreements. He reviewed the objectives and went over the work that has occurred recently. The idea of area separators between the valley municipalities came about in the 1990's and was formally adopted via intergovernmental agreements in 1998, after the adoption of the two Growth Plans by the City of Grand Junction and Mesa County. Although the agreements have no sunset provision, they do call for a five year review which is the purpose of this meeting. In the agreements with both Fruita and Palisade, with the City and the County have the following goals – cooperative land use planning, orderly transition between communities, discourage commercial strips in those areas and minimize taxpayer expense to serve those outlying areas. Prior to the Persigo Agreement, providing sewer and annexation were linked. This led to one of the key provisions in the agreements. Such provisions are: cities will not annex, municipal and sewer service will not be extended, land use decisions will

enhance the rural character of the area, and rezoning must be consistent with the Master Plan or approved by the County and cities.

Mr. Fife listed some of the awards and recognitions that the program has received so far. The program has also been presented at various conferences.

He noted that this is not a no-growth agreement – it allows development where the zoning allows such.

### **Purchase of Development Rights Program**

The purchase of development rights program was put into place in 2002 and it has been very successful. Last year the transfer of development rights was used in Fruita. In the public meetings that have occurred they found that most folks support the program and think more should be done. Several volunteered to participate in creating design guidelines in order to preserve rural character. A consistent guideline for defining “rural” was one of the main comments that was expressed.

Under the PDR program, if all pending projects close this year, a total of 769 total acres will be protected. That includes 12 properties in Palisade and 5 in Fruita.

### **Virtual Tour of Program**

Michael Warren, Long Range Planner for the County, gave a virtual tour of the properties now under protection. He identified the various properties, size and owners, noting there were some donations as well as purchases. Mr. Warren said in Palisade, the majority of the acquisitions were orchards but there are some ranches, farms and wildlife areas. The Orchard Mesa Reserve includes existing orchards and dry lands to be converted back to orchards. Here acquisitions, when combined with public lands already owned by public entities, make a pretty good corridor of a preserved area along the Colorado River.

### **2004 Update**

Tom Latousek, Land Protection Specialist with the Mesa Land Trust, which handles the financial component of the PDR Project, addressed the members present. This review takes the place of the Annual Report. He then reviewed all projects completed since last fall. The Palmer property, along with Williams, Basher and Cordova properties make for about 123 acres protected in Fruita. Funds for these purchases come from a variety of sources including GOCO and Farm Bill Fund as well as the buffer zone partners. Next there is the Miller property, 32 acres in Palisade, the

Franklin property in Fruita, 118 acres, which is at the north end of the buffer zone. There has been interest expressed from surrounding owners and they hope more area will be acquired. There are five pending acquisitions; four are under contract, which will mean another 369 acres will be protected. These properties include the Likes-Durnell, the Stecher property, the Talbott Farms, Inc., the Avant Farm and the Arnett property which includes an opportunity for trail easement acquisition. The trail acquisition will allow the extension of the river trail east from 32 Road. An incentive for landowners to donate an easement is that the Mesa Land Trust helps out with the transaction costs. Those fees are more than regular title costs, since there are IRS requirements and other legal costs, and costs for an environmental hazard assessment.

Regarding budget for this year, Mesa County contributed \$162,000, the City \$151,800, \$10,000 from Fruita, and Palisade contributed \$3,000. The remaining balance for Mesa County and Grand Junction is \$26,175 if all projects close. The value of the protected acreage is \$6 million, purchased for about \$3.2 million. Next year four more easement purchases are planned along with one donation being anticipated. That will complete 1000 acres, actually that will be one tenth of the area in the buffer area.

Other issues, besides making a dent in the backlog of eligible properties, is funding when the program has now gained momentum. Now they are starting to have protected properties be sold, the effect of that is that easement values are going down, so the result may be a little less interest in the program in the next year or two. The remaining land owners will be offered less money, because it affects the comparables that have been sold.

City Manager Arnold asked if this program is still a priority of GOCO. Mr. Latousek responded that so far, particularly since this program has been successful, there have been bigger grant cycles and larger amounts available. The grant administrators do like to see the local support. Also local funds can be used to leverage funds with the Farm Fund Bill. Mr. Latousek added that this board of reviewers select areas partially based on urgency and partially on cost.

### **Issues, Alternatives, and Recommendations**

Mr. Keith Fife said discussions are ongoing with the Clifton Sanitation District #2 to keep them from annexing into the buffer area. There have also been discussions with Fruita on removing the buffer area from their 201 sewer service boundary. Fruita City Manager Kinney assured the group that will happen.

It is recommended that Staff be directed to develop amendments to the Mesa County Land Development Code that will address rural character and design guidelines for the roadways along the buffers.

Regarding revisions to the boundaries – in the Palisade buffer it has been discussed that perhaps more of East Orchard Mesa should be removed or perhaps all of East Orchard Mesa should be removed since they are not in danger of development.

On the Fruita side, in the Redlands area specifically, some owners have expressed interest whereas some owners have never been interested, so perhaps those properties should be removed. Also there are some areas that are no longer rural and were placed in the buffer area because the owners were opposed to annexation. Since that is no longer an issue, perhaps they should be removed from the buffer area.

Commissioner Bishop noted that Clifton Sanitation District #1 may merge with Clifton Sanitation District #2.

### **Next steps**

Mr. Fife summarized the next steps: an IGA with Clifton Sanitation District #2 to include working with Palisade and the Sanitation District to ensure no connections to sewer are done in the buffer area, remove the Fruita buffer areas from Fruita's 201 sewer service areas, exclude the buffer area from the Fruita Community Plan, clarify agreements that rezones must be consistent with Mesa County Master Plan. Mr. Fife also asked that Staff be directed to work with residents, landowners and Mesa County Planning Commission on boundary revisions, developing overlay zoning districts, design guidelines and standards along highway corridors, and rezones of undeveloped properties to be consistent with Master Plan.

Mr. Fife also asked for direction to work on amendments to the Mesa County Development Code including a definition of rural character, compliance with the Master Plan, incentives for voluntary rezones and replats, consistency with Cooperative Planning Agreements, rural development standards, and handling municipal review comments.

Other next steps include coordinating expansion of Transfer of Development Rights program, more outreach, and to explore funding. Mr. Fife noted that even with doubling the entities' contributions, the program will still be short in funding.

County Administrator Bob Jasper made a pitch for combining the PDR and TDR, using leverage for development rights with the transfer of development rights. That way they can give the property owners both

money and paper. He said the incentives will have to be greater to interest people to participate in the program.

Chair Genova directed Staff to look at that option. Councilmember Jim Spehar suggested Fruita could be the pilot for that project since they are already in the process. County Administrator Jasper advised that it would be more valuable if all governments were involved.

Chair Genova requested that Staff work with Clifton Sanitation on who might want sewer service in the buffer area. She said the question left is the “no man’s land” area where the District wants to expand. She would like to see one sewer treatment plant in that area. Commissioner Baughman noted that even if Palisade has no interest in margining with Clifton Sanitation now, Clifton Sanitation is interested and wants information from Palisade.

Mayor Jim Adams expressed that he is not inclined to remove any areas from the buffer areas. Palisade Trustee Wallace agreed.

Chair Genova directed Keith Fife to make formal requests to each entity for funding.

Grand Junction Council President Bruce Hill stated he is pleased with the program, 10% of the lands protected is a huge step forward. He noted that the program, after five years, only needs fine tuning. He would like to see guidelines along roadways so there is a visual impact of the buffer area. He agreed that the “no man’s land” area needs to be firmly defined.

Commission Baughman suggested that the Dyer property be considered for removal since the owner is against being in buffer zone and the nearby Deer Park subdivision has been developed at 2 acre lots and is too dense to be in buffer zone. Chair Genova disagreed and suggested that further discussions of these issues take place among the individual entities.

Chair Genova adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.