

GEM Committee Minutes – September 7, 2011

1. Attendance: Paul Riley, Kimbal Wheatley, Frank Cumberland, Kathy Allen, Jim Ormsbee, Kent Lyons, Fred Smullin, Steve Clarke.
2. Minutes of the July meeting were approved as written.
3. The Committee expressed its sympathy to Paul Riley on the unexpected passing of his wife in late July. We appreciate his participation with the Committee.
4. Agri-business ordinance – The current ordinance draft use table was reviewed. The overall concern was balancing uses so farming continues. Some concern was expressed that uses like a mini-market cross that line. Many questions were answered by further reading of the ordinance text. At this point the committee feels our best investment is to attend planning commission meetings (next one on 9/27 at 5 pm) to listen and participate in the discussion. Frank reported his efforts to reach Jeff Williams are unsuccessful to this point.
5. Oakley School visit report – Steve reported on the visit to the Oakley therapeutic school. The school was sited on 9 acres, since that time an adjoining hay field was purchased so the site is now 17 acres. Steve reports that the nearest neighbors are all separated from the school by at least one open field at this point and that seems comfortable using 2nd hand reports. The school functions like a large “blob” in a rural residential neighborhood. It seems neither to intrude nor add to the neighborhood. The architecture is pleasant and non-intrusive, lighting would not comply with our lighting ordinance, and the overall effect is one of high quality design and construction. The school currently houses 75 students of its capacity of 100. Specific questions about interactions with the community elicited an outline of their community service/interaction history. They take a group of students to the Canyons for snowboarding/skiing, they often go to Moab for biking, they occasionally go to Salt Lake City for service with a nonprofit humanitarian group. They have tried to do service in Oakley, but the town is unable to provide a regular project of the size needed for the group so they don’t have interaction with neighbors or the local town to any extent. The guide reported the only neighbor interaction was a girl who loved horses snuck out, stole a horse, and went for a ride. Students at this school are without exception graduates of “lock-down” facilities or wilderness experience camps. The academic program seemed age appropriate, combined with unusually strict rules of behavior/computer use/etc. The competitive athletic program is conducted in the 1A high school bracket.

Steve’s conclusion is that neighborhood compatibility issues are the important land use law issues. Kimbal Wheatley pointed out the cyclic nature of such industries. Such schools tend to be faddish, tend to go out of business in a few years, and leave the community deciding what to do with such large facilities. He cited the possibility of requiring the petitioner to post a bond to

cover cost of deconstructing the facility.

6. Therapeutic School Petition Progress Report – Fred Smullin reported on the status of the Green Valley Academy lawsuit, emphasizing the need for funding. Ordinance modifications seem to revolve around the issues of having a business in a rural residential neighborhood... especially a business that is not patronized by residents of the neighborhood. Kimbal Wheatley discussed the **long range implications of allowing such businesses in residential areas by pointing out the need to plan in a way that supports development of nodes, not one that defeats them.** When we permit businesses to buy land at the relatively low cost of rural residential land as opposed to commercially zoned land we incent them to build not in node areas, but in residential areas. The committee agreed this is a fundamental issue. Perhaps the ordinance work should look at **removing uses** from current AV-3, etc. zones.
7. General Plan modification money – Steve reviewed the meeting he and Richard Webb held with John Bennett, manager of the Governors Office of Planning and Budget. Steve, Richard, and Shanna will meet to decide on the next steps. Frank suggested that we develop an approach tying the planning work to job creation in some way. The Bennett meeting was very useful and showed the value of 3 things:
 - a. Tightening the definition of scope of work for the consultant
 - b. Using research currently available in the GOPB or Wasatch Front Regional Council.
 - c. Networking with the various federal and state groups who might contribute in an attempt to form a coalition of partners who can fund the deal.

Fred Smullin volunteered to help write proposals if needed.

8. The next meeting will be October 5th at 5 pm in the Huntsville Library.
9. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.