

From: [Zdeba, Benjamin](#)
To: [Lee, Amanda](#)
Subject: FW: Comments on May 1, 2019, GPU Steering Committee agenda items
Date: Tuesday, April 30, 2019 5:24:51 PM
Attachments: [2019May01_GPU_Steering_Committee_Agenda_Comments_JimMosher.pdf](#)
[image001.png](#)

Hi Amanda,

Please see additional materials attached for tomorrow's GPUSC meeting.

Thanks!

Ben Z.

BENJAMIN M. ZDEBA, AICP
Community Development Department
Associate Planner
bzdeba@newportbeachca.gov
949-644-3253

From: Jim Mosher <jimmosher@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 30, 2019 5:21 PM
To: Campbell, Jim <JCampbell@newportbeachca.gov>; Zdeba, Benjamin <bzdeba@newportbeachca.gov>
Subject: Comments on May 1, 2019, GPU Steering Committee agenda items

Jim & Ben,

Please find attached some quick comments on the items listed on the May 1, 2019, GPU Steering Committee agenda.

I have BCC'd this to the committee members as listed on the City website.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Mosher

May 1, 2019, GPU Steering Committee Comments

These comments on Newport Beach General Plan Update Steering Committee [agenda](#) items are submitted by: Jim Mosher (jimmosher@yahoo.com), 2210 Private Road, Newport Beach 92660

Item III. Public Comments (non-agenda items)

As indicated at the April 3 Steering Committee meeting, I continue to think the process and results of the “Listen & Learn” conducted by the City in 2002 – including more than just the end product report submitted by the consultant to the City Council as [Study Session Item 2](#) at its January 28, 2003, meeting – remain relevant.

To that end, I have uploaded to a publicly-viewable “Dropbox” folder the files provided to me in response to a 2014 Public Records Act request. They include the agenda and minutes (but not the agenda packets) from all the meetings of the General Plan Update Committee, whose role was similar to the present Steering Committee, and which met starting on October 9, 2000, a month before the citizens General Plan Greenlight Initiative went to the ballot. They also include the agendas, minutes and agenda packets of all the meetings of the larger General Plan Advisory Committee (which first convened on March 11, 2002, early in the Listen & Learn process) – but, unfortunately in an unsearchable PDF “image” format.

The 2000 through 2006 GPU files can be viewed here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/l5vhrdq8h5mti86/AAC-C7K6-dVx8ByvZn4iNZdNa?dl=0>

or in shortened form:

<https://urlzs.com/dr1w>

Taken in their totality, they inform both where the present General Plan came from and the state of public opinion 17 years ago, which likely has not changed a great deal. Those views may or may not be adequately reflected in the present GP.

The Vision Statement, which features prominently in the present RFP, was initially crafted by the outside consultant (MIG – see contract [C-3410](#)) based on input received at their January 12, 2002, “Visioning Festival” which began the 2002 Listen & Learn, and then refined by a seven-member subcommittee of the GPAC (consisting of Chairman David Janes, Jackie Sukasian, Florence Felton, Phillip Bettencourt, Roger Alford, Nancy Gardner, Tom Hyans and GPAC Chair Bob Shelton), with input from the committee as a whole. It was completed before and not changed as result of the November 16, 2002, Community Visioning Summit which concluded the Listen & Learn. The City Council approved the Vision Statement as [Item 13](#) at its March 25, 2003, meeting.

Of similar importance, in my view, is the General Plan and Zoning that *preceded* the 2006 update. Useful inks to the above, and more, can be found under the General Plan “Watch List” page on the SPON website: <http://SponNB.org> .

Item IV.a. Review Minutes of the April 3, 2019 Meeting

The following corrections to the [draft minutes](#) are suggested:

Page 1, Item II (WELCOME AND ROLL CALL, MEMBERS PRESENT), last name: "..., Mayor Diane Dixon (Ex ~~Oficio~~ Officio Member)"

Page 2, paragraph 2, sentence 3: "Existing for-sale condominiums designated as affordable can be resold only at an affordable rate ~~only~~ during the 30-year term."

Page 3, paragraph 2: "In reply to ~~Hoiyen~~ Hoiyin Ip's query, ..."

Page 4, last sentence before "e": "~~Hoiyen~~ Hoiyin Ip suggested ..."

Page 5, last sentence before "f": "~~Hoiyen~~ Hoiyin Ip remarked ..."

Item IV.b. Responses to the Request for Proposals (RFP) and an Overview of the Review Process

It is disappointing that out of the 44 firms that downloaded the RFP, only 5 submitted proposals, and of those, only 2 (Kearns & West and MBI Strategic Communications) claim any experience doing public outreach for general plans.

It is also disappointing that none of the proposers provided an example of a final outreach summary document similar to that expected to be prepared by them at the end of the Listen & Learn process. I thought that had been requested by Committee member Tucker at the March 20 meeting, but in the RFP it seems to have been reduced to a vague statement under the "Experience" requirement at the bottom of page 17: "*Demonstrate experience with at least three (3) projects of a similar scope and nature by providing a synopsis of each project, as well as relevant exemplary work produced for each project.*" It was apparently left to the proposers to guess that a written Listen & Learn summary would be their most "*relevant exemplary work.*" It seems none of them made that connection, and as a result neither provided nor told us where we could find an example of their final written work product.

The respondents similarly seem to have noticed (on page 11 of the RFP) the requirement to submit *resumes*, but missed the instruction to identify "*a primary representative and an alternate*" – at least, none of them did.

The small number of qualified submittals simplifies the Committee's task of choosing who to interview, but it has to make one wonder if the RFP was effectively written and effectively promoted. One would have guessed the field of qualified firms was much wider. Does staff have a theory of why the response was so poor?

Regarding the few who did apply:

Angela DiPasquale

Although included in the present agenda packet, this respondent clearly misunderstood the RFP and failed to submit a proposal in compliance with it.

FSB Core Strategies

FSB, by contrast, *did* read and understand the RFP: their “Methodology” addresses each of the bullet points in the requested Scope of Services. They even have some knowledge of Newport Beach. But they appear to be a political *persuasion* firm, not a *listening* one, and neither their response nor [their website](#) offers any evidence of the firm ever having done public outreach for a general plan update.

The political experience they choose to emphasize is particularly troubling: they assisted The Irvine Company and the Chamber of Commerce in bending public opinion to defeat Measure X, the citizens’ “Greenlight II” initiative which ran on the 2006 ballot in reaction to Measure V, the City’s General Plan Update proposal. That will hardly endear them to the 37% of the voting public who (despite FSB’s best efforts to scare them into thinking otherwise) thought Greenlight II would have been a good safety valve on the new plan (see Council [Resolution No. 2006-103](#)).

FSB was also engaged by the City Manager to conduct public outreach for the attempted Land Use Element update in 2013-2014 (see [Contract C-5599](#) and its [Scope of Services](#)) – rejected by 69% of voters as [Measure Y](#). I do not recall any of the promised services being publicly delivered, so I have to guess they were working behind the scenes.

Whatever their other merits, their clandestine involvement in Measure Y and the idea that they regard an ability to manipulate public opinion as a plus should be disqualifying for the present job.

Kearns & West

According to their website, Ms. Isaacson (the proposed “principal in charge”) [joined Kearns & West](#) in 2016, becoming a principal this March.

Their general plan experience seems to come primarily through their proposed subcontractor, Dyet & Bhatia, which does, indeed, appear to have worked on many (see their planning [project examples](#)). Dyet & Bhatia (under [zoning](#)) also claims to have experience with form-based codes, for which may of interest in Newport Beach.

The [City of San Jacinto General Plan update](#), cited as the one the proposed primary team is currently working on, is similar to Newport Beach in that it seeks to update a plan adopted in 2006. It differs in that it seems predicated on the expectation that the population of San Jacinto (an old city between Hemet and Beaumont) will increase by 77% in the next 20 years. And the website (linked to above) does not seem particularly imaginative. In addition, the [online survey](#) (perhaps because of the expected growth?) appears geared much more toward “*What do you want to see MORE of?*” than “*What would you like to see less of?*” (which seems to me an equally valid, and interesting, question).

To date, the results of the San Jacinto outreach efforts, which began February 21, do not appear to have been posted. The effort also does not appear to include an “existing conditions” document to assist participants in understanding what they are being invited to comment on.

Some information *is* available on the outreach efforts for the [Rancho Santa Margarita General Plan Update](#), which we are told the presently proposed Project Manager and Lead Facilitator was apparently involved in. In the “What we heard from you” section on the preceding page, there are links to two sets of collated comments. It is not clear they are in a format the Steering Committee is looking for.

MBI Strategic Communications

In their response, MBI cites the services their team provided to the [City of Long Beach's 2040 General Plan Update](#). Long Beach was updating a general plan dating from 1989 (similar in vintage to the one Newport Beach updated in 2006) in a process that began in 2004 and has evidently just concluded. The years in which MBI was involved are not clear from [their website](#), and may have involved only the “Civic Center.”

The Long Beach community engagement efforts and results (which do not seem to mention MBI) are linked to from the site mentioned above. They are interesting in that each public comment is reproduced in full and accompanied by a city response, much as is done with comments on EIR's – and as with EIR's the responses tend to dismiss the comment as having been dealt with elsewhere.

The Long Beach project is also interesting in that it introduced the concept of “PlaceTypes” into its general plan – but again, the extent, if any, to which MBI was involved is unclear.

Fern Nueno, who was a planner with Newport Beach through 2015, appears to have played a role similar to Ben Zdeba's in the present effort and would presumably be able to illuminate Long Beach's experience with MBI's proposed project team.

Aside from the oblique reference to Long Beach, MBI's [online project list](#) does not indicate any other experience with general plans, or any particularly applicable Listen & Learn experience.

S. Groner Associates, Inc.

It may be of interest to know the Newport Beach City Manager already has a contract with this firm ([C-7395-1](#)), entered into in 2018, for “Community Outreach, Public Relations, and Education Services.” Since that is an “on-call” contract, what they may have been asked to do is determined by a “letter proposal” not subject of wide public knowledge.

Like FSB, this firm seems to have more expertise in rallying support for projects than in seeking objective input. Nothing in their response or on [their website](#) suggests they have experience conducting outreach for general plan updates.