

**MINUTES**  
**CITY COUNCIL CITIZEN'S FORUM**  
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - YUMA CITY HALL  
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA  
**February 6, 2018**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Mayor Nicholls** called the City Council Citizen's Forum to order at 5:31 p.m.

Councilmembers Present: Shelton, Watts, Thomas, Deputy Knight, McClendon, Miller and Mayor Nicholls  
Councilmembers Absent: None  
Staffmembers Present: City Administrator, Gregory K. Wilkinson  
Various department heads or their representatives  
City Attorney, Richard W. Files  
City Clerk, Lynda Bushong

**I. BONDING PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Jerry LoCoco, 4464 W. Charra Lane**, expressed concern regarding the millions of dollars that have been extracted from Yuma County over the last several years by means of the State balancing their budget. The premise of where the tax dollar is collected-is where the improvements are made, such as roads, is not being adhered to. Yuma's school districts have been impacted negatively and have not received funds that they should have. On one hand the State shows that they intend to continue this wealth extraction from Yuma County, but on the other hand the State and the Board of Regents are touting higher education as the catalyst for economic development in Maricopa and Pima County. **LoCoco** agrees that higher education means a more talented workforce, which then may lead to economic development. However, Arizona legislators have passed a one billion dollar bond for higher education in May with zero dollars allocated to Yuma County. The Board of Regents plans to spend more on restroom renovations in Phoenix and Tucson than they plan on spending in Yuma County. Recalling that Councilman Thomas asked the HighGround consultant what the States intentions are with the Yuma County water rights. **LoCoco** opined that the State will continue to take funding from Yuma County and clearly has Yuma County water rights in their targets. Concluding, He asked, "Who is going to stand up for Yuma County".

**Discussion:**

**Mayor** thanked LoCoco and stated that he spends probably 20 hours a week, on a job that is slated for four hours a week, standing up for the community. However, things do not happen quickly so constant pressure and a consistent message are vital. The more people that are engaged the more successful it will be.

**Shelton** opined it is not the people of Yuma that have a problem, the problem exists at the State level. The challenge is to find a way to make the State part of the answer and not part of the problem.

**LoCoco** informed City Council that a petition is being circulated in hopes to get more funding into Yuma for higher education. Almost 400 signatures have been collected in just a few days. The goal is to collect 10,000 signatures.

## **II. ZONING CHANGES TO GHIOTTO FAMILY PROPERTIES**

**Steve Shadle, 1400 S. Hettema**, expressed concern about the proposed zoning changes, stating he represents residents on all four sides of this property. The Ghiotto property is a commercial piece of property and the argument has been that the owners should be entitled to develop their property to the highest and best use. **Shadle** stated they agree, but the development needs to be appropriate to the surrounding area. There are approximately 15-17 joining acres coming up that are also requesting high density. He estimated this could potentially mean an addition of 1200 people and 600 vehicles. **Shadle** expressed the main concern is placing this added population and traffic in the 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Avenue B area; an area that is already designated a truck route and where many traffic accidents have occurred. **Shadle** opined that the emergency access for this area would be a safety issue and the high density could strain the schools and negatively impact the surrounding neighborhoods.

**Shadle** informed City Council that he spoke with Mayor Nicholls previously about a possible conflict of interest, stating that Mayor Nicholls owned property next to the Ghiotto property. He suggested Mayor Nicholls review the map and speak with the City Attorney. **Files** stated under Arizona statute in order for there to be a conflict of interest it requires a proprietary or monetary interest in the matter that is being considered. **Mayor Nicholls** asserted that there is no conflict of interest because he does not have any financial interest in the rezoning.

**Shadle** noted if you look at the City map you will see there are at least 100 acres of high density property that are not developed. Only four of the 34 agencies that typically review a rezoning request responded during the preliminary meeting. Additionally a traffic study was not completed. He opined that medium density is sufficient for that area and high density is going to cause some serious problems for City.

Discussion:

**Watts** questioned the difference between high and medium density and asked what the zoning designation is for Camelot Apartments. **Lineberry** stated the difference is 12.9 units per acre for medium density and 18 units per acre for high density. Camelot Apartments are considered high density.

**Shelton** inquired what the potential residence count would be in this area. **Shadle** stated the plans are only in the preliminary state. However, he opined approximately 400 units would be permissible.

There being no further business, **Mayor Nicholls** adjourned the meeting at 5:57 p.m. No Executive Session was held.

APPROVED:

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Lynda L. Bushong, City Clerk

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Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor