



May 29, 2009

## Desert Falls rezoning approved

*Bob Challinor, Desert Valley Times*

The Desert Falls International Sports Resort has almost as much paperwork as it does dirt work **before it can open for business at its anticipated fall 2010 target.**

City council, however, cleared the first steps for the sports resort's paper trail by unanimously approving a zone change and master plan amendment for the project Tuesday evening.

Desert Falls developers, who want to build a massive sports resort aimed primarily at amateur events and athletes, needed to rezone approximately 935 acres of land that was set aside for residential planned use development (PUD). Council's zone change and master plan amendment approval have changed the underlying land use of the property to mainly parks and recreation with a mixture of commercial, open space, public facility and up to 495 units of housing on 100 acres.

Dirt work won't begin yet on the project. There's still plenty of paperwork ahead.

"We still have to get the master development plan, the design standards handbook and the environmental development plan," said Aaron Baker, city planner who's handling the project. "We'll also need a site plan from them.

"There's two ways for them to go: they can take all the processes and boil them down to a development agreement or do it piece meal. A development agreement is necessary if they deviate from current city code in any way.

"They're over the initial hurdle. Now they have some momentum. I'd like to see them go ahead and do these things. It's exciting. They have a personal planner, and we are business friendly here."

Council needed little time to approve the rezoning, and there was no comment during the public hearing.

Council member Bubba Smith noted there was no designation attached to the 100 acres of housing.

"It won't be greater than MF-2 (Multi-Family, medium density), will it?" he asked.

"We won't know exactly what it will look like until it is defined through the handbook," Baker said.

"There are other residential units contemplated in the commercial. It's a mixed-use project."

He said there was no cap currently in the residential and commercial development.

"A lot of other PUDs have been given that flexibility," Smith said.

City economic development director Bryan Dangerfield said the project's first phase would be constructed within two and a half years.

"They have 60 days after recordation to put five percent down on the total purchase price," he said.

"Their best intent is to purchase the property as soon as possible."

The next application cycle for submitting additional project paperwork begins June 3, Baker said. That would get documents before council by July 28.

"The applicant said they are working on the handbook," Baker said. "Staff has not seen it yet."

Catherine Lorbeer, planning/redevelopment director, said project grading couldn't commence until developers submitted environmental documents.

Desert Falls developers already had submitted a revised concept plan that showed the soccer fields being moved from the south side of the project to the northeast corner of the property.

"Obviously, there are lots of plans in the works," said Josh Olmstead, one of the Desert Falls partners. "We want to do this as quickly as we can. We still have some hoops to go through, but I want to assure everyone that we'll do this as quickly as we can."

Council adopted and endorsed the zone change and master plan amendment contained in three resolutions.

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