

Dorothy Gilbert and the Phoenix Mountains Preserve

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1965-69

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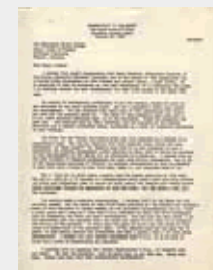
Resolution 12376, 8/9/66.
ACC# 98-1906, 1/50

Resolution 12376 passed by the Council of the City of Phoenix resolves to provide protection and preservation of open space and wilderness within the Phoenix Mountains.



Letter to Phoenix Mayor Milton Graham, 8/20/66.
ACC# 98-1906, 1/11, 2 pages

Letter argues against development at 36th Street and Lincoln Drive; land that borders on the Squaw Peak Park.



**General Open Space Plan, The Phoenix Gazette,
September 19, 1966.**
ACC# 98-1906, 1/44, 2 pages



An introduction by Dottie Gilbert; an explanation of the plan that promises to preserve mountain land; and an Open Space Plan map.

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This site was produced collaboratively by Rose Minetti, [Archives and Special Collections](#); Sue McNamara, also with Archives; and Heather Knowles, [Library Instruction, Systems and Technology](#), at [Arizona State University Libraries](#).

October, 2003

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APPENDIX A

RESOLUTION NO. 12376

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE AND WILDERNESS AREAS WITHIN THE PHOENIX MOUNTAINS AREA

WHEREAS, the rapid growth in size and population experienced by the City of Phoenix is expected to continue in the future; and
WHEREAS, the undeveloped area of the Phoenix Mountains has outstanding recreation appeal and potential; and
WHEREAS, there now exists a great deal of recreation use in mountain areas outside of the existing parks, in adjacent undeveloped land, for riding, hiking, picnicking and other outdoor recreation activities; and
WHEREAS, the most recent pattern of growth of the City of Phoenix has been predominantly to the northwest and northeast and it is likely, in the future, the Phoenix Mountains will be completely encompassed with dense urban development; and
WHEREAS, the Phoenix City Council has submitted an application to the United States Government, Department of the Interior, for the acquisition of certain federally owned lands in the Phoenix Mountains area for the purposes of parks and recreation and did declare an emergency, and the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Board and the Phoenix Planning Commission have furthermore recommended the acquisition of certain additional lands in this same mountain area for the same purposes,
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHOENIX as follows:

SECTION 1. That the general open space plan for the Phoenix Mountains attached to this resolution be, and the same is hereby approved in principle as a preliminary long range, general reference policy plan for the guidance of future urban development, with the basic underlying concept of preserving the entire undeveloped portion of the Phoenix Mountains as a second wilderness park within the city.

SECTION 2. That a land acquisition program be developed which will insure preservation of these natural areas which are already supplying a great recreation need.

SECTION 3. That the various city departments take notice of the Plan as an aid in coordinating the development and implementation of their work programs.

SECTION 4. That the several citizen boards and commissions take note of the Plan as a general reference in assisting them to make decisions required in their assigned scope of authority.

SECTION 5. That the citizens of the City of Phoenix, Arizona, are hereby urged to acquaint themselves with this Preliminary Plan.

PASSED by the Council of the City of Phoenix this 9th day of August, 1966.

APPROVED by the Mayor this 9th day of August, 1966.

ATTEST:

STANTON S. VON GRABILL City Clerk

MILTON H. GRAHAM
MAYOR

DOROTHY V. GILBERT

480 EAST OCOTILLO ROAD

PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85012

August 20, 1966

265-8397

The Honorable Milton Graham
Mayor, City of Phoenix
Municipal Building
Phoenix, Arizona

Dear Mayor Graham:

I seldom find myself disagreeing with Harry Coblenz, Executive Director of the Valley Beautiful Citizens' Council, but in the matter of the application for a Planned Area Development at 36th Street and Lincoln Drive, I must differ. He is speaking of what he envisions as the best development of a particular 62½ acres. I am looking towards the best development for some 3,000 acres in the Squaw Peak area.

By making it economically profitable to put the maximum number of units on the mountain at the least possible cost, you set a precedent which will hasten its development. You may preserve the upper part of this particular 62½ acres, but what of the property above it. The owner of that property will also want a P.A.D. with multiple dwellings high up in the mountains. Once the precedent has been set, the mountain will go like wildfire, and the concept of the Phoenix Mountains as a natural wilderness area, surrounded by a zone of intensive recreation is gone forever.

The Plan for the Phoenix Mountains which you have adopted as a concept is a magnificent plan. But did you realize that this property lies within the area envisioned as "open space"? Mr. Beatty says that it is not possible to have a moratorium on property development until planning is done, but it should be possible to slow development by not making it so attractive to investors. I realize this is not good Chamber of Commerce philosophy nor good real estate propaganda, but it is to the long-range advantage of Phoenix to postpone development as long as possible to give the city a chance to plan the area, lease it, and purchase some of it,

May I urge you to place great urgency upon the proper planning of this area. How sad it will be if it becomes an unimaginative dense urban area with city streets and curbs and sidewalks, when it could be built around its trails with little picnic spots scattered through the mountains to lure the hiker, the Boy Scout-- and, yes, the horseman.

The zoning needs a complete overhauling. I believe R-43 is too dense for the mountain areas, but far worse is the R1-10 which prevails on the eastern and northern parts of the mountains in places where, as one gentleman picturesquely put it, "even a billy goat can't hang on." Once the P.A.D. precedent is set, the R1-10 developers will be clamoring for their own mass developments. And how can you deny them? I am not impressed with the argument that the owner who seeks P.A.D. does so to preserve the beauty of the mountain. If this were his goal, he could put one house on five acres and leave most of the mountain bare. If Mr. Spector has had the area for 18 years, he can easily recover his investment and make a profit with a far less dense development. I suspect the real reason developers want P.A.D. is to be able to build more units as economically as possible.

I realize that in opposing the Select Subdivisions P.A.D., we horsemen lost our trail. We lost the skirmish, but we still hope to win the war. Since that time, there have been four very constructive developments:

1. Most important, Phoenix has adopted a Plan for the Phoenix Mountains to guide development there.

2. Phoenix has purchased 60 acres in the vicinity of Squaw Peak.

3. The Arizona Outdoor Recreation Coordinating Committee has recommended matching funds for the development of Squaw Peak. (I only wish these funds could be used to purchase more land, rather than to develop it, but I am grateful that the funds may become available, however they may be used.)

4. The Bureau of Land Management is reclassifying some 800 acres of land in the Squaw Peak and North Mountain Park vicinity as recreational land for lease or sale to Phoenix (subject to the adjudication of the mining claims, which, of course, present a real obstacle to enlarging the park in this manner).

If progress continues to be made as rapidly as it has since the March hearing, we may yet have an area capable of giving Phoenicians and visitors a taste of the outdoor life and the Western atmosphere they crave.

I am reminded of a tale of two cities— Fort Lauderdale and Miami Beach. Fort Lauderdale found a way to preserve its wide sand beaches for all to enjoy. Miami Beach, on the other hand, sold its beaches. Today, you can't even see the ocean for the huge hotels which line it. And swimming in most areas is for people who can afford \$30 a day rooms.

Our mountains are to Phoenix what the beaches are to Florida. They are our "natural resources", and they are everybody's scenery. We can permit the erection of private walled communities with guards at the gate to cut us off from the mountains. Or we can plan them for the greatest enjoyment of the greatest number, perhaps by using tax incentives to persuade owners to dedicate trail easements and public areas. I believe that this is a matter which would challenge the imaginations of the city planners, and that, with encouragement, they could devise a realistic means of achieving the Plan for the Phoenix Mountains.

I am sorry I seem to be against "progress" in the usual sense of the word. I am really for "progress" in the long-range sense of preserving for the Phoenix of the future as much as possible of this delightful and unique spot.

In conclusion, let me say that if you or any of your fellow Councilmen or staff members are interested in seeing the region from the back of a horse, my husband and I will be delighted to have you accompany us any weekend.

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy V. Gilbert
Editor, ARIZONA HORSEMAN

P.S. This letter is being sent to other City Council members, Mr. Coblentz, and possibly others whom I feel may be interested in this matter.

Recreation Gets Priority In North Phoenix Plan

By DOROTHY V. GILBERT

Phoenix City Council on Aug. 9 unanimously adopted a comprehensive "Plan for the Phoenix Mountains."

The plan had been recommended to the council jointly by the Phoenix Planning Commission and by the Parks, Playgrounds and Recreational Board.

This marks the first time in the history of Phoenix that a specific area has received over all general planning. The area extends from Shaw Butte to Camelback and includes North Mountain and Squaw Peak Parks.

TAKING A LONG look into the future, the planners have come up with a preliminary concept "for this and future generations" which would preserve "the entire undeveloped portion of the Phoenix Mountains as a second wilderness park within the city," with a buffer zone of recreation areas between the wilderness district and urban developments.

The authors of the plan point out: "The opportunity to preserve . . . wilderness parks in the heart of a densely developed urban area is indeed unique and will insure that Phoenixians will have easy access to recreation open space for generations to come."

"The splendor of the scenic skyline" would be preserved as would geologic formations which range in time from the dinosaur-age relics near Camelback Mountain to relatively recent lava flows at Lookout Mountain. An effort would also be made to preserve plant life in its natural state and wildlife in its natural habitat.

THE PLAN ENVISIONS approximately 15 miles of scenic

drives with viewpoints at the gateways to the Valley where roads pass through the mountains. There would be facilities for picnicking and camping and some 30 miles of hiking, riding and interpretive trails. One proposed trail would follow the ridges of the mountains from the vicinity of Northern Avenue and the Arizona Canal to North Mountain Park.

Milton Sanders, planning commission chairman, and Ada

The Phoenix Mountains Open Space Plan is portrayed on this map with the exception of Camelback Mountain to the east (right of map).

The map prepared especially for The Phoenix Gazette by John W. Stansel shows the outline of the proposed open space area, part of which would be left as wilderness and part of which is proposed as recreation area. Shown also are Squaw Peak and North Mountain parks and 872 acres of federal land which Phoenix has applied to purchase at \$2.50 an acre. Three-fourths of this land is tied up with mining claims now under adjudication.

The map also shows the 60-acre parcel which Phoenix has agreed to purchase for the construction of Squaw Peak Freeway, for flood control in the Dreamy Draw area and for park land. The dotted lines indicate projected trails.

RI-6, RI-10, and RI-43 designate single-family residential zones, with minimum lot sizes ranging from 6,000 square feet to 43,560 square feet.

Docker, president of the Parks, Playgrounds and Recreational Board, have urged Phoenix citizens to acquaint themselves with the plan and have requested that city departments and citizen boards and commissions use it as reference in making future decisions. It is not a detailed binding plan, but a concept to be followed as closely as feasible. City planners point out that the real challenge lies ahead when efforts must be made to implement the plan.

Since most of the area is privately owned, the real problem is how to acquire enough land to carry out the concept, and how to plan the remaining land to enhance the concept rather than conflict with it. The current zoning pattern (RE-43 east of Squaw Peak and RI-10 west and north of the mountain) does not lend itself to the kind of open space proposed.

THE FORMER permits one house per acre and the latter zoning allows four houses per acre in an area which has been described as so rough "even a billy goat can't hang on." A great deal of citizen goodwill and support will be necessary if the city is to carry out its avowed plan of preserving the scenic skyline and wilderness character of the area.

Jim Witty, president of the Arizona State Horsemen's Association, which has been seeking a formula for preserving the Squaw Peak trails system, commended the City of Phoenix for its "forward-looking thinking" and added, "Although many people may not take time to write you regarding this situation, I think you can feel assured that the great preponderance of the public is behind you and will assist in implementing this wonderful idea. We send you our strongest 'pat on the back' for a giant step in making the City of Phoenix one of the leading cities of the nation as a place to vacation and live."

