

# City of Fresno

*Tower Theater*  
815 E Olive Ave., Fresno, CA 93728



## Meeting Minutes - Final

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

5:30 PM

Regular Meeting

In Person and/or Electronic, Tower Theater Lounge  
815 E Olive Ave., Fresno, CA 93728

## **Tower District Specific Plan Implementation** **Committee**

*Chairperson - Christopher Johnson*

*Vice Chair - Janay Conley*

*Board Member - Annie Lokrantz*

*Board Member - Michael Birdsong*

*Board Member - Myra Coble*

*Board Member - James Kitch*

*Board Member - Joseph Catania*

**THE COMMITTEE WELCOMES YOU TO THE TOWER THEATER, LOCATED AT 815 E OLIVE AVENUE, FRESNO, CA 93728**

**The meeting can also be viewed live at 5:30 P.M. on Comcast Channel 96 and AT&T channel 99.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**The following options are available for members of the public who want to address Tower District Specific Plan Implementation Committee:**

**1. You are invited to a Zoom webinar.**

**a) Register in advance for this webinar:**

**[https://fresno-gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_taAP1qgNRGGeXj2cB5mzQQ](https://fresno-gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_taAP1qgNRGGeXj2cB5mzQQ)**

**After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.**

**b) If you do not wish for your name to appear on the screen, then use the drop down menu and click on “rename” to rename yourself.**

**c) Those addressing Committee must state their name for the record.**

**OR**

**2. Join by phone: 1-669-900-9128**

**Webinar ID: 951 8694 8275**

**a) Those addressing the Committee must state their name and address for the record.**

**3. Email: [LongRangePlanning@fresno.gov](mailto:LongRangePlanning@fresno.gov)**

**a) Attendees may also email comments to be read during the meeting. Please include the agenda date and item number you wish to speak on in the subject line of your email. Include your name, and address for the record, at the top of the body of your email.**

**b) Emails will be a maximum of 450 words.**

**c) All comments received will be distributed to the Tower District Specific Plan**

Implementation Committee prior and during the meeting and will be a part of the official record.

d) Notwithstanding subsection c) above, unless otherwise required by law to be accepted by the City at or prior to a Tower District Specific Plan Implementation Committee meeting, no documents shall be accepted for review unless they are submitted to Long Range Planning at least 24 hours prior to the commencement of the meeting at which the associated agenda item is to be heard.

All participants will be on mute until they are called upon at which point they will be unmuted and have three minutes to talk. To prevent participants from having their video on, we will remove the option to show their video.

Pursuant to the Executive Order, and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in the Tower District Specific Plan Implementation Committee meeting, please contact the Planning Division, 559-621-8277 within 48 hours of the meeting.

## **I. Call to Order & Roll Call**

*Chair called the meeting to order at 5:39 pm and initiated the roll call.*

*Also present were Long Range Planning staff Sophia Pagoulatos, Casey Lauderdale, Yamilex Nava, Adrienne Asadoorian, Preston Her, Maya Mubarak, Christopher Green, and Matthew Chea; Council representative Brenda Cosio; consultant team Peter Winch, Diego Velasco, and Kate O'Beirne.*

**Present** 4 - Chairperson Christopher Johnson, Board Member Annie Lokrantz, Board Member James Kitch, and Board Member Joseph Catania

**Absent** 3 - Board Member Michael Birdsong, Vice Chair Janay Conley, and Board Member Myra Coble

## **II. Approve Agenda**

**On motion of Board Member Lokrantz, seconded by Board Member Catania, the above AGENDA was APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 4 - Chairperson Johnson, Board Member Lokrantz, Board Member Kitch and Board Member Catania

**Absent:** 3 - Board Member Birdsong, Vice Chair Conley and Board Member Coble

## **III. Approve Meeting Minutes**

**III-A**     [ID 23-1809](#)     November 14, 2023 Tower District Specific Implementation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes

**On motion of Board Member Lokrantz, seconded by Board Member Kitch, that the above Action Item be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 4 - Chairperson Johnson, Board Member Lokrantz, Board Member Kitch and Board Member Catania

**Absent:** 3 - Board Member Birdsong, Vice Chair Conley and Board Member Coble

## **IV. Council District Updates**

*Cosio from Council Member Annalisa Perea's office (District 1) did not have any updates. She provided information on the opening of a local business called Mi Cafecito (in Van Ness Village).*

*Johnson asked about the ribbon cutting and the opening of the new neighborhood pocket park, and the removal of the fencing around the new park. Staff stated the fence would come down at the ribbon cutting as scheduled and explained how Council Member Perea's office is working in conjunction with the Fresno Arts Council for an art installation.*

## **V. Staff Updates**

N/A

## **VI. Continued Matters**

### **VI-A**    [ID 23-1817](#)    Consideration of the Revised Committee Meeting Schedule for Calendar Year 2024

*Lauderdale presented the projected schedule for the TDSP Committee Meetings for 2024 and outlined the Specific Plan projected milestones for the upcoming year. Staff recommended changes to the upcoming year meeting schedule and proposed that the Committee meet twice in February 2024. Also, posed that the August 2024 meeting could be a joint meeting with the Tower District Design Review Committee since they oversee the Tower District design standards.*

*The Committee agreed to meet on February 20th and 27th and expressed interest in a joint meeting with the Tower Design Review Committee.*

**On motion of Board Member Lokrantz, seconded by Board Member Kitch, that the above Action Item be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 4 - Chairperson Johnson, Board Member Lokrantz, Board Member Kitch and Board Member Catania

**Absent:** 3 - Board Member Birdsong, Vice Chair Conley and Board Member Coble

## **VII. New Matters**

**VII-A** [ID 23-1818](#) Regular Monthly Subcommittee Updates

1. Implementation Role Subcommittee
2. Historic Preservation Subcommittee
3. Land Use, Zoning, & Entertainment District Subcommittee
4. Circulation Subcommittee
5. Public Spaces Subcommittee

*Catania represented the Land Use Subcommittee and provided an update on their latest discussions. The subcommittee delved into the southwest region of the Tower District, where they addressed concerns about industrial uses, truck routes that pass through residential areas zoned for industrial use, and the High-Speed Rail. Additionally, Catania shared on the subcommittee's plans to explore options for increasing density in the Tower District.*

*Lauderdale elaborated on the additional topics the Subcommittee will cover and provided the date of the next meeting, Jan 9, 2024.*

**VII-B** [ID 23-1819](#) Report of Targeted Revitalization Strategy

*Winch presented the Targeted Revitalization Strategy, the feedback on the community engagement, and the types of improvements people would like to see. Also discussed was the current zoning throughout the Tower District and the significance of how zoning in the TDSP could aid in revitalization.*

*Velasco from City Thinkers explained the Development Prototypes. The prototypes varied from townhomes, bungalow/cottage courts, commercial mixed-use, and podium mixed-use. He provided additional specifications for each type and showed the proposed development ideas in areas in the Tower District.*

*O'Beirne from EPS presented the Economic Feasibility Study. Townhomes and bungalow courts were found to be feasible, but the others were infeasible due to the high construction cost. O'Beirne provided ideas to lessen the construction cost, like streamlining the entitlement process, indirect public subsidies, and changing parking regulations.*

*Winch highlighted how the TDSP update could provide a way to start*

*implementing the previously discussed changes and aid in revitalizing the Tower District, like updating building regulations, enabling bungalow/duplex housing, and more flexibility with ADUs.*

*Johnson asked WRT to provide the analysis regarding the construction cost and staff. O'Beirne provided the different development prototypes from the study and showed the rental rates for brand-new construction and building costs.*

*Johnson shared positive comments for the economic study was as it showed the relationship between the cost and return of new construction.*

*Birdsong, joining as a member of the public questioned the conversion of the motels for revitalization, and staff responded to how the study focused on new developments.*

*Members of the public discussed the Tower revitalization strategy, recommended looking at case studies from similar development revitalization strategies, the plan for live-work spaces, the feasibility of townhome/ bungalow style, the Dairy Producer Industrial Use, aging infrastructure, conversion of office to land use, and mother-in-law suites.*

*Staff members explained how the live-work spaces could be examined by looking at existing zone districts that can permit them or expand the use regulation. Staff will work with the consultants to publish the information presented and give information on the city's ADU program.*

*Chairperson Johnson elaborated on how the Economic Feasibility Study is essential to bring to Fresno's City Council and commented further on development costs and CA's Building Code update driving prices up.*

## **VIII. Unscheduled Oral Communications**

*Lauderdale thanked the Fresno Holiday Home Tours Organizers and Sense of Place Gallery for allowing Tower Rocks to participate in the event.*

*Lokrantz expressed excitement seeing the Youth Ambassadors and*

*encouraged people to engage with them.*

*Staff Member Her provided information on the live Tower Rocks Hub map.*

## **IX. Adjournment**

*Next Meeting: January 16, 2023 at Tower Theater*

*The Chair adjourned meeting at 7:15 pm*