

City of Fresno

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



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

5:30 PM

Regular Meeting

In Person and/or Electronic
Tower Theater Lounge

Tower District Specific Plan Implementation

Committee

Chairperson - Christopher Johnson

Vice Chair - Michael Birdsong

Board Member - Annie Lokrantz

Board Member - Janay Conley

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

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

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 Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm and initiated the roll call.

Also present were Long Range Planning staff Sophia Pagoulatos, Casey Lauderdale, Preston Her, Adrienne Asadorian, Karlo Guillermo, Yamilex Nava; consultant team Peter Winch and Deeksha Rawat; Council District Staff Gabriela Olea (District 3), Brenda Cosio (District 1)

Present 6 - Chairperson Christopher Johnson, Vice Chair Michael Birdsong, Board Member Annie Lokrantz, Board Member Janay Conley, Board Member Myra Coble, and Board Member Joseph Catania

Absent 1 - Board Member James Kitch

II. Approve Agenda

Continued item VII-B (ID 23-1533) to the November 14, 2023 meeting.

On motion of Vice Chair Birdsong, seconded by Board Member Lokrantz, the above AGENDA were APPROVED AS AMENDED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Chairperson Johnson, Vice Chair Birdsong, Board Member Lokrantz, Board Member Conley, Board Member Coble and Board Member Catania

Absent: 1 - Board Member Kitch

III. Approve Meeting Minutes

III-A [ID 23-1536](#) September 19, 2023 Tower District Specific Implementation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes

Committee member Lokrantz, asked to correct the typo regarding staff members name.

On motion of Chairperson Johnson, seconded by Board Member Lokrantz, that the above Action Item be APPROVED AS AMENDED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Chairperson Johnson, Vice Chair Birdsong, Board Member Lokrantz, Board Member Conley, Board Member Coble and Board Member Catania

Absent: 1 - Board Member Kitch

IV. Council District Updates

Staff member Olea, provided three updates: Roeding Park Dog Park opening; the Fresno Arts Council is seeking artists and mural proposals for San Pablo Park; and the Wishon and Palm bike lanes have been delayed, and will open the first week of November, with a helmet and bike giveaway scheduled for November 4, 2023.

Johnson asked for an update on the barricades on the Palm bike lanes and staff said they would look into it.

Staff member Cosio, invited the general public to take part in a webinar that they are hosting with Public Works and Traffic Operations concerning bike lanes.

V. Staff Updates

V-A [ID 23-1540](#) Staff Update on Community Meeting scheduled for October 24, 2023, at Root Access, located at 1476 N Van Ness Ave.

Staff member Her, shared information about the Tower Rocks event, which was held at Root Access on October 24, 2023, to help the community stay informed about the Tower District Specific Plan Update. During the event, the community had the opportunity to paint a rock and have them placed around Tower.

V-B [ID 23-1531](#) Update on the feedback received from the public during the discussion of Development Prototypes and Historic Preservation at the September 19, 2023 Regular Committee Meeting and Staff's responses to each question / concern.

Staff member Pagoulatos shared that feedback that was received at the September Tower District Committee meeting, and the responses from staff are available to review.

VI. Continued Matters

N/A

VII. New Matters

VII-A [ID 23-1532](#) Election of Vice Chair of the Tower District Specific Plan Implementation Committee

Birdsong announced that he would step down from his position as Vice Chair.

Approved by unanimous vote, Annie Lokrantz nominated Board Member Janay Conley for the position of Vice Chair, with a second from Myra Conley.

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

Aye: 6 - Chairperson Johnson, Vice Chair Birdsong, Board Member Lokrantz, Board Member Conley, Board Member Coble and Board Member Catania

Absent: 1 - Board Member Kitch

VII-B [ID 23-1533](#) Consideration of the Revised Tower District Specific Plan Implementation Committee Meeting Schedule for Calendar Year 2024

Item was continued to the next meeting on November 14, 2023.

On motion of Vice Chair Birdsong, seconded by Board Member Lokrantz, that the above Action Item be CONTINUED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Chairperson Johnson, Vice Chair Birdsong, Board Member Lokrantz, Board Member Conley, Board Member Coble and Board Member Catania

Absent: 1 - Board Member Kitch

VII-C [ID 23-1534](#) 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

Committee member Coble, the Implementation Committee liaison stated that the Tower District Review Committee would be discussing smoke shops and the proposal sought to limit smoke shops to two per district.

Committee member Birdsong, pointed out an article on the TDPA Facebook page that describes the progress of the proposed ordinance and the likely outcome.

Staff member Woodward summarized the Circulation Subcommittee's discussion on policies and goals regarding the bike lanes surrounding businesses and the plan itself.

The Subcommittee members confirmed they had reviewed and discussed the circulation issues thoroughly. It was noted that bike lanes would encroach on street parking in the original plan, however converting to two-way traffic is no longer feasible. The removal of the couplet and making Wishon and Fulton one-way is not feasible. A parking plan is needed in the district. A trail is requested on the north and south streets, similar to the midtown trail.

Committee Member Lokrantz, highlighted a typo that "minority" be changed to "mobility", and also expressed concern about a road diet at McKinley and Palm.

Public Spaces Subcommittee briefly summarized what was discussed, including tree health, vacant lots, and library services.

Member of the public informed the Public Spaces Subcommittee that the Police Department has been going around the community encouraging business owners to top their parking lot trees to discourage people experiencing homelessness from utilizing the shade.

Member of the public reported that contractors did not adhere to dust control rules, and that staff never visited her neighborhood to inform her of updates and events concerning the Tower District Update, and would like more

information regarding parking on the street.

VII-D [ID 23-1535](#) Workshop by WRT Design on Circulation and Parks and Policy Recommendations for the Specific Plan Update

Consultant team member Rawat presented an overview of existing circulation conditions, including the urban street grid, street classification, transit and bike network, vehicle-versus-vehicle collisions, pedestrian- and bicycle-related collisions, infrastructure projects, and existing deficiencies. This discussion focused on the two existing parks in the Tower District, the thermal comfort, Fresno Parks Master Plan, Measure P, and the priority of existing and new parks.

Consultant team member Winch presented on the health and equity framework, the existing goals and policies for circulation and open spaces, and recommendations.

Committee member Birdsong recommended staff to look into the Tower Street Couplet Study.

Members of the public spoke with the County regarding the possibility of establishing a library in Tower, and the leasing department advised that the first step should be to move Gillis to another location. The Tower does not require a new location if Gillis can be relocated closer to the Tower. Nevertheless, if Gillis is located farther away from Tower, then perhaps a new Tower location would be necessary. Ted C Wills has a newly constructed green space that will be utilized as a playfield.

Member of the public suggested having representatives from other City Departments attend these policy discussions to ensure the implementation is consistent with the original intention.

Member of the public affirms that H Street should be open to traffic and multimodal, all light industrial developments in the TDSP should be rezoned, and encourages the Committee to take a strong position. Additionally, the public would like to see pedestrian connectivity to Broadway Park, including sidewalks.

Member of the public expressed concerns about the presentation's focus on bicycle lanes, the five years it took to make improvements to the Roeding parking lot, and the lack of solutions for transitional housing presented by the staff.

Committee member Coble added that there are no sidewalks from the Tower District to Roeding Park, which makes it impossible to walk.

VIII. Unscheduled Oral Communications

Member of the public encouraged the Committee and City staff to revamp the outreach strategy, and staff assured that door-to-door canvassing has been taking place.

Member of the public informed the community regarding the potential development of ADU's and tiny homes in Tower.

Staff member Pagoulatos stated the November meeting will focus on the Tower Entertainment District.

IX. Adjournment

*Next Meeting: November 14, 2023 at Tower Theater
The Chair adjourned meeting at 7:26 pm*