

City of Fresno

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



Meeting Minutes - Final

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

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

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. 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 5:41 pm and initiated the roll call.

Also present were Long Range Planning staff Sophia Pagoulatos, Adrienne Asadoorian-Gilbert, Yamilex Nava, Maya Mubarak, Veronica Martinez, Preston Her, Christopher Green, Emily Reyes, and Matthew Chea; consultant team Peter Winch and Deeksha Rawat; Council District Staff Brenda Cosio (District 1);

Present 7 - Chairperson Christopher Johnson, Board Member Michael Birdsong, Board Member Annie Lokrantz, Vice Chair Janay Conley, Board Member Myra Coble, Board Member James Kitch, and Board Member Joseph Catania

II. Approve Agenda

On motion of Board Member Coble, seconded by Board Member Lokrantz, the above MINUTES were APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Chairperson Johnson, Board Member Birdsong, Board Member Lokrantz, Vice Chair Conley, Board Member Coble, Board Member Kitch and Board Member Catania

III. Approve Meeting Minutes

IV. Council District Updates

N/A

V. Staff Updates

VI. Continued Matters

VI-A [ID 24-307](#) Presentation on Land Use Concepts

Winch summarized the previous meeting, which focused on five Land Use Themes. The meeting addressed concerns about business displacement, family-oriented neighborhoods, protection of residential areas from industrial uses, mitigating impact without changing Light Industrial Zoning, examining the Tower District from the perspective of residents, supporting higher density, addressing traffic concerns, ensuring that new developments

contribute positively to the character of the Tower District, and exploring non-market models to provide affordable housing and grocery stores.

Coble requested additional clarification regarding the concept of a non-market model, to which the WRT staff responded by stating that it was designed to facilitate development without being dependent on the private market.

Members of the public discussed concerns about bike lanes not complying with regulations, health concerns around Producers, Caltrans' work on the 99, and the accessibility in the Tower Districts. Members also expressed concerns about the effects of industrial land use on air quality and the environment and discussed mitigation measures. They also mentioned the smell caused by the High-Speed Rail and PG&E. Finally, the community expressed support for the businesses in the industrial area and acknowledged their contributions to the community.

Birdsong explained the history related to Producers and the rezone that occurred.

Chairperson Johnson requested information regarding changes to the Residential Land Use Theme and expressed concerns about the creation of ADUs and parking issues.

Catania provided a comprehensive list of potential businesses that could be established in the "middle" and the associated traffic and pedestrian patterns that might emerge as a result of such ventures. Lauderdale was able to elaborate further, explaining the importance of aligning these businesses with the current Land Use framework already in place.

Chairperson Johnson asked about zoning in high density and Land use designation impacts and what the results of the proposed theme changes would be.

Winch summarized the changes to the Themes. (Main Street, Park Opportunities, Employment Theme,)

Pagoulatos explained that proposed changes would remove some legal non-conformity and that parking restrictions/regulation are created by State.

VII. New Matters

VII-A [ID 24-308](#) Policy Recap Discussion

Rawat reviewed the document that will be handed out to provide comments on the proposed changes. WRT staff explained the organization and the overview of the structure on the document, and key feature to note for the Subcommittee.

Chairperson Johnson asked how the document would be handed out to the Subcommittees.

VIII. Unscheduled Oral Communications

There were concerns from members of the public about air quality, zoning changes, accessibility of sidewalks, safety concerns related to bike lanes, and potential trail development along the canal. It was also noted that Fresno City College is acquiring land in the area and La Tapatia is willing to work with the community to improve South Tower and Belmont Corridor while meeting CA Air Resource Board requirements.

IX. Adjournment

*Next Meeting: March 19, 2023 at Tower Theater
The Chair adjourned meeting at 7:16 pm*