

City of Fresno

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



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Tuesday, November 14, 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

**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

Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 5:38 pm and initiated the roll call.

Also present were Long Range Planning staff Sophia Pagoulatos, Casey Lauderdale, Yamilex Nava, Preston Her, Christopher Green, and Matthew Chea; consultant team Peter Winch and Olivia Grenzsbach; City staff Phillip Siegreist (Planning Manager), Mike Landon (Deputy Police Chief), Jennifer Horsford (Police Captain), Christina Roberson (Assistant City Attorney), and Susan Chudy (Project Liaison/Program Administrator).

Present 6 - 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

Absent 1 - Chairperson Christopher Johnson

II. Approve Agenda

Continued item VI-A (ID 23-1659) to the December 12, 2023 meeting.

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

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

Absent: 1 - Chairperson Johnson

III. Approve Meeting Minutes

III-A [ID 23-1658](#) October 17, 2023 Tower District Specific Implementation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes

Committee member Coble, asked to correct Committees last name from Myra Conley to Myra Coble.

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

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

Absent: 1 - Chairperson Johnson

IV. Council District Updates

N/A

V. Staff Updates

V-A [ID 23-1656](#) Introduction to the One Fresno Ambassador Program in Tower

Chudy discussed the recently launched Fresno Hop Trolley System, as well as its operation hours and stops.

Committee member Lokrantz asked for clarification regarding the stops, and Chudy informed her that there is a stop on Van Ness/University.

Coble asked how many trolleys were on the system. Staff replied that the City owns three trolleys, with two in operation at one time. Ambassadors are on hand to assist and greet passengers.

VI. Continued Matters

VI-A [ID 23-1659](#) Consideration of the Revised Committee Meeting Schedule for Calendar Year 2024

Item was continued as noted to the next meeting on December 12, 2023.

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

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

Absent: 1 - Chairperson Johnson

VII. New Matters

VII-A [ID 23-1681](#) 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 noted that the Tower District Design Review Committee discussed smoke shops as it relates to signage, buffer zones, and saturation, including how many are allowed. A second meeting will be held on November 21, 2023.

VII-B [ID 23-1660](#) Presentation and Recommendations regarding the creation of a Tower Entertainment District

Staff member Lauderdale gave a brief overview of what the Tower Specific Plan is.

Winch (Consultant) explained what the Tower Entertainment District is and showed a list of the nighttime businesses.

Grenzebach (Consultant) presented the feedback received during the stakeholder meeting from business owners, business district representatives, residents and neighborhood association representatives and provided examples of other cities' approaches.

Winch (Consultant) discussed the recommended boundaries for the Street Vendor Pilot Program, CUP consistency and applicability, safety, noise sound levels in patios. A number of policy recommendations were made regarding to noise, sidewalk vendors, trash and other nuisances, traffic and parking, business diversity and concentration and entertainment district enhancements.

Committee member Coble asked for clarification regarding patio noise and who is responsible for managing business improvements. Winch stated the noise should not be audible from the neighboring property and the Tower Marketing Committee could be the one to facilitate the improvements.

Committee member Catania asked if the businesses could come together for improvements in the business district such as parking, benches, and artwork that could be funded by grants. Winch agreed and suggested it could be funded through matched funds from the City.

Vice Chair Conley asked for the sample size of the data that was recorded at the stakeholder meetings and Staff replied with estimates for each of the Focus Groups and that similar questions were incorporated into the August community workshop.

Public Comment:

A member of the public stated that TMC provides many services, such as trash containers, lighting, grant assistance, and they would like to see TMC remain in place, but would be open to a BID.

A member of the public said CUP renewals are expensive. They felt ABC should be responsible for administering food regulations, and that Tower does not need another PBID.

A member of the public asked about standardizing CUPs, mentioned how expensive they are, and asked for clarification on what is classified as amplified music.

A member of the public mentioned some businesses were left out of the boundary and requested bike parking be added.

A member of the public asked if there were any plans to connect FAX with the Fresno Hop Trolley.

A member of the public asked if there was a way to reorganize TMC to better serve businesses.

A member of the public expressed concerns about drinking and driving.

A member of the public commented that the City's regulations and processes are the reason for the lack of diversity in businesses.

A member of the public asked why the rules need to change and suggested CUPs be checked by City inspectors, while enforcing new and existing regulations.

A member of the public stated the CUP regulations changed post-COVID and ABC wants to close his patio. Staff responded that it would be something that would need to be sorted out with ABC.

Committee member Catania voiced support for TMC and requested more resources available to them. He had security and property damage concerns and a concern about lapse in business operations upon renewal, suggesting a grace period for applicants.

Staff member Siegreest explained that under the current Development Code Conditional Use Permits last for seven years and explained the process of a renewal.

Winch stated that within 12 months of TED going into effect business would have to apply for it.

VIII. Unscheduled Oral Communications

Staff member Lauderdale mentioned that the School Area Team (which is part of Code Enforcement) provided materials to share with everyone. Staff thanked Root Access for hosting the Tower Rocks event. A second event will be held at Sense of Place Gallery, near Fresno High on December 4, 2023, with the Holiday Home Tour.

IX. Adjournment

*Next Meeting: December 12, 2023 at Tower Theater
The Vice Chair adjourned meeting at 7:32 pm*