



**CITY OF FOWLER  
SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
July 15, 2010**

MINUTES

Chairman Mukai called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

**Commissioners Present:** Gary Mukai, Sandie Monis and Craig Mellon

**Commissioners Absent:** Henry Fernandez and Mark Rodriquez

**City Staff Present:** City Attorney Scott Cross, Planning Consultant Bruce O'Neal, Community Development Director Randy Deaver and Planning Secretary Corina Burrola

**Reorganization:**

A nomination was made by Commissioner Monis to re-elect Gary Mukai as Chairman for the Planning Commission this was second by Commissioner Mellon and passed by roll call vote of 3-0-0-2.

A nomination was made by Commissioner Monis to re-elect Craig Mellon as Vice-Chairman for the Planning Commission this was second by Chairman Mukai and passed by roll call vote of 3-0-0-2.

**Approval of Minutes:**

A motion was made by Commissioner Monis to approve the minutes of March 11, 2010 and second by Vice-Chair Mellon and passed by 3-0-0-2.

**Public Presentation:**

There were no public presentations (Public Presentation closed at 6:39 p.m.)

**Agenda Item No. 6:**

**Public Hearing to Consider Conditional Use Permit No. 10-02, Filed by National Raisin Company to operate an Anaerobic Digester for Processing Agricultural Wastewater on a Portion of APN 343-053-23.** Planning Consultant, Bruce O'Neal prepared a brief report and explained to the Commission the background of a previously proposed project, CUP 98-01, filed by National Raisin to permit a land disposal option for waste water, which was a joint application combined with the County of Fresno. That application was very controversial especially with neighbors to the north and northeast; it was approved by the Planning Commission but was never constructed. Conditional Use Permit No. 10-02 proposal presented to the Commission today is a much improved state of the art proposal compared to the land disposal option that was considered in 1998, the Air District and SKF and other agencies strongly support this project because of the benefit to the environment. The digester would remove organic matter and other contaminants from water used to wash and process raisins and other fruit prior to discharge to the SKF County Sanitation District wastewater treatment facility. Other advantages is that it generate methane gas which is than used to generate steam and electricity and the electricity is than used for plant operation in order to run the anaerobic digester.

The digester would be located on approximately 5 acres of a 14.95 acre parcel; the digester would have the capacity to treat up to 10,000,000 gallons with approximately 300,000 gallons moving through the system per day. A Negative Declaration was prepared and circulated to all reviewing agencies which only two comments were received and have been provided in the staff report for the Planning Commission to review.

Commissioner Monis asked questions pertaining to odor and noise coming from the digester and how the dirty water will get from one end to the other. Bruce O'Neal explained that he and Community Development Director, Randy Deaver, toured the Valley Fig location and no odor was detected and since there are no moving parts to the digester noise would not be an issue. The only noise may come from the electrical generator.

**Public Hearing Opened:** 6:49 p.m.

Russ Murray, Waste Water Treatment Consultant, has built four anaerobic digesters the original digester was built for Sun Maid Raisins in Orange Cove in 1976 and has been in constant operation since then. Mr. Murray feels that from a track record stand point, the way these digesters are constructed there won't be any impact of any sort on the community or as far as odor. Mr. Murray had prepared a PowerPoint presentation unfortunately was unable to present it to the Commission to review. Samples of the materials used for the covers were presented to the Commission and explained of their uses. Mr. Murray continued to explain to the Commission the uses of these covers and how the digester operates. Mr. Murray continues to monitor the locations he is in charge of and there have been no complaints from any of the residents.

Joseph Daggett from Gateway Engineering was able to present a quick preview of the PowerPoint presentation to the Commission on the operation of the Anaerobic Digester.

There were no public presentations pertaining to Conditional Use Permit No. 10-02

**Public Hearing Closed:** 7:08 p.m.

Commissioner Monis made a motion to approve Negative Declaration for CUP No. 10-02; this was second by Vice-Chair Mellon and passed on a 3-0-0-2 vote.

Commissioner Monis made a motion to approve Conditional Use Permit No. 10-02; this was second by Vice-Chair Mellon and passed on a 3-0-0-2 vote.

**Communications:**

Planning Consultant, Bruce O'Neal advised the Commission that there will an Item presented on the Agenda for August 5, 2010.

Chairman Mukai congratulated Commissioner Monis for her many years of service to the City of Fowler. Commissioner Monis will be retiring from the City of Fowler.

No other business was discussed and the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Corina Burrola  
Planning Secretary