

**MINUTES OF THE FOWLER CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MARCH 16, 2021**

Mayor Cardenas called the meeting to order at 7:04 p. m. Roll call was taken.

Councilmembers Present: Cardenas, Rodriquez, Kazarian, Mejia, and Parra (via Teleconference)

City Staff Present: City Manager Quan, City Attorney Cross, Police Chief Alcaraz, Public Works Director Dominguez, Fire Chief Lopez, City Planner Marple, Deputy City Clerk Burrola, and Rebecca Molina

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

There were no public presentations.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**STAFF REPORTS**

**Public Meeting to Consider Accepting the 2020 Annual Progress Report for the City of Fowler General Plan and Housing Element**

City Planner Marple reminded the council the annual progress report is due April 1, 2021, in accordance with Government Code Section 65400. Ms. Marple noted the General Plan Update encountered slight delays due to COVID and not able to execute all of the public outreach that was intended in the year 2020, but completed the policy paper for both climate adaptation and environmental justice; and the General Plan Policy Audit Report.

Ms. Marple also highlighted completed 2020 projects which included: annexation of the Woodside Map at Sumner and Sunnyside; approval of Buford Travel Center Project which includes two drive thru restaurants, a sit down restaurant, and a hotel; Three Crowns Industrial Park continues to facilitate their development.

City Planner Marple also mentioned staff continues to work with council, city manager, and EDC to attract businesses to Fowler. General plan update workshops will be held in April and May. Ms. Marple also reported, upon further review the completion of the General Plan and EIR will be November 2022 instead of the initial March 2023.

Ms. Marple also reported that upon further review of the schedule of completion for the General Plan, the initial scheduled completion date was March of 2023. City Planner

updated that she is now anticipating the new completion date of the General Plan and the EIR to be November of 2022.

Ms. Marple reviewed the Housing Element and annual progress report, mandated pursuant to the government code. The City of Fowler participated with the Fresno COG in the multijurisdictional housing element that covers the eight year period from 2015 to 2023. Fowler's regional housing needs allocation for the 8 year timeframe is 524 units. Thus far, Fowler is at 55 units and is still in need of 286 units to meet the unit allocation. Ms. Marple recommended the council approve resolution 2493 and accept the annual progress reports for submittal to both the office of planning and research and the housing and community development department.

Ms. Marple answered questions from the dais. Confirming the majority of residential building permits issued in 2020 were from the K. Hovnanian subdivision; Woodside Home and possibly KB Homes will possibly pull permits as well. Ms. Marple did note the concern Fowler is not meeting the low and very low allocations put forth by the state, but she and City Manager Quan have ideas of having partnership conversations with Fresno County Housing Authority or self-help enterprises. The city has until 2023 to meet the aforementioned allocation numbers; then the city would receive new allocation numbers as part of the sixth cycle housing element which can exist throughout the city in various zoning districts. Ms. Marple confirmed the smaller homes being built behind people's homes could be considered low income if they meet the criteria. There is currently one ADU (Accessory Dwelling Units) that has been issued this year and anticipate three more applications coming in soon.

The Mayor opened the floor to public comments on the matter at 7:26 p.m.

With no public comments, the hearing closed at 7:27 p.m.

A motion was made by Councilmember Kazarian to approve Resolution No. 2493, seconded by Councilmember Mejia. The motion carried by roll call vote: Ayes: Kazarian, Mejia, Cardenas, Rodriquez, and Parra. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None

### **Public Meeting to Authorize the City Manager to Submit an Application for Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Grant Funds**

City Planner Marple briefed the Council on the Regional Early Action Planning Grant Program (REAP). As part of the 2019/2020 budget act, the state allocated \$125 million to regions for the REAP. Of the \$125 million Fresno COG was giving \$1.1 million; \$900,000 has been set aside for the Fresno COG Housing Planning Grants Program. The grant application was submitted to the COG.

Ms. Marple requested funds in the amount of \$100,000 to facilitate the completion of the general plan to support efficient land use patterns and increase housing opportunities. Funds are also anticipated to be used for a sub-area traffic model pursuant to the vehicle miles traveled analysis and prepare traffic impact analysis guidelines for land use and

transportation guidelines. Ms. Marple explained these guidelines will help facilitate the housing element to provide and accommodate additional housing opportunities.

The Mayor opened the public hearing. No public comments.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Rodriguez to approve Resolution No. 2493, seconded by Councilmember Kazarian. The motion carried by roll call vote: Ayes: Rodriquez, Kazarian, Cardenas, Mejia, and Parra. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

## **CITY ENGINEER'S REPORT**

No report was given.

## **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

### **COVID-19 Update**

City Manager Quan said that according to her weekly call with the Fresno County Department of Public Health the City is currently at 977 total positive cases. She mentioned that COVID Vaccines were opened up this week to anybody 16-64 years of age with underlying health conditions. City staff continues to post any vaccination clinics and availability on the city website; if anyone knows of any organizations offering vaccinations out in the community please let us know so that it can be posted on the city website and we can get the word out. Mayor Cardenas mentioned because his place of business is next door to the United Health Center here in Fowler, the center will inform him when they have leftover vaccines available toward the end of the day. Councilmember Kazarian asked Councilmember Parra if he had any guidance as far as the age requirements and Mr. Parra stated that because of the refrigeration issue and the expiration date of the vaccine the leftovers are available to any age, but Moderna has the age limit of 18 and Pfizer's age limit is 16 year old. Mayor Cardenas wanted to conclude with announcing that United Health Center in Fowler would also be having a vaccine clinic tomorrow, March 17 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Ms. Quan went on to discuss the American Rescue Plan and Fowler is ear marked to receive 1.278 million dollars. Ms. Quan has been in contact with the league and that money will allocated to the state and there will be an application process. She went on to explain that there will be two allocations of money given to cities that have a population of less than 50,000 and the city would have to have a spending plan and spend it by December of 2024. Ms. Quan will keep everyone updated on this matter as she doesn't believe they will have the guideline ready any time soon. She continued to explain that the American Rescue Plan is part of the COVID Relief Package that the President signed. Its Ms. Quan's understanding this is very flexible spending so a discussion in the future will have to be had in regards to the allocation of these dollars.

Ms. Quan announced outgoing Deputy City Clerk Corina Burrola's last day will be Friday, March 19. Councilmember's individually thanked her for her outstanding service throughout her years here with the city.

Lastly City Manager Quan reported that she was nominated as the Vice Chair of the COG Policy Advisory Committee for this upcoming year and she is happy to represent the city of Fowler. The council congratulated her.

## **PUBLIC WORKS REPORT**

Public Works Director Dominguez opened his discussion with wanting the council's consensus on reopening the public facility and specifically the city parks and restrooms. Ultimately the decision would be at the discretion of the city. Fresno County Public Health advised him that the city does need to take the necessary precautions and use of proper signage. He mentioned the city does have the ability to sanitize the playground equipment and restrooms at least two times a week or more. Lastly, Mr. Dominguez reported the Panzak Park restroom remodel should be completed this Friday, March 19.

Councilmember Kazarian voiced his opinion of wanting to open up the parks as long as proper protocols are being followed. He added hand sanitizer stations should be made available possibly in the alley public seating area.

Councilmember Mejia asked what the county's requirement were on how often they think the equipment should be sanitized on a weekly basis. City Manager Quan answered that it was up to the discretion of the city based on staff capacity.

Council unanimously agreed after proper signage and sanitizer stations are available that all city parks should reopen after final inspection of the Panzak Park walk through of the remodeled restrooms.

## **FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

City Manager Quan reported the job opening for the Finance Director position has been posted. The job posting will close March 26, 2021. She also stated she will have a Finance Item on the upcoming April 6 council meeting.

## **POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT**

Police Chief Alcaraz explained how based on the 20/21 budget year he was planning on purchasing two patrol vehicles however due to the COVID pandemic he scaled it back to purchasing and outfitting one patrol vehicle. It was brought to his attention that the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution District had qualified the 2021 Ford Explorer Hybrid as a qualifying vehicle for their clean emission grant. He contacted SJVAPD and they were able to revise our application and submitted the application for two hybrid vehicles and approved them. Mayor Pro-Tem Rodriquez asked how old the patrol cars were that would be getting replaced and Chief Alcaraz said they are from 2007-2011. Councilmember

Parra agreed that the extra funding needed for the patrol vehicles should be taken out of Measure N funds. Mayor Cardenas asked if Chief Alcaraz has planned to surplus the two Crown Victoria vehicles when they receive the new cars. Chief mentioned he may surplus them or keep them for his high visibility project, but one he does want to keep as a memento to highlight this historic choice of vehicle in law enforcement.

Public comments opened at 7:58 p.m.

Member of the community, Steve Barela, stated that Measure N should be utilized for the Fire and Police Departments because that is what it is intended for.

The public hearing closed at 8:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Rodriquez to approve Resolution No. 2495, amending the 20-21 adopted budget to purchase and outfit an additional police department vehicle, seconded by Councilmember Parra. The motion carried by roll call vote: Ayes: Rodriquez, Parra, Cardenas, Kazarian, Mejia. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT**

No report was given.

## **CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

City Attorney Cross reported that in a future meeting he will need to give a Brown Act update. Councilmember Parra mentioned that Mr. Cross does need to cover AB 1234 because it is required.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

The consent calendar consisted of: A) Ratification of Warrants – March 16, 2021; B) Approve Minutes of the City Council Special Meeting – March 16, 2021, and City Council Meeting – March 16, 2021

Mayor Pro-Tem Rodriquez made a motion to approve the consent calendar, seconded by Councilmember Mejia. The motion carried by roll call vote: Ayes: Rodriquez, Mejia, Cardenas, Kazarian, and Parra. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mayor Cardenas made a recommendation to appoint Stephanie Mejia to fill the Recreation Commission vacancy. Councilmember Mejia recused himself and stepped out due to conflict of interest. Mayor mentioned they received three applications. Councilmember Kazarian brought up the subject of nepotism and to be mindful of how

this could look to the public because Stephanie Mejia is Councilmembers Mejia's wife. Mayor assured Councilmember Kazarian that Mrs. Mejia is more than qualified for the position. City Manager Quan wanted to add that she attended the last Recreation Commission Meeting and said that she was very impressed with Mrs. Mejia's work and volunteer involvement and thought she added a lot to the commission. Ms. Quan also confirmed with City Attorney Cross that the Recreation Commissioners do not receive a stipend and they are truly a volunteer. Mayor also brought up that Mrs. Mejia works for Sun-Maid as the event coordinator and very experienced in planning events and would be very beneficial to the Recreation Commission. Councilmember Parra added that she is creative, organized, and has done great work with the community. Mayor wrapped up the discussion by asking if the members of the council accepted his recommendation to appoint Stephanie Mejia to the Recreation Commission.

Mayor Pro-Tem made a motion to approve the appointment of Stephanie Mejia to the Recreation Commission, seconded by Councilmember Parra. The motion carried by roll call vote: Ayes: Rodriquez, Parra, Cardenas, Kazarian. Noes: None. Abstain: Mejia. Absent: None

Councilmember Kazarian reported that he has been meeting with EDC staff on economic development in the City of Fowler.

Councilmember Mejia reported they have been working very hard on the city wide Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt coming up. Registration for the event opened in February and they had to close it early because they received over 600 participants sign up. They will continue to work on making it a COVID safe event.

Councilmember Parra reported that he has been working with City Manager Quan to insure the league to make sure there is a plan to distribute the 1.2 million dollars coming to the city.

Mayor Cardenas reported that he had seen a banner on Main Street announcing United Health Center celebrated 50 years of service to the community. He stated he would like to give formal recognition and prepare a resolution for UHC recognize them for excellent service. Councilmember Parra suggested we could recognize Dr. Shankerman who lost his life to COVID. City Manager Quan suggested a proclamation.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Having no further business, Mayor Pro-Tem Rodriquez made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Mejia to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.