

MINUTES OF THE FOWLER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday December 7, 2021

Mayor Cardenas called the meeting to order at 7:00 p. m.

Councilmembers Present: Cardenas, Rodriquez, Kazarian, Mejia, Parra

City Staff Present: City Manager Quan, City Attorney Cross, Police Chief Alcaraz, Public Works Director Dominguez, Community Development Director Gaffery, Recreation Coordinator Hernandez, City Planner Marple, Finance Director Moreno, City Engineer Peters, Deputy City Clerk Vasquez

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Fowler resident Melissa Squeo, Raul Gonzalez of Fresno County Department of Public Health, and the Patel family of La Quinta Inn Fowler addressed the Council.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Pro-Tem Rodriquez made a motion to approve the consent calendar, seconded by Councilmember Kazarian. The motion carried by roll call vote: Ayes: Rodriquez, Kazarian, Cardenas, Mejia, Parra.

7. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

7-A. FINANCE

i. ACCEPT the Independent Auditor's Report for the Fiscal year 2018-2019

Finance Director Moreno introduced Gus Corona, Partner of Borchardt, Corona, Faeth & Zakarian, Certified Public Accountants. Mr. Corona provided an overview of the auditor's report for Fiscal Year 2018/19. He stated in stated in their opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund and the aggregate remaining fund information of City of Fowler as of June 30, 2019, and the respective changes in financial position, and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Various Councilmembers had questions about internal controls; City Manager Quan provided responses.

7-B. PLANNING

i. **Public Hearing to CONSIDER Adoption of the Fresno County SB 743 Implementation Regional Guidelines.**

City Planner Marple provided an overview of Fresno County SB 743 Implementation Regional Guidelines. She stated that historically, in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lead agencies are required to analyze traffic impacts based on level of service (LOS). City Planner Marple reported that in order to shift the traffic analysis to a method that considered greenhouse gas emissions, Senate Bill 743 (SB 743) was passed in 2013. She stated SB 743 requires lead agencies to examine vehicle miles traveled (VMT) generated by a project, with a mandatory transition for all analysis from LOS to VMT by July 1, 2020. City Planner Marple reported SB 743 does not affect the City's ability to maintain LOS standards as part of the General Plan and require street improvements in conjunction with projects.

City Planner Marple reported the Fresno Council of Governments (COG) prepared their own analysis and prepared VMT guidelines for use by COG's member agencies. She stated that following extensive public review, COG adopted the "Fresno County SB 743 Implementation Regional Guidelines" in June 2020. City Planner Marple reported the largest difference between the State's guidelines and COG's guidelines is the threshold. The State's guidelines require a 15% reduction by each project and the COG's guidelines require a 13% reduction. City Planner Marple stated staff and the Planning Commission recommend the City Council adopt the Fresno County SB 743 Implementation Regional Guidelines as the City of Fowler's VMT threshold for future CEQA analysis.

There was no public comment.

Mayor Pro-Tem Rodriguez made a motion to CONSIDER Adoption of the Fresno County SB 743 Implementation Regional Guidelines, seconded by Councilmember Parra. The motion carried by roll call vote: Ayes: Rodriguez, Parra, Cardenas, Kazarian, Mejia.

ii. **Public Hearing to CONSIDER Planning Case No. 21-0015, a Tentative Subdivision Map (TSM), Prezone, Annexation, and Adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration, submitted by Sunshine Raisin Corporation for approximately 29.04 acres on**

the east side of South Armstrong Avenue between East Adams and East Hogan Avenues.

City Planner Marple requested this item be continued to the January 4, 2022 Council meeting.

Mayor Pro-Tem Rodriguez made a motion to continue Public Hearing to CONSIDER Planning Case No. 21-0015, a Tentative Subdivision Map (TSM), Prezone, Annexation, and Adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration, submitted by Sunshine Raisin Corporation for approximately 29.04 acres on the east side of South Armstrong Avenue between East Adams and East Hogan Avenues to January 4, 2022 Council meeting, seconded by Councilmember Kazarian. The motion carried by roll call vote: Rodriguez, Kazarian, Cardenas, Mejia, Parra.

7-C. PUBLIC WORKS

i. Discussion Regarding SKGSA Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022 Budget.

As requested by Council, City Engineer Peters presented an overview of the South Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SKGSA) budget. He stated that each spring the SKGSA adopts a preliminary budget. City Engineer Peters reported the SKGSA budget is funded by contributions from member agencies based on gross water pumped. He reported Fowler's contribution is approximately 13% of the SKGSA budget. Various Councilmembers had questions about SKGSA funding, background on how GSAs function, returns on contributions, and potential grants.

ii. Receive analysis from ARC Alternatives on their third-party review of the City's proposals for the Solar/Energy Conservation Project.

Provide Staff direction on next steps for the Project, which may include authorizing the City Manager or designee to negotiate a Project Agreement with the selected vendor.

Councilmember Parra recused himself from the discussion of this item.

City Manager Quan introduced Simon Olivieri of ARC Alternatives who reviewed the City's proposals for the Solar/Energy Conservation Project. Mr. Olivieri provided an overview of their findings which included a review of the initial project scope, and vendor responses.

He stated after reviewing the potential sites, the best option in the immediate term is for the City to install the solar system at the new Fire Station building, which would offset utility costs at that facility and at City Hall. Mr. Olivieri reported the timing of this project in relation to PG&E interconnection rules presents a risk to the project and securing grandfathering will likely be crucial to the financial success of the Solar/Energy Conservation Project. Mr. Olivieri stated the ideal process is to select a vendor first and have them manage the interconnection process. He stated a contingency option is to submit interconnection prior to having a vendor partner.

Various Councilmembers had questions about cost per watt, monitoring cost, and whether the City should pursue additional vendor bids. Councilmember Kazarian inquired if staff could share comments on their recommended direction. City Manager Quan stated staff recommend ARC Alternatives pursue additional vendor bids and work with SitelogIQ on a possible cost reduction. After discussion, Council directed staff to work with ARC Alternatives to pursue additional vendor bids and work with SitelogIQ on reducing their bid.

iii. Review alternatives and provide staff direction regarding potential request to Caltrans to add median treatment to the State Route 99 improvement project.

City Engineer Peters reported Caltrans is performing work on State Route 99 through Fowler which includes installation of a center median concrete barrier. He shared examples of various options with the Council. After discussion, it was the consensus of Council to request Caltrans install a brick design with the City of Fowler logo.

7-D. CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

i. COVID-19 Update

City Manager Quan reported the Fresno County Department of Public Health's data shows Fowler's vaccination rate is 70%. She reminded Council the Fire Station Open House is Tuesday, December 14th at 3:00 p.m. City Manager Quan stated the next Council meeting will be January 4, 2022. She reported staff is moving forward with the EDA grant for the community center and working with the Economic Development Corporation and Sonia Hall with the City of Parlier who was involved with the Orange Cove Community Center.

8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS – (CITY MANAGER)

8-A. FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Finance Director Moreno provided a second quarter sales tax update.

8-B. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Public Works Director Dominguez updated Council on the Donny Wright dog park and Laker Lane fences. He also stated staff is working on two grants as well.

8-C. CITY CLERK DEPARTMENT

Deputy City Clerk Vasquez updated Council on the Chambers audio/visual upgrade.

8-D. PLANNING DEPARTMENT

City Planner Marple reported the General Plan EIR Scoping Meeting was held last month and the comment period will close December 10, 2021.

8-E. POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Chief Alcaraz distributed DOJ crime statistics for the months of October and November.

9. COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Mayor Cardenas thanked Recreation Coordinator Hernandez, the Recreation Commission, Public Works Department, and Police Department for a successful Christmas on Merced Street event.

Mayor Pro-Tem Rodriquez, Councilmember Kazarian, Councilmember Mejia, and Councilmember Parra echoed Mayor Cardenas' comments.

9-A. Board/Committee Assignment for 2022 Veterans Day event

Mayor Pro-Tem Rodriquez volunteered to be the 2022 liaison for the Veterans Day event committee.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Councilmember Kazarian made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilmember Parra. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.