

**MINUTES OF THE FOWLER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 17, 2020**

Mayor Cardenas called the meeting to order at 7:02 p. m. Roll call was taken.

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

Councilmembers Absent: Rodriquez

City Staff Present: City Manager/City Clerk Davis, City Attorney Cross, Finance Director Uyeda, Police Chief Alcaraz, Public Works Director Dominguez, Fire Chief Lopez, Deputy, City Engineer Peters, Planning Commissioner Mejia, and City Planner Marple (Via Teleconference)

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Kathleen Mclemore, Fowler resident, voiced her concerns regarding people not picking up after their pets. She is requesting signs be placed in and around her neighborhood.

PRESENTATION OF EMPLOYEE PLAQUES FOR YEARS OF SERVICE

Mayor Cardenas presented plaques to employees for their years of service with the City. Plaques were presented to Building Official Nolasco Baxa, 5 years; Deputy City Clerk Corina Burrola, 10 years; Fire Chief Manuel Lopez, 15 years; and City Manager Jeannie Davis, 25 years.

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Davis said the City will be having a small grand opening ceremony for the new fire station on Thursday, December 10, 2020. COVID precautions will be in place.

She said the City is preparing for the Christmas Tree Lighting event for December 5, 2020.

STAFF REPORTS

Second Reading of Ordinance No. 2020-06

City Planner Marple joined via teleconference. Ms. Marple said on October 20, 2020, the Fowler City Council re-introduced Ordinance 2020-06, with changes to the version originally introduced on October 6, 2020. The Ordinance makes minor amendments to various development standards applicable to accessory buildings in residential zone districts in the City, and also adds additional uses and makes minor amendments to various permitted and conditional uses in the neighborhood commercial, general commercial, light industrial, and form-based code area zone districts in the City.

Councilmember Kazarian made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2020-06, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Hammer. The motion carried by roll call vote: Ayes: Kazarian, Hammer, Cardenas, and Parra. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Rodriquez.

CITY ENGINEER'S REPORT

Consider Adoption of Resolution No. 2480 – All-Way Stop – 8th Street / Fresno Street

City Engineer Peters said the intersection of 8th Street and Fresno Street is currently a three-legged intersection with a stop sign on the minor approach. The other approach on 8th Street is not stop controlled. The speed limit on 8th Street is 35-mph and the speed limit on Fresno Street is 25 mph.

Due to recent changes at the intersection he and Public Works Director Dominguez prepared a warrant study at the intersection in accordance with the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices to determine whether the intersection met the criteria for an all-way stop control. The study was completed and found that due to site distance deficiencies at the intersection mainly parked cars and the outdoor dining structure impair the sight distance for Fresno Street traffic. He is recommending that Council adopt Resolution No. 2480 converting the intersection of 8th Street and Fresno Street to an all-way stop.

The Council asked if the owner of Jocy's Restaurant, Mr. Arteaga, was contacted regarding the issue. Public Works Director Dominguez said he did speak with Mr. Arteaga and he did have some concerns. A discussion took place concerning placing an all-way stop and the affects it will have on some of the surrounding businesses and the semi-truck trailers delivering cargo to the nearby packing businesses. Councilmember Kazarian asked if a temporary stop sign could be placed on a temporary basis verses permanently. Mr. Peters said the intersection is already converted to a temporary all-way stop control. His recommendation is to approve the all-way stop tonight, and if the outdoor structure is removed, sometime in the future, it then can be re-evaluated.

Councilmember Parra made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2480, "A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Fowler Designating the 5th Street / Fresno Street Intersection as All-Way Stop; seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Hammer. The motion carried by roll call vote: Ayes: Parra, Hammer, Cardenas, and Kazarian. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Rodriquez.

Discussion/Direction Regarding Circulation Strategies at the State Route 99 / Adams Avenue Interchange

City Engineer Peters said there has been an increase in recent development activity in the vicinity of the Adams Avenue / State Route 99 interchange. Staff has determined that a new road connection near the existing southbound off-ramp is needed to support additional development and to provide circulation within the areas of Fowler bounded by Sumner Avenue, Clovis Avenue, Adams Avenue, and State Route 99. Staff met with Caltrans and explored very preliminary alternatives for circulation improvements at this interchange. He said Caltrans is in support of the circulation.

He said one alternative is to construct a roundabout at the southbound off-ramp intersection with Adams Avenue the other alternative was identified in a SW area traffic impact study approved by the Council in 2015. Mr. Peters provided the interchange alternatives exhibits for viewing. He said the next step in developing alternatives would be to prepare an interchange and freeway corridor study on State Route 99 between Clovis Avenue and Merced Street as directed by Caltrans. A discussion took place and the direction of the Council is to have staff gather more information and bring it back to Council for further review and discussion.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

COVID-19 Update

City Manager Davis said the City is currently at 320 total cases, 192 closed cases, 3 deaths, and 7 are under investigation. She said the County Health Department provided information that COVID cases are raising. The County provided information on COVID guidelines on travel advisory for non-essential travel and Thanksgiving celebration, the information is posted on the City's website.

She said the Million Mask Giveaway, sponsored by Fresno County EDC and County of Fresno Supervisors, provided cases of masks and hand sanitizers for small businesses across the County.

Ms. Davis said the City is currently working with United Health Center on setting up COVID testing events.

Approve Resolution No. 2481 – Extending the Temporary Outdoor Business Operations Assistance Program for Restaurants, Retail Businesses, and Service Businesses in the City

City Manager Davis said in August 2020 Council approved Resolution No. 2475 approving Temporary Outdoor Business Operations Assistance Program funding \$10,000 of 2020 Coronavirus Relief Funds, which funding was available to eligible businesses in the City for a limited period of time. The program funding was not fully utilized and the eligibility period expired in September 2020. She said the City would like to extend the eligibility period through March 1, 2021 to provide enough time for businesses to make purchases for heaters and other items in order to stay in business.

The City would then reduce the funding from \$10,000 to \$5,000 and transfer \$5,000 into a Covid-19 Business Assistance Grant program if approved by the Council. The grant program would provide direct grant for \$1,000 to assist certain businesses that have had to shut down their operations, or reduce indoor customer seating for full service restaurants.

She said the City extended funds to make certain outdoor seating and related improvements along Merced Street which were utilized by four businesses, those four businesses would be excluded from the reimbursement program but they would be eligible for the grant program. Councilmember Kazarian said Fowler Donuts did not benefit from the outdoor seating along Merced Street and asked that they be removed from the list of the four businesses ineligible under the reimbursement program.

Councilmember Kazarian made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2481, as amended, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Hammer. The motion carried by roll call vote: Ayes: Kazarian, Hammer, Cardenas, and Parra. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Rodriquez

Councilmember Kazarian made a motion to approve proposed COVID-19 Business Assistant Grant Program, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Hammer. The motion carried by roll call vote: Ayes: Kazarian, Hammer, Cardenas, and Parra. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Rodriquez.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Public Works Director Dominguez said he submitted an application for a Public Safety Power Shut-Off Grant (PSPS) in the amount of \$271,000 to purchase backup generators. Funding is available to support equipment purchases and to improve local preparedness and response for PSPS events.

He said a pre-construction meeting was held on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 for the Panzak Park Improvements Project. Construction will be starting next Monday, November 23rd.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

No report was given.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Police Chief Alcaraz circulated the DOJ crime statistics for the month of October 2020.

Chief Alcaraz commended his officers for apprehending a suspect involved in a robbery from another city.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Fire Chief Lopez said they are nearly finished moving into the new fire station. He thanked everyone involved in the process of the new fire station.

Mayor Cardenas asked Fire Chief Lopez if they will be placing a flag pole in front of the new fire station. He said he attended a Fowler Lions Club meeting and they are looking to donate funds for community service projects. Councilman Kazarian, who is currently the Finance Committee Chairman for the Lions Club, said he will submit the idea to the Lions Club for a flag pole.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

City Attorney Cross said a new law signed by Governor Newsom, Assembly Bill (AB) 992, which amends the Brown Act's prohibition of serial meetings, to permit certain social media communications.

Under the revised law, board members may communicate with their communities via social media, but may not communicate directly with other members of their board on any issue of board business. Even simply “liking” another board member’s post has the potential to create a violation of the Brown Act.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The consent calendar consisted of: A) Ratification of Warrants – November 17, 2020; B) Approve Minutes of the City Council Meeting – October 20, 2020; C) Approve Resolution No. 2482,

A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Fowler Approving a Residential Water Service Discontinuation Policy”;

D) Approval the City of Fowler Temperance and Walter Pedestrian Improvements ATPL 5173 (031) Project Construct by Power Design Electric, Inc. and Authorize the City Engineer to File a Notice of Completion; E) Approved Online Utility Payment User Agreement

Mayor Cardenas pulled Item A and questioned the double posting of Check No. 37109 (Superior, LLC.) in the amount of \$16,161.08. Finance Director Uyeda said he will rerun the report and provide copies.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Cardenas said he attended the Veterans Memorial Cruise organized by Roy Alatorre. Melissa Squeo provided baked goods to the Veterans.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hammer said the Trunk or Treat event was a huge success there were over 1500 cars that attended the event. He commended Senior Coordinator, Yvonne Hernandez and the Recreation Committee for organizing a successful event.

Councilmember Kazarian attended the Truck or Treat event; it was a wonderful turn out.

Councilmember Kazarian said he introduced a proposal he presented to the Five Cities Joint Power Authority to come together for a branding effort to identify the City as a District.

He provided information on the Green Energy Program Level 3 EV charging and grants funding opportunities for the City.

Councilmember Parra attended the Truck or Treat event.

He said United Health Center is scheduled to have free COVID testing this coming Thursday, November 19, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Councilmember Kazarian made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro- Tem Hammer to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.