

**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
MINUTES**

July 8, 2013

Mayor Vierra called the City Council Study Session to order at 5:45 p.m. with the following in attendance:

ROLL CALL Council Members Durossette, Ingwerson, Lane (arrived 6:23 p.m.), Mayor Vierra

EXCUSED Councilmember Kline

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Discussion of the Annual Report of the Ceres Downtown Revitalization Area Board (CDRAB) for Fiscal Year 2013/14 and Levy Assessment for CDRAB Activities and Projects.

Acting City Manager, Art de Werk, introduced the item and acknowledged Planning Commissioners in attendance.

Bryan Briggs, Redevelopment/Economic Development Manager presented a report to Council discussing the following topics:

- History of the Ceres Downtown Business Revitalization Area Business Improvement District
- Downtown Specific Plan
- Summary of business meetings held in January, 2011
- Summary of survey sent to downtown businesses in February, 2013

Mayor Vierra invited public discussion.

The following spoke regarding the Ceres Downtown Business Revitalization Area:

- Dave Pratt, resident, commented that the downtown area needs something unique to attract people away from the strip mall areas.
- Brenda Scudder Herbert, resident and downtown business owner, discussed the following issues:
 - Why have signs in the downtown area taken so long? Business owners requested signage two years ago.
 - Business owners are not notified when CDRAB meetings take place.
 - Do new businesses have to participate in Ceres Downtown Revitalization Area Assessment?
 - Downtown Ceres is in a prime location next to the freeway; use the money we have to improve the downtown.

In response to Ms. Herbert's comments Mayor Vierra directed staff to:

- Provide signage downtown.
- Send meeting notifications in the mail for all CDRAB meetings and via email for those businesses that wish to participate electronically.
- Mayor Vierra further clarified that ALL businesses in the assessment district are required to participate.

- Laurie Smith, Planning Commissioner, recommended the City consider a downtown incentive program; monthly or quarterly newsletter and mailed meeting notifications to keep the downtown businesses informed; make the downtown area the productive business district that it can be.
- Owner of Sweet Lu's (name not provided), commented that the downtown needs several improvements including signage, building improvements and more business-owner involvement. Many business owners feel there is no motivation to get involved because nothing gets done.
- Dave Pratt, resident, recommended staff send out a post cards and emails with meeting notifications.
- Len Shepherd, resident, suggested the City use an incentive program for improvements that can easily be completed such as painting and general clean up in front of businesses. Staff should be more pro-active in notifying businesses of CDRAB Board meetings.

COUNCIL DIRECTION

- Continue with the Ceres Downtown Revitalization Area Business Improvement District and the CDRAB.
- Review the original intent of Ordinance 88-708 establishing the Ceres Downtown Revitalization Area and the downtown area grant program currently used by the City of Turlock.
- Update the Ceres Downtown Revitalization Area Business Improvement District Program.
- Provide downtown signage.
- Send notification in the mail for all CDRAB Meetings and via email for those that wish to participate electronically.
- Return to Council the first meeting in August with some proposals.
- Adopt the Budget on July 22, 2013.

7:05 p.m. There being no further business, Mayor Vierra adjourned the City Council Study Session.

/s/Chris Vierra, Mayor

/s/Cindy Heidorn, CMC, City Clerk