

CITY OF CERES
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

September 16, 2013

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Chapman, Del Nero, Kachel, Molina. Smith

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Director of Community Development Tom Westbrook, Deputy City Manager/City Engineer Toby Wells, Deputy City Manager/Finance Director Sheila Cumberland, City Attorney Mike Lyons, Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager Bryan Briggs, Secretary/Deputy City Clerk Ann Montgomery

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Del Nero.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

It was moved by Commissioner Kachel; seconded by Commissioner Chapman to approve the minutes from the meeting of August 5, 2013; Carried 4/0/1 (Smith abstained).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION:

None

CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS:

None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AS POSTED (OR AMENDED) AND CERTIFICATION OF POSTING:

It was moved by Commissioner Molina, seconded by Commissioner Smith to approve the agenda as posted; Carried 5/0.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

None

**ADJOURN AS THE PLANNING COMMISSION TO THE CERES DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION AREA BOARD**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 6:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Chapman, Del Nero, Kachel, Molina, Smith

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Director of Community Development Tom Westbrook, Deputy City Manager/City Engineer Toby Wells, Deputy City Manager/Finance Director Sheila Cumberland, City Attorney Mike Lyons, Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager Bryan Briggs, Secretary/Deputy City Clerk Ann Montgomery

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

NEW BUSINESS

2. FY 2012-13 Quarterly (4th) Report for period ending June 30, 2013.

Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager, Bryan Briggs presented the staff report.

- Commissioner Smith asked for clarification of the line items in the budget that have a significant unspent portion.

Mr. Briggs explained that the CDRA is a zero sum budget; we begin the first day of the new fiscal year with a budget of what we think we might spend, and we determine those amounts based on previous years' expenditures or something that might be coming up in the next fiscal year. The money isn't going to be spent, unless there's a specific reason.

- Commissioner Molina inquired about Item #4 - Hatch Road Retail Corridor, and asked Mr. Briggs to elaborate on what the City is doing to collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce and the Alliance.

Mr. Briggs explained the City's role with the Hatch Road Corridor is that of a support role, providing technical expertise, doing any surveys or research into what could be done, what has been done, and then collaborating with the Chamber and the Alliance, to provide solutions to problems that private business currently experience.

- Commissioner Molina asked about the response seen so far from the business owners.

Mr. Briggs explained the turnout hasn't been what we hoped it would be; however, there have been interesting discussions amongst the private property owners which have included anecdotal stories about their experiences. Representatives from the Police Department have attended every meeting, and also a private security firm, and they've each spoken about what the businesses can do to improve the shopping experience. Things were picking up slowly, and then it has slipped down. That is why Chief deWerk has asked Mr. Briggs to get something going with the Chamber, the Alliance and the City sometime soon.

- Commissioner Molina inquired if we are done with the Urban Futures Consultant or are they still putting things together.

Mr. Briggs explained that the City Council was not satisfied with the quality of the product that was presented to us at the meeting, which was communicated to Urban Futures. Mr. Briggs, Mayor Vierra and Acting City Manager deWerk had a conversation with the Principal of Urban Futures, Marshall Linn, and relayed the gravity of their dissatisfaction and what could possibly be done to improve the product. They've agreed to take that on and make those improvements. He's hoping to get it on the agenda for the first meeting in October.

3. Ceres Downtown Revitalization Area Board Annual Report FY 2013-14 discussion.

Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager, Bryan Briggs presented the staff report.

Mr. Briggs described the background of the Ceres Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), recent involvement of businesses located in the downtown, and various programs that have been financed throughout other jurisdictions in California. Mr. Briggs requested the BID Board provide direction regarding which programs, if any, they would like him to pursue, and come back to this board with potential program guidelines and costs.

Discussion ensued regarding Potential Projects for the Downtown BID.

- Commissioner Smith asked if Mr. Briggs had conducted a survey of the downtown regarding the number of vacancies, as it would be good to know what the percentage of vacancy rate is.

Mr. Briggs explained that he has a Vacant and Underutilized Property Survey of the entire City, which includes the downtown.

- Commissioner Smith mentioned that what she'd like to see is a survey that demonstrates what the commercial, retail and residential usage is, by percentage, how much of that space is vacant, and any income and wage information. That information can help us to prioritize the programs.
- Commissioner Smith recognized that members of the Chamber are in attendance, and thinks the Chamber involvement is essential. She asked about the flexibility of the ordinance to possibly allow us to use some of the money to employ for one year, a part-time staff person that can provide the support, and direct coordination with the Chamber, on events.

City Attorney, Mr. Lyons replied that yes, some portion could be used for administration of the programs or program management.

The public hearing was opened at 6:45 p.m.

- Renee Ledbetter – Vice Chair of the Ceres Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Ledbetter stated she has been a resident of Ceres for almost 20 years and has a vested interest in Ceres. In attendance with her were two other Chamber Board members, Helen Condit and Beth Hunt, to show their support for the CDRAB Board, and also in the endeavors that Mr. Briggs has undertaken.

Ms. Ledbetter asked the City Attorney if there is there way to create an ordinance that specifically determines what type of businesses we want to see downtown.

Mr. Lyons responded that the City has basic zoning power to determine generally what the uses are. He doesn't know if our Downtown Specific Plan designates some areas and types of commercial use. He's thinking, in terms of how we spend money that we have to spend on the Downtown area, we can certainly provide incentives for the location of the types of businesses we would like to see locate in the area.

- Commissioner Smith added that once the survey is conducted and we're able to identify what our vacancy rate is in the downtown area and what our uses are, we can design our Incentive Program to reward the businesses that we're looking to attract, and provide lesser incentives for other types of businesses.

Ms. Ledbetter suggested that some of the things that the Chamber is willing to step up and help with are:

1. The Business of the Year for Downtown – that's an easy thing and obviously the Chamber would want input and recommendations from the CDRAB Board as far as who those businesses would be, since the Board is the head of the BID.

2. Signature Events – are obviously something the Chamber would be behind and partner with the BID Board with marketing.
- Commissioner Molina is grateful that the Chamber is open to working with us. What he would like to see, if it's possible, is having a meeting with the Alliance, the Chamber of Commerce and the Board, and discuss as a group, and prioritize which programs we should work on.
 - Commissioner Smith asked what the City of Ceres' annual contribution to the Alliance is.

Deputy City Manager, Finance Director Sheila Cumberland stated \$16,000.

Summary of plans moving forward:

- The CDRAB Board will meet again in 30 days:
 - Mr. Briggs will have a survey of the downtown business district;
 - Mr. Briggs will come back to CDRAB board and bring Chamber and Alliance representatives with;
 - The meeting will not necessarily be a meeting with the CDRAB Board at the dais and Mr. Briggs at the podium, but more of a work-session, where we sit around the table, roll up our sleeves, where we talk about our plan, the pieces to it, how we want to arrange it, and how much money we have to spend.
 - Letter drafted by the CDRAB Board, through staff, inviting the Chamber and the Alliance to the meeting;
 - Mr. Briggs will e-mail his powerpoint presentation to the CDRAB Board as well as the Chamber in preparation for the work session.
- Dave Pratt – long time Ceres resident

Mr. Pratt stated that the downtown needs some cleaning up and we need to do something unique to draw people to downtown.

The public hearing was closed at 7:11 p.m.

RECONVENED AS THE PLANNING COMMISSION at 7:11 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

4. River Bluff Regional Park Master Plan Update.

Deputy City Manager/City Engineer, Toby Wells presented the staff report.

A short discussion ensued regarding layout of the park, including fields, courts, parking and restrooms.

Commissioner Smith pointed out a typographical error in the last paragraph on page 20 of the Staff Report (page 8 of the Master Plan). “The City Council instructed staff to move forward with ~~the~~ planning the space as temporary parking for the facility, noting that at some future point, returning to the original commercial building plan may occur.”

The public hearing was opened at 7:20 p.m.

- Dave Pratt – long time Ceres resident

Mr. Pratt stated that he hopes that the City will develop a program where kids can go, as they need to belong to a group. If parks are developed, he suggested that a basketball court or baseball diamond be put in.

The public hearing was closed at 7:22 p.m.

It was moved by Commissioner Smith; seconded by Commissioner Kachel to adopt PC Resolution No. 2013-11, including the correction on page 8 of the River Bluff Regional Park Master Plan; Carried 5/0.

PUBLIC MEETING(S):

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

MATTERS INITIATED BY PLANNING COMMISSION AND STAFF

None

REPORTS:

Staff:

Mr. Westbrook:

- Chamber Coffee Hour - September 27th at 7:00 a.m. at Alfonso's.
- Building permit was issued for the old CVS site for dd's Discount store. They plan to open in March 2014.
- Someone is interested in the old Long John Silvers site. We don't have building permits yet, but it appears they will be doing a façade improvement.

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- Staff had a Predevelopment meeting last week with someone who is interested in putting in an 8,000 square foot, two-story professional office building downtown, at the corner of 6th and Park Streets. This will be the first building constructed under the Downtown Specific Plan.

Mr. Wells:

- Whitmore Avenue PG&E work. We are working with them as quickly as we can, as it'll probably be another 4 to 6 weeks of impacting Whitmore Avenue.
- Whitmore Interchange Landscaping project – We are re-bidding the project and hope to award that in October.
- Service Road Sewer project – is currently out to bid. This is to take care of a big bottleneck in our system on Service Road between Central and Moffett.
- Safe Route to School project – around Carroll Fowler School and Mae Hensley Junior High School on Moffett; that should be completed by the end of this month.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Commission adjourned at 7:29 p.m. to the next regularly scheduled meeting of Monday, October 7, 2013.

APPROVED:



Gary Del Nero, Chairperson

ATTEST:



Tom Westbrook, Secretary