

**CITY OF TAFT  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
MARCH 6, 2013**

The March 6, 2013, regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Taft, held in the City of Taft Council Chamber, 209 E. Kern Street, Taft, CA 93268, was opened by Chairman Walchock at 6:17:40 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Sutherland, and invocation was given by Commissioner Fleetwood.

PRESENT: Chairman Curtis Walchock, Vice Chairman Robert Thompson;  
Commissioners James Fleetwood, Ron Orrin, Shaun Sutherland  
Planning and Community Development Director Mike Waiczis;  
Recording Secretary Alina Megerdom;  
Planning Commission Attorney Tom Ebersole.

**CITIZEN REQUESTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Dr. Kathy Orrin presenting Greater Taft Economic Development Authority (GREDA) handed out a document called "Tour of Taft". Copy of said document was entered into record. She gave a brief summary on GREDA and stated that GREDA is a joint powers agency created by the City of Taft and the Kern County Board of Supervisors. They are committed to furthering the economic reach, strength, and viability of the community of Taft through advocacy, education, partnering, and organizing.

On Friday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, Taft City Manager Craig Jones, Councilman Orchel Krier, Bill Black, Economic Development Agency (EDA) Chairman Michael Long and Dr. Orrin took a tour of Taft and the entrances to the city to review blighted properties and create a list of blighted properties that are of concern to the image of the community of Taft. They were able to identify 80 properties of concern that are on entrance roads into the City of Taft and adjacent neighborhoods.

Dr. Orrin also stated that there is a Downtown Committee which is part of the Taft Chamber of Commerce. The committee would like to make the commissioners aware of the shredded rubber tires that were placed in the flower beds on Center Street. They are not happy with the color blue; they are all over the place and not just in the flower beds, it's on the sidewalks too. Also, they are concerned with some of the building colors in the downtown area, specifically the building on Main Street. It has been painted a color that is not attractive to the eye.

Walchock asked if the GTEDA packet has been given to Supervisor David Couch. Dr. Orrin stated that yes, it has been e-mailed to his office and it's going up the ladder. They will continue sending a list and pictures as they collect new information.

Walchock asked Waiczis if the issue with color of the buildings in downtown area is something that needs to be put on the agenda, asked if staff would research it and bring it back to the Commissioners. Waiczis stated yes, he will speak to Code Enforcement and handle a few of the items. The business on Main Street has to turn in a Site Plan Review. This is something he will look into and bring information back to the Commissioners next month.

Orrin stated that the City needs to be proactive. If they don't address the issue of the building colors, buildings will continue to be painted different colors and it will decrease the value of the property and the neighboring businesses. Waiczis stated they might have to give notice to businesses to bring in a Site Plan if they decide to make any changes to the exterior of the building.

Orrin also mentioned the windows being boarded up. He stated that it should be a temporary solution and not turn permanent. Waiczis stated he will speak to Jill Gibson, Code Enforcement Officer to see if she is available to attend the next Planning Commission meeting and address some of the concerns.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES 6:42:11 PM**

Consider approval of minutes for the February 6, 2013, Regular Planning Commission Meeting.  
**RECOMMENDATION** – Approve as submitted.

**Motion:** Moved by Orrin, seconded by Thompson, to approve the minutes of February 6, 2013.

**AYES:** Fleetwood, Orrin, Sutherland, Thompson, Walchock

**RECEIVE REPORT AND PROVIDE DIRECTION 6:42:23 PM**

1. **Zoning/ Code Enforcement Issue** – Existing storefront conversions to residential uses in the Central Business District. Attorney's opinion regarding illegal residential uses located 714 and 716 Center Street.

Waiczis presented the report on Zoning / Code Enforcement issue. He stated that he spoke to the Planning Commission Attorney, Mr. Ebersole on this matter. Ebersole informed him that he will attend the Planning Commission meeting to address the issues on this matter. He also notified the Commissioners that the property owner was in the audience and was available to answer any questions.

Ebersole stated that Waiczis contacted him a few weeks ago for legal advice on the property at 714 and 716 Center Street. He stated that at this time, this was a Code Enforcement and Building Permit issue. The buildings are not up to code, and the current uses are inconstant with the Zoning Ordinance. They need to evict the tenants and bring the building up to code to be able to lease it.

The property is not zoned residential and therefore it cannot be used as residential. If the owner chooses to change the use for the property, they will need to turn in the proper applications and staff will decide if it's an item for the Planning Commission or Council.

Ebersole suggested that the property owner file proper eviction papers and give the tenants time to find a new location. He believes if the tenant has lived at the premises for less than a year it's a 30 day notice. But, if the tenant has lived at the premises longer than a year, it's a 60 day notice.

All the Commissioners agreed that this matter is a Code Enforcement and Zoning issue and agreed that the city staff will continue to work with the property owner to resolve all issues.

Waiczis asked Ms. Megerdom to set up a meeting with property owner & Ms. Gibson, Zone Enforcement Officer.

**PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT 7:18:50 PM**

1. **Banners (blow flags)**

Waiczis presented a power point presentation on blow flags.

**2. Site Plan for Hotel**

Waiczis stated that the applicant is in the process of turning in all appropriate documents for the Site Plan and has asked if the Commissioners could hold a Special Meeting to speed up the process.

Walchock asked for a five minute recess, the Commissioners went into a recess at 7:25:00 PM. The Commissioners returned from their recess at 7:29:24 PM and the meeting continued.

Waiczis asked the Planning Commissioners to consider holding a Special Meeting on March 21, 2013. All Commissioners agreed they would be available that day.

**3. New signs along 119 and 33. 7:35:50 PM**

Waiczis updated the Planning Commission on the meeting he had with Caltrans in regards to signs along Highways 119 and 33. He stated ideally he would like to see some really nice signs on 119; it's on the table and eventually will do. But for now, Caltrans is very eager to install very quickly 2 signs on Kern Street and split of 33 and 119. The signs are going to help direct the traffic to Kern Street and towards Taft. CalTrans will be placing the signs at no cost to the City. They will place the signs on their right of way. In the meeting they also agreed that there are some signs that need to be removed. CalTrans has agreed to remove some of the signs and replace them with new signs that direct traffic towards Taft.

Walchock asked when the timeline was for the new signs. Waiczis stated that Caltrans informed them it should take about two months to remove the old signs and place the new ones.

Waiczis also would like to see signs on private property that advertises businesses around town. Realistically he believes in six months to a year they will start seeing new signs.

**4. The Housing Element**

Waiczis stated that City of Taft Housing Element was done in 2009. It's due next year. He does not think staff will be able to do it. They might need to ask Council for help from outside services.

**5. PC CC Joint workshop**

Waiczis suggested sending a Commissioner to the City Council to ask to pick a date for a joint meeting.

**6. Parking on lawns**

Waiczis stated that he is unaware that the City has regulations restricting parking on lawns.

Orrin asked if there is anything they can do. Ebersole suggested bringing it back as an action item.

**7. Attorney's opinion on Mr. Orrin serving on two different Boards**

Waiczis stated that City Manager Craig Jones had requested from the city attorney an analysis on this subject. The attorney replied in a letter that stated, pursuant to Government Code section 1099, it appears that while a conflict could perceivably arise, the potential for such a conflict is so rare as to be insignificant. Thus, Mr. Orrin is not barred from holding the office of Planning Commissioner and Board member for the District. A copy of the said letter was given to each Commissioner and placed into record. Also, a copy of the list of properties for the West Side Recreation and Park District were given to all Commissioners and placed into the record.

**8. Commission Training (To be announced)**

Waiczis provided the Blow Flags Power Point as one of the Commissioner Trainings.

**CITY ATTORNEY STATEMENTS**

No comments.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

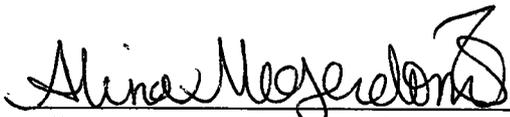
No comments.

**Identification of Representative to the City Council.**

Commissioner Orrin stated he would attend the Council Meeting and report on Planning Commission meeting updates on Tuesday, March 19, 2013.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion:** Moved by Sutherland, seconded by Fleetwood on and approved unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 8:18:26 PM.

  
Alina Megerdom, Recording Secretary

  
Curtis Walchock, Chairperson