

**CITY OF TAFT  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2014**

The February 19, 2014, 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 Ron Orrin at 6:05:18 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Renée Hill, and invocation was given by Jim Stegal, Community Christian fellowship.

PRESENT: Chairman Ron Orrin, Vice Chairman Robert Thompson;  
Commissioners Renée Hill, Shannon Jones;  
Planning and Community Development Director, Mark Staples.  
City Attorney Tom Ebersole.

ABSENT: Commissioner Bob Leikam, City Clerk Alina Megerdom

**I. CITIZEN REQUESTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS 6:08:13 PM**

Michael Long, business owner of Blackgold Brewing Company introduced himself and addressed some of his concerns on an event that took place on Cruise Night and also zoning issues in regards to certain Clubhouse opening on Center Street. Center Street is zoned for retail and restaurants. Zoning is important because it does a couple of things. It gives people the opportunity to invest in area he believes in, that has a predictable future, it increases property values, and it attracts investment. What bothers him is there is a shop on Center Street that is not a business, does not have a sign, does not have posted hours and there is some alcohol drinking on the inside which is totally illegal. They have two t-shirts hanging but it is not for sale. They probably don't even have a business license. What he would encourage the Planning Commission to do is hold a workshop for Center Street uses and anticipated issues.

Orrin reassured Mr. Long that his comments have been an active discussion among the Commissioners and has been interaction with Council at some length and it will not lay adornment. They are responding to what he has said.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES 6:13:38 PM**

Consider approval of minutes for the January 22, 2014, Regular Planning Commission Meeting

Recommendation: Approve as submitted.

Motion: Moved by Thompson, seconded by Hill, to approve the minutes of January 22, 2014, Regular Planning Commission Meeting.

AYES: Hill, Jones, Leikam, Orrin  
APPROVED: 4/0

**III. PUBLIC HEARING 6:14:25 PM**

Continued Items

1. City of Taft Municipal Service Review Update – Consideration of an update to the City of Taft and West Side Recreation and Park District Municipal Service Reviews for the Kern

County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo).

Staples asked if the item can be pulled from the Agenda and be back when it's absolutely ready.

**Motion:** Moved by Thompson, seconded by Hill, to pull City of Taft Municipal Service Review Update from the Agenda for a future Commission meeting date.

**AYES:** Hill, Jones, Orrin, Thompson

**APPROVED:** 4/0

New Items

2. Center Street One-Way Improvements – City proposal to change the 400 and 500 blocks of Center Street to a One-Way Street in the eastbound direction. The project, at this time, will be limited to resurfacing Center Street and restriping the lanes and parking spaces. 6:16:58 PM

Director Staples gave a staff report on the prior meetings proceedings and read comments submitted by the President of the Fox Theater.

Commissioner Hill stated her concerns:

- How will business owners be accommodated or compensated for inconvenience.
- Will 2 week project become a 6 week project?
- Cruising Center will be significantly affected and additionally the Fox Theater.
- Hill fears that there will be a loss of parking.
- In the end how does this one way improvement really help downtown and the businesses there?
- On Cruise Night people would be driving more on North Street than Center Street.
- She believes it's another reason to not go through downtown. It will inconvenience the customers.

Commissioner Jones stated her concerns:

- Asked if it's going to be one way with two lanes or one way with only one lane?
- Cruising Center Street would be effected.
- Is it going to make the general public more confused on Cruise Night?

Chairman Orrin stated his concerns:

- He believes the important thing is Center Street is in serious need of paving. The funds are available, paving curb to curb would be beneficial.
- The Parking issue can be engineered and mitigated.

Commissioner Thompson:

- They really don't have enough information to make a good informed decision. They don't know how the striping is going to run and how it's going to be laid out. Don't have information on the curbs and gutters. Is there enough money to pull out and replace.
- He would like to be able to see a drawing by engineering to really showing to everyone what is going to happen. Where the stripping is going to be. What will happen to the road? What will the overlay be? Then there will be a better idea of what it will actually

cost the City.

- He believes it's too early for the Resolution. He would need more detail and more information before he can make a decision.

Staples stated that the project itself will probably never come before the Commission because it is not an item under Commission review. The important part of this meeting is to get more of the emotion, speculation and feedback of the cause and does it bring anything to value. Comments, ideas, fears and whatever it may be even without the plans in front of the Commissioners and public.

Jones asked if the funding that was received to do the resurfacing, was it received with one way tied to the funding. The only way it can be resurfaced is if it's changed to a one way?

Staples stated that it was project specific for paving and striping of Center Street. He is not sure about the detail, he does know that the dollar amount equated to about two blocks worth of work.

Jones asked clarity on if it was not changed into one way would the funding still be available for the two blocks of Center Street to repave and restripe just the way that it is.

Staples stated yes, there are enough funds to pave the road and stripe it in one way, proper signage and enough funding to change the stripes back if it did not work out.

Orrin opened the floor for public comments.

Bill Messenger, Messenger Automotive at 531 Center Street. He is against the one way street. It is inconvenient for the movement of vehicles. He is for the street improvement. One-way street will cause him to circle blocks with cars. Employees park across the street in front of other businesses and legally he can't tell employees to parking in certain public areas.

Christy Durken, Bangs and Tangles at 404 Center Street. She has the same concerns that have been stated. She has ladies rending boots from her, they are not her employees. They do park on 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 300 block of Center Street. She does ask them not to park so close to the salon. She does not see the one way street being beneficial to her business. She is concerned on length of time is will take for the street improvement because she is concern that it will take money out of pockets of hairdressers. Concerned about cruise night, brings business. Customers will not want to be bothered with only 2 blocks of one-way.

Phoenix Brow, Pizza Factory at 614 Center Street. He is concerned that a lot of businesses will lose business due to the one way on Center Street. He is very busy on Cruise night; it is big for his business. He is also against the one-way street improvements; he suggests putting the money elsewhere.

Jack Short, owner of buildings 418, 420 and 420 ½ Center Street which is H&R Block, Bakery and the Thrift Store. He came to the meeting to hear the rationale for the one-way street. Hasn't heard any rationale for having the improvements. Future street plans for sidewalks sounds years away and Center Street is not ready for it. Cruise night is it for the bakery business. He wants to know if it can be paved and stay two-way. Can the money be used to make it two-way?

Staples stated that yes, it can be used for the two-way but he is not aware of the detail.

Jack Leonard, owner of 214 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Does not have business on Center Street, but he does visit his property to make sure it has not been damaged. He does drive both ways on Center Street. He did not like 5<sup>th</sup> Street being closed either. Special events is fine for 5<sup>th</sup> Street, but for one day. Wasn't Church Street supposed to be paved? It hasn't been done. If Center Street is going to be repaved, when will that take place? He has been speaking about this project around town and not one person has suggested it's a good idea. No one he knows agrees with the change to one-way.

Hill stated a while ago North Street was one way. She had numerous occasions that she drove the wrong way on North Street. She feels it's also a safety issue.

Commissioner Leikam arrived at 6:57:58 PM.

Staples stated that what Commissioners are doing this evening is not approving or denying the project, because we do not have the project before us. This is purely collecting comments from the public. It may or may not push one direction or the other. All comments will be included in the Minutes and will go to the Council for their future action.

Orrin stated he would like clarification for Mr. Leonard's comments. Projects get designated and planned and approved. Why do some of them not get done? Is it a local decision or is funding retracted from the funding source at the State level or the County level? He also wanted to make something; the Commissioners are not the body to propose this and not the body who has approved it. They are just see it as an issue and wanted the public's input. That was their intention.

There being no other comments for or against the Public Hearing, the Public Hearing was closed at 7:05:29 PM.

Thompson wanted to clarify that the third paragraph in resolution. The paragraph states it as a potential project. It does not state that they are doing it as of now. Staples concurred.

Staples presented a revised resolution to the Commission: "A resolution of the planning commission of the City of Taft recommending to the City Council that they approve of the asphalt resurfacing of Center Street for the 400 and 500 blocks, but should remain a two-way street per the overriding sentiment from the public comments received."

Commissioners concurred with Staples proposed revision.

**Motion:** Moved by Hill, seconded by Leikam to approve A resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Taft recommending to the City Council that they approve of the asphalt resurfacing of Center Street for the 400 and 500 blocks, but should remain a two-way street per the overriding sentiment from the public comments received.

AYES: Jones, Hill, Leikam, Orrin, Thompson

APPROVED: 5/0

#### IV. **PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW 7:13:25 PM**

1. Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) Regional Housing Need Assessment (RHNA) –

A review and discussion of Kern COG and California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) regional housing need determination.

Staples gave information on the letter from Kern COG and the chart that was attached and a brief explanation on the regional housing need determination.

Commissioner Thompson had to leave at 7:23:46 PM

**PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT 7:23:42 PM**

1. Central California and Central Coast Local Government Partnership Meeting January 30, 2014 – Overview of meeting on Energy Action Watch and energy efficiency plans and programs.

Staples provided information from a meeting he attended at Central California and Central Coast Local Government Partnership. The Central Coast area of COG's and Central Valley of COG's held a meeting on January 30<sup>th</sup> to have an overview of some of the programs and other items that are available to try to push both the public and the private sector to become more energy efficient.

2. 2014 Advanced CEQA Workshop – Overview of the CEQA Workshop help by the Central California chapter of the Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP) on February 6, 2014.

Staples attended an advanced CEQA workshop meeting. There was talk about streamlining the CEQA process. As long as one is diligent in processing a CEQA it will go smoothly.

3. National Association of Development Organizations – “Meet Me Downtown”: Case Studies in Small Town Economic Development

Staples had the opportunity to sit in on a webinar on February 5<sup>th</sup>. They had 3 case studies in small town economic development. NADO stands for The National Association of Development Organization. It was found in 1988, it's a non-profit research foundation. Staples gave a power point presentation on NADO.

4. Schedule Special Planning Commission Meeting – An open forum discussion for a Needs Assessment for Center Street

Staples recommended March 5, 2014, all Commissioners concurred.

V. **CITY ATTORNEY STATEMENTS**

There were none.

VI. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Hill stated that on February 21, 2014 the newly hired Correctional Officers will be sworn in at the MCCF. Among them are two of her children.

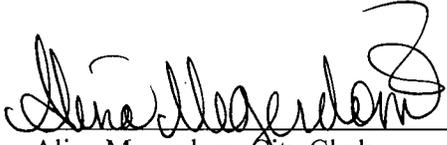
Jones stated that Taft Chamber of Commerce will be closed February 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of 2014.

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

Commissioner Hill stated he would attend the Council Meeting and report on Planning Commission meeting updates on Tuesday, March 4, 2014.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion:** Moved by Hill seconded by Leikam and approved unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 8:11:08 PM.

  
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Alina Megerdom, City Clerk

  
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Ron Orrin, Chair