



**FULTON CORRIDOR**

**SPECIFIC PLAN  
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Meeting Location: The Grand, 1401 Fulton Street, Fresno, California

***MEETING MINUTES***  
**TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 2010 - 4:00 P.M.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Sandra King called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

**Members Present**

Joyce Aiken, Alan Allen, Rosemarie Amaral, Donavan Byrn, James Connell, Morgan Doizaki, Patrick Hammond, James Haron, Eric Kalkowski, Sandra King, Gary LanFranco, Nancy Marquez, Polly Parenti, Timothy Schulz, Maribel Vera-Anaya, Brent Weiner

**Members Absent**

Raul DeAlba, Victoria Gonzales, Evan Hammer, Jr., Roger Palomino, Allysun Williams

**Alternate Members**

Nadar Ali, Suzanne Bertz-Rosa, Beth Eckloff, Jan Minami

**Consultants Present      Consultants Present**

Stefanos Polyzoides, David Sargent, Juan Gomez-Novy

**Staff Present**

Craig Scharton, Elliott Balch, Sandra Berney, Cynthia Dondero, Amy Huerta, Wilma Quan, Elaine Robles, Dawn Steele, George Smith, Kelly Trevio, Angela Vasquez, Alex Villa, Joann Zuniga

**2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Introductory comments were given by Chair Sandra King. Downtown Revitalization Manager Elliott Balch stated the consultant team and city staff were moving along with the creation of the specific plan; stated earlier in the day the consultant team was introduced to the members of the community and to city staff and presented their discovery findings from walking neighborhoods and mapping the area, taking notes, and observing how Fresno neighborhoods functioned in and around downtown; mentioned the consultants would be conducting a neighborhood charrette, which was an intensive design workshop for the downtown neighborhood planning area, during the week of May 10, 2010.

Elliott Balch stated the advisory committee, at this meeting, would be reviewing what the consultants discovered in the neighborhoods and how that affected the downtown core; stated there would be an update on the planning process and committee members would have an opportunity to ask questions, raise issues; stated there would be an opportunity to discuss the recent Fulton Mall issue.

### **3. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

#### **A. Agenda Approval**

The agenda was approved unanimously.

#### **B. Approval of Minutes for the March 9, 2010, Regular Meeting**

Chair Saundra King called for approval of the March 9, 2010, meeting minutes; noted that Alternate Committee Members Suzanne Bertz-Rosa and Beth Eckloff were not present at the meeting of March 9, 2010.

Alan Allen moved for approval of the meeting minutes, second by Gary LanFranco; motion carried (m/s/c/ 16 yes, 0 no, 5 absent, 1 abstention—Patrick Hammond who was not present at the March meeting). Meeting minutes of March 9, 2010, were filed as submitted with the correction showing that Suzanne Bertz-Rosa and Beth Eckloff were not present at the March meeting.

Elliott Balch stated let the record reflect that Saundra King was chair.

### **4. STATUS OF FULTON MALL HISTORIC DESIGNATION**

Craig Scharton stated there was a recent application to place the Fulton Mall on the National Historic Register; stated typically an application would be for a single property or site, or district of multiple properties; stated the application recommended the Fulton Mall be treated as a site even though it had multiple property owners; stated it should have instead been considered as a district; stated the process had rules that were confusing and staff asked Sacramento for clarification and had not received clear information such as how many property owners were there on the Fulton Mall, what constituted a property owner/multiple owners of single property; stated they could not legally notice property owners if unsure of property ownership and the State used outdated lists; stated City staff did not believe the property owners were properly noticed; stated the application would be going to the State Historic Preservation Office on April 30; stated he was unclear if the irregularity in the noticing or in property ownership status would stop the process; stated in order for the nomination to move forward it needed to be considered by the local Historic Preservation Commission; stated the Commission had indicated the Fulton Mall was an eligible property but voted unanimously not to place the Fulton Mall on the register at this time because of the process underway with the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan; stated both the City's highest elected official Mayor Swearingin and the Historic Preservation Commission recommended it not be placed on the Register at this time, which should also stop the application; stated the City Council, which did not have a legal role, but did have a community voice, considered it and voted unanimously to not recommend its placement on the Register at this time; stated a vast majority of Fulton Mall property owners had also opted not to support placement on the Register at this time.

Craig Scharton stated from the Administration's standpoint, the City invested in a great public process through the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan, that all options would be looked at openly and fairly, that the community would be invited to participate with their thoughts and ideas, that clear information visually presented by the consultant team for consideration, and that information from other communities that had been through similar processes would be considered; believed in the process and did not want to take anything out of sequence such as the Fulton Mall designation.

Saundra King stated it was her understanding that there were 40 property owners on the Fulton Mall and that 51 percent would be needed, and asked would there need to be one more property owner—21—to hold up the process. Elliott Balch stated they would be working with the State to determine the number; stated there were 46 privately-owned parcels on the Fulton Mall and the number of owners for each of those properties was undetermined at this time; stated the City had 22 parcels with letters received in objection and 2 parcels with letters of support, but unknown how many property owners that represented.

## **5. CONSULTANT TEAM'S SUMMARY OF DISCOVERY PROCESS**

David Sargent of the Moule Polyzoides consultant team stated the discovery process was underway to understand Fresno as it was currently, had been in the past, and how Fresnoans throughout the neighborhoods/districts and interests felt about their city; interviewed many residents, property owners, business owners, and other representatives in Fresno and learned interesting facts and received incredible support; stated people interviewed were plugging into a unified process and thinking about Central Fresno; conducted field investigations, and documented mapping and diagraming of approximately two-thirds to three-fourths of the 1950 footprint of the area; stated the area included the existing Edison, Fresno High-Roeding, Central Area, and Roosevelt community plans, which contained useful information from which the consultants would mine information to incorporate/overlay into the new plan; stated the existing specific plans included the Fresno-Chandler, Fulton-Lowell, and Tower and information would be incorporated into the new community and specific plan.

David Sargent gave a brief PowerPoint presentation that showed mapping as follows:

- Existing zoning patterns that defined higher and lower intensity areas and stated many of the detailed zoning rules would change through the work underway to develop rules that would foster the sorts of neighborhoods that Fresno had in the past and wanted in the future;
- Existing street network that, in general, was continuous with breaks where big infrastructure was built and street closures occurred; showed existing thoroughfare networks, and stated roadway capacity was plenty and matter of reassigning some of that capacity to accommodate a more urban way of movement--more priority to pedestrians, transits, bicycles, and less priority for high speed cars; stated there was a good start on bike network and with existing transit, did not want to over-right what existed with new recommendations but rather build on it with new BRT or streetcar, or high-speed train system; stated there were big pedestrian barriers with the location of the freeways, lack of sidewalks, confusing intersection designs, no lighting, buildings built in such a way that weren't pedestrian friendly, lack of street parking that would allow ability to approach building easily; stated blocks longer than 600 feet, a threshold at which people felt less walkable and less like a neighborhood;
- Existing street tree canopy and landscape coverage made the city a great place to be; stated there would be a focused effort on ways of restoring more of the canopy that improved the living environment and made it more valuable;
- Showed initial framework of neighborhoods, districts, and corridors; stated living in one of the neighborhoods and having nearby support services whether commercial, civic, or educational traditionally created value; stated in the future replace some of the more threadbare corridors that had lost the development they once had and had not yet gotten back in return to nurture the neighborhoods and support neighborhood quality of life in way the corridors do not

currently do; stated there were districts, neighborhoods not dominated by residential uses, that were urban districts of a particular character such as downtown corridor; showed map of industrial districts, medical center, civic uses; stated corridors were observed under character type, automobile oriented and pedestrian oriented; stated major focus or work would focus on more pedestrian-friendly corridors in terms of landscaping.

David Sargent stated some of the concerns that the consultants heard from the public pertained to street closures, lack of street planting, street widths that seemed out of scale with the need, street network that was confusing, patchwork transition from county rural to city urban living, lack of street lighting or type of lighting that fostered cozy neighborhood environment, types and heights of fencing, street frontages that did not make pedestrians safe, alley conditions; stated alleys were an underutilized resource and maximize the usage of alleyways such as parking, access to dwelling units, and facilitating safe travel through neighborhoods on bicycles; stated in the core there was a lack of housing for the number of jobs, restaurants, things to do; building higher densities along the corridors, reviving Belmont and Blackstone Avenues.

David Sargent stated comments from people included that they avoided downtown because it was unfamiliar to them, dangerous, parking structures not easy to find, one way streets; heard from people to turn downtown into a mixed use district with retail, office, housing, and entertainment, promote adaptive reuse of historic buildings, build lofts in older buildings, and introduce higher density housing; stated there was a suggestion to introduce awnings on buildings, and stated that awnings had atrophied into signage on buildings and that the consultant would be interested in including standards and reintroducing real awnings; heard people say preserve and maintain Fulton Mall in its current pedestrian condition as it was the only one of its kind left; heard introduce vehicular traffic on Fulton Mall between Kern and Tulare Streets, over the entire length of Fulton Mall; stated the first charrette in mid-May would not focus narrowly on the downtown corridor and Fulton Mall, but would focus in general on the Mall's purpose and function in the larger context and discussing its disposition and that the more detailed work would be the subject of the charrette in September; heard from people that they would like more people to live in the Lowell neighborhood because they wanted to, introduce market-rate housing to balance the range of housing opportunities, preserve the existing housing stock, guidelines on how to make buildings contribute to the quality of the neighborhood overall; stated for the Jefferson neighborhood, heard people say encourage organizations to build quality over time and ensure that development would not push out low income residents.

David Sargent stated there would be an economic development summit held May 4 and 5, 2010, to focus on learning from other cities and people who have worked in many cities on how economic development and improvement could be done in low-income neighborhoods in ways that were equitable to all segments of the population; stated concerns he heard regarding Southwest Fresno such as neighborhoods that were chopped up, discontinuous, pieces of neighborhoods that were good but nothing connected to it; stated the consultants would be to focus on work to paint a picture of how to knit all fragments together into a much more coherent community pattern; stated concerns he heard regarding the Jane Addams community that much had been lost regarding a sense of community, streets were in bad shape, and current zoning allowed a jumbled mix of industrial and residential uses, high speed traffic going through the community but not contributing to the quality of the neighborhood; stated the consultants would be looking at improvements to the street network and how it handled traffic, pedestrians, bicyclists and looking at targeted changes to the zoning to bring residential and industrial into more balance.

David Sargent stated in August the consultants would be looking in depth at the Fulton Corridor area; stated this presentation was an excerpt of a longer presentation that was available on the website; stated the charrette in May would be the main opportunity for the community to discuss these subjects that were briefly introduced at this meeting.

## **6. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT**

James Haron asked how one would go about scheduling an appointment with the consultants to provide input. Craig Scharon stated at this time the Downtown Neighborhoods Community Plan was progressing faster than the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan; stated there hadn't been meetings with the stakeholders for the Fulton Corridor as yet but would happen in mid- to late-August, September; stated focus was on the neighborhoods because that charrette was scheduled first; advised to call either Wilma Quan or Elliot Balch.

Donavan Byrn asked for the consultants opinions about the Fulton Mall and how the Fulton Mall related to the remainder of downtown. David Sargent stated regarding the Mall and its immediate environs, it was difficult to find one's way around this area and could easily get lost, the disconnectedness of how to navigate in and around downtown was the biggest single issue. Donavan Byrn asked would improved signage help. David Sargent stated that would help, also unscrambling all one-way streets, restoring some streets that were severed, signage, opening up the Mall and areas around it because downtown was complicated to navigate.

## **7. PUBLIC INPUT**

A member of the public asked what was a charrette. David Sargent stated it would be a week long conversation that allowed the consultant team to work in Fresno and meet with city staff, the public, property owners, stakeholders to develop iterations of the framework of the plan; the consultant team would be proposing an initial set of transportation policies, or interventions, series of ideas of what types of buildings would be appropriate in the neighborhoods, on the corridors, or in the districts according to what was heard by the community, open space and landscape ideas and which seemed right to the community; stated at the evening charrettes all people of Fresno would have an opportunity to provide input and to hear one another and the role of the consultants would be to support the conversation about the future of Fresno.

Saundra King stated a charrette was the opportunity to speak and be heard, voice opinion.

## **8. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Stefanos Polyzoides stated the consultants were into a 90-day discovery process of talking to people in the community; stated at the end of the charrette in May, issued would have been vetted and the project would be largely designed and the direction of the plan written on paper. David Sargent stated ultimately this would be the public's plan, and it was very important that the process enabled everyone to hear one another on key issues.

## **9. NEXT MEETING**

Saundra King stated the next meeting of the committee would be on June 8, 2010, at 4 p.m. and that the week of May 10 through 15, 2010, was the charrette on the Downtown Neighborhoods Specific Plan.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Approval Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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CRAIG SCHARTON, Director  
Downtown and Community Revitalization Department