

MINUTES

TURLOCK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2013 6:00 PM

YOSEMITE COMMUNITY ROOM TURLOCK CITY HALL, 156 SOUTH BROADWAY

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bean, Brem, Hackler, Fregosi, and Salcedo

ALTERNATE COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Pollard

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Badal, Dias and Hillberg

STAFF PRESENT: Debra Whitmore, Deputy Director of Development Services; Rose Stillo, Senior Planner; Adrienne Werner, Assistant Planner; Dorinda Soiseth, Staff Services Technician

- A. CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.
- B. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -** None
- C. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST OR DISQUALIFICATIONS -** None
- D. WORKSHOP ON THE FUTURE OF TURLOCK'S DOWNTOWN:**

Debbie Whitmore opened the workshop by suggesting that there may be a possibility for the community to accept taller development/buildings in the downtown area. She provided information on the different building height limits in town and said that the ordinance allows for 25% above this by means of a conditional use process.

Laura Podalsky of the Local Government Commission (LGC), provided information on the purpose of the LGC and what they do. She talked about how different age groups impact housing needs and trends. She explained how floor area ratio (FAR) and setbacks affect neighborhoods, and their purpose in development; explained how density is calculated and what it can and can't tell about use.

Chairman Brem called for a 10-minute recess at 6:50 PM.

Chairman Brem reconvened the meeting at 6:58 PM.

Stefan Pellegrini, an Urban Designer with Opticos Design, shared his recommendations for the development of downtown Turlock.

- Downtown Design Frameworks** – There are different districts in the downtown area.
- Existing physical form & character** - What makes Turlock special is the grand ground floors, unique architecture, older neighborhoods and multi-family units

3. **Issues and opportunities with existing guidelines**
 - a. Frontage and setbacks
 - b. Building types
 - c. Refining building height
 - d. Coordinating public and private realm improvements

4. **Recommendations to Consider – Guiding Principles for Downtown Turlock**
 - a. Maximize use of historic fabric
 - b. Frontages, setbacks, building heights
 - c. Think about building types
 - d. Think about public realm improvements

Stefan said that a building's height should not be much taller than the width of the adjacent street, and talked about sun shadows in comparison with building height. He provided recommendations for building heights in various downtown districts.

5. **Precedents**

Stefan also provided examples of how different types of development could complement each other based on architectural design.

Comments from the audience included the need to develop the area around the post office and Olive Avenue; the necessity of saving farm land and the need to implement the ideas that have been presented; the shade trees in downtown are a wonderful amenity; downtown Turlock needs murals similar to downtown Manteca; the potential difficulty of repurposing existing, older structures; the potential number of residents that could be accommodated in the downtown area; the possibility of building parking on the first story and housing on the second story of a residential building; adding a new fee to pay for larger open spaces in the downtown area; concerns that higher density may bring a higher crime rate; the need for taller buildings ("go up not out"); what will the City offer to young people who need more things to do; we need to transform Turlock and be less conservative; historic development is good, but we need to plan amenities for the new residents that will come; the historic core of the downtown is special and makes it feel like a community; have any retailers been "turned away" in downtown due to the cost of renovation; and the need for more family driven places in downtown.

Chairman Brem asked about Fire Department response in relation to a building's height.

Turlock Fire Chief Tim Lohman responded that they are more interested in internal fire suppression measures such as sprinkler systems, and said they support buildings that go up and not out. Chief Lohman asked how higher density development would impact the crime rate. Stefan Pellegrini said that one study suggests that as density increases crime actually decreases, but this is a controversial study. Laura Podalsky spoke of crime prevention through design, having the windows face the street. Debbie Whitmore noted that this issue was addressed in the recently adopted General Plan.

Renee Ledbetter, president elect of the Ceres Chamber of Commerce, commented that they are looking to Turlock as a model of a good downtown.

Stefan Pellegrini also talked about the various funding programs that can provide tax credits

for buildings with historic designations; the need to be aggressive in solving parking issues; the different ways to utilize the wide streets in downtown; and that rents in Turlock may not justify a parking structure in downtown.

Maryn Pitt, Assistant to the City Manager/Economic Development, spoke of Turlock's unique and changing economics due to the draw from a large geographic area.

Discussion from the Commission included the need for amenities that are within walking distance from the downtown area; the need to maintain the character of Turlock's downtown core and keep the existing building facades; economic influences that may hinder development; and the need to provide amenities for youth; development in other communities that include parking structures; the structural integrity of Main Street needs to be maintained with development growing around it, and that creating a plan with the information provided tonight is a good framework to get started.

E. ADJOURNMENT Chairman Brem adjourned the meeting at 8:29 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



MIKE BREM
Chair



DEBRA A. WHITMORE
Deputy Director of Development Services,
Secretary of the Turlock Planning Commission