

- A. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairwoman Fregosi called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
PRESENT: Commissioners Jeanine Bean, Elvis Dias, Nick Hackler, Victor Pedroza,
Eric Gonsalves, and Chairwoman Fregosi.
ABSENT: None

B. RECOGNITION OF COMMISSIONER HILLBERG

Chairwoman Fregosi opened the meeting by wishing Planning Commissioners and staff a happy new year. Chairwoman Fregosi presented past Commissioner Hillberg with a proclamation and thanked him for his eight years of service to the Planning Commission and wished him well in future endeavors. Commissioner Hillberg stated that he enjoyed his time on the Planning Commission and thanked fellow Commissioners and staff for his experience.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Accepting minutes of regular Planning Commission meeting of December 3, 2015.

Chairwoman Fregosi made note of the green sheet pertaining to the minutes.

Motion by Commissioner Hackler, seconded by Commissioner Bean, to accept the minutes as amended by the green sheet. Motion carried unanimously.

D. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Deputy Director of Development Services/Planning Manager Debbie Whitmore made announcements regarding the appointment of new Commissioners, the audio-visual equipment upgrades/new voting system in the Council Chambers, the joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission on January 26, 2016, the Mayor's State of the City Address on January 29, 2016, and an upcoming Planning Commissioner's workshop on February 27, 2016. Ms. Whitmore also noted the green sheets pertaining to agenda item I1. Chairwoman Fregosi encouraged Commissioners to review the items previously discussed at the last joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting in August 2015 and to provide updates.

- E. 1. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND DISQUALIFICATIONS:** None
2. DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS:

Agenda Item I1 is subject to the requirements for disclosure of Ex Parte Communications. Planning Commissioners should disclose the following information if applicable:

- a. State for the public record the nature of the communication; and
- b. With whom the ex parte communication was made; and
- c. A brief statement as to the substance of the communication.

F. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Dana Ricker expressed her concerns regarding RAM Farms including permitting requirements, potential consequences of continued growth, inappropriate use of agricultural land, extended operating hours, the noise study, and applicable enforcement. Ms. Ricker thanked Debbie Whitmore for her assistance in following up on her concerns and stated that she hopes City staff will continue to be involved with future concerns and support.

Milt Trieweiler spoke regarding the City of Turlock's future including quality of life issues and smart growth.

G. CONSENT CALENDAR: None**H. PUBLIC HEARINGS: None****I. OTHER MATTERS**

1. General Plan Conformity Determination for Abandonment of Cooper Street between Oak and Rose Streets.

There were no disclosures of ex parte communications for this item.

Chair Fregosi pointed out that the Planning Commission is to determine whether the abandonment is in conformance with the General Plan, not to make decisions or recommendations. Deputy Director of Development Services/Planning Manager Debbie Whitmore further explained that the Commissioners will only take action on the conformity not the abandonment itself.

Ms. Whitmore presented the staff report on the request from the Sacred Heart Church to abandon a portion of Cooper Street between Oak and Rose Streets including information about the application process, General Plan policies, the MDP from 2001 for the existing abandonment, and maps illustrating the alternate path of travel if the abandonment were to occur. Ms. Whitmore also provided feedback from the neighbors including the loss of street access, increased response times for emergency vehicles to gain access to the neighborhood, traffic re-routed to neighboring streets, traffic back-ups, speeding, and lack of notification of street closures for school and church events.

Chairwoman Fregosi asked for public comment.

Mike Ducey acknowledged the efforts of Scared Heart to increase safety; however, he spoke in opposition of the abandonment for reasons including loss of parking, challenges for garbage collection and bin placement, and traffic being re-routed to neighboring streets. Mr. Ducey also noted that numerous events are held in the gymnasium after school hours which will create more traffic and parking on neighboring streets that are not well-lit and do not have sidewalks. Mr. Ducey suggested installing push gates or panic hardware to prevent pedestrians from entering the school sites.

Edwina Rocha, employee of the Sacred Heart Parish, provided information regarding the existing street closure, expressed ongoing safety concerns for students and parishioners, and noted several other events held at the parish during evenings and weekends that would also benefit from the permanent closure. Ms. Rocha also stated that the parish makes every effort to reach out to neighbors advising them of the main celebrations that affect Rose, Oak, Lyons, and Cahill Streets.

Commissioner Pedroza asked Ms. Rocha to share some of the safety concerns and explain what the parish is trying to resolve by closing the street. Ms. Rocha stated that the fenced areas will prevent pedestrians (strangers) from gaining access to the premises during the day and noted instances of which the school had to issue lock down orders due to unauthorized pedestrians entering the premises. Commissioner Pedroza requested information about Turlock High School's street closure. Development Services Director Mike Pitcock responded that the high school has the same type of permit as Sacred Heart Church, noting that if they have a special event, they can request to keep the gates closed longer. Ms. Rocha commented that when the parish has requested to keep the street closed longer, the City has authorized their request.

Chairwoman Fregosi asked who would be responsible for sidewalk and street repairs/maintenance if the permanent closure was approved. Mr. Pitcock responded that the church would become responsible with exception of the areas that have utilities of which easements would be required. Commissioner Dias asked if the City has considered selling property. Mr. Pitcock stated the City cannot sell the property because the right-of-way was obtained by an easement. Commissioner Gonsalves asked if the General Plan addresses specific public safety concerns, noting that his children attend a school that does not allow pedestrians to enter the school site when the gates are closed.

Jack Asno stated that his biggest concern is for the safety of the children and the future of the school and that he believes that the proposed changes will improve the neighborhood and the community as a whole.

Clarence Oliveira stated that the existing design of the site cuts the school in half, making the school completely exposed to the public. Mr. Oliveira noted that, by allowing the church to make these improvements, the value and aesthetics of the area will improve, creating more of a park setting rather than a playground. Mr. Oliveira also noted three lock downs that occurred within the last year and the vandalism and theft problems. Chairwoman Fregosi asked if there is campus supervision when children are out playing. Mr. Oliveira Clarence commented yes.

Commissioner Pedroza reiterated that the Commissioners are here to make a decision whether the proposed abandonment meets conformity and asked for direction from staff whether it does. Chairwoman Fregosi commented that some of this information is up for interpretation noted that the City Engineer did not have any concerns about traffic in the area. Commissioner Hackler stated that the closure would be an excellent addition for the church and school; however, he is concerned with the preservation of the existing neighborhood, character, and flow and would like to see additional information. Commissioner Gonsalves agreed that he would like to see a proposed design from the church that addresses traffic concerns. Commissioner Pedroza stated that he doesn't have enough information to make a determination. Commissioner Bean concurred.

Rusty Baez noted that a preliminary design was provided to the neighbors and the City that addresses parking, safety, exiting, gates with sensors, controlled access and cameras, and beautification. Ms. Debbie Whitmore stated that the church is still working on plans, but that Commissioners need to make a determination based on conformity and not review it from a project standpoint. Commissioner Hackler stated that the Commissioners have been very specific on projects or improvements that benefit the community, but that he is uncomfortable making this decision. Chairwoman Fregosi noted the MDP from 2001, stating that through traffic does not have access to the area during school hours which minimizes traffic concerns and promotes safety. Chairwoman Fregosi also shared her concerns including weighing the benefits of the private sector versus the community as a whole, public safety response times, increased foot traffic throughout the surrounding neighborhood, and the precedent of other institutes wanting to do the same thing.

Linda Murphy-Lopes, Principal of Sacred Heart School, spoke about the daily issues of homeless at the site, the goal to create a safer and more beautiful area, and that there are no houses within the stretch of roadway they are requesting to close. Ms. Murphy-Lopes also noted that the difference between Sacred Heart and other schools in Turlock is that the other schools have enclosed areas at their campus of which Sacred Heart does not.

Chairwoman Fregosi closed public comment.

Commissioner Dias referred to the City Engineer's report and policies, noting that he believes the proposed abandonment fits within conformity and that the Commissioners should allow the City Council to make the final decision. Commissioner Hackler agreed that first three policies are easy to justify; however, he wants to make sure that the preservation of the existing neighborhood is strongly considered.

Resolution - Option 1: Determining that the proposed abandonment of Cooper Avenue between Oak and Rose Streets is in conformity with the Turlock General Plan was introduced by Commissioner Dias, seconded by Commissioner Hackler, and failed 3/3 by the following vote:

Commissioner Dias	Commissioner Gonsalves	Commissioner Bean	Commissioner Hackler	Commissioner Pedroza	Chairwoman Fregosi
Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No

Chairwoman Fregosi recessed the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Chairwoman Fregosi reconvened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Chairwoman Fregosi handled Item J1 out of order between Items I1 and I2.

- J1. Request to appoint a member of the Planning Commission to the "The Search Is On" Library Committee.

Chairwoman Fregosi introduced Pat Portwood from the Friends of Turlock Library. Ms. Portwood provided an overview of "The Search Is On" campaign including statistics, current challenges, and the five-year goal to locate, fund, and build the new library. Ms. Portwood requested that the Planning Commission appoint a Commissioner to serve on the committee to represent the partnerships between the City, County, and other various organizations and noted that she is looking for a commitment by February 1, 2016 to ensure attendance at the first meeting on February 10, 2016.

Deputy Director of Development Services/Planning Manager Debbie Whitmore noted that the Chair needs to appoint a member at the next Planning Commission meeting. Chairwoman Fregosi asked if any of the Commissioners are interested in serving on this committee. Ms. Portwood noted that the meetings would be informal and concise. Commissioner Bean volunteered; however, she noted that she is unable to attend the first meeting due to a previous commitment.

Item J1 concluded at this time

2. Workshop on the Sign Ordinance Update.

Deputy Director of Development Services/Planning Manager Debbie Whitmore noted that the purpose of tonight's meeting is to hear from the business community and receive feedback regarding the proposed updates to the sign ordinance. Ms. Whitmore indicated that the updates will address business concerns that stemmed from recession (promotional, temporary, and people operated signs), are designed to make sign standards easier to understand, allow for certain types of promotional signage, avoid competitive disadvantages for existing businesses, and create an expedited permitting process. Ms. Whitmore noted that the Turlock Chamber of Commerce recommended that the City evaluate the City of Rancho Cucamonga's sign program and consider adopting a similar format. Ms. Whitmore stated that in addition to Rancho Cucamonga's sign program, staff has also been looking at Monte Vista Crossings and the Countryside shopping center as starting points to evaluate monument signs, sign area, and sizes. Ms. Whitmore added that the target deadline to present the updated sign ordinance to the City Council is October 2016, which means there will be monthly Planning Commission workshops with the intent of developing a draft ordinance in July 2016 so that the Planning Commission can take action in September 2016.

Chairwoman Fregosi asked how many packets were distributed to the business community. Ms. Whitmore noted that the Chamber has the distribution list and would have to confirm that number. Commissioner Pedroza asked how long staff has been working on this process. Ms. Whitmore responded three years. Commissioner Hackler stated that he is comfortable with what staff is proposing so far; however, he would like to receive community feedback.

James Crivelli from the Turlock Chamber of Commerce spoke regarding the distribution process, noting that he sent an invitation to business members informing them about tonight's meeting and the upcoming joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting; however, he didn't have means to attach the supporting information (documents) because of the mass size. Ms. Whitmore responded that she would be happy to work with James to provide a link to the business community with this information. Commissioner Pedroza commented that it is important that we receive feedback from the end-user.

Scott Snider shared concerns regarding lack of maintenance of existing signs due to graffiti and asked if there is something that can be added to the ordinance to ensure proper maintenance. Mr. Snider commented that the graffiti at parks and schools is much better; however, much improvement is still needed with commercial signs. Fire Marshal Mark Gomez stated that Neighborhood Services acknowledges this ongoing issue and makes contact with the property owner or tenant advising them to remove or offering assistance to remove the graffiti; however, they have to be careful not to damage the sign or the building. Chief Gomez noted that there are certain materials that signs can be made of which makes it significantly easier to remove graffiti. Chief Gomez also noted that he will provide updated graffiti statistics from 2015 to share with the Commissioners.

Rose Stillo, longtime resident, stated that she is very concerned about the appearance of signs and clutter and asked the Commissioners that once a sign program is implemented, that it is also enforced. Commissioner Pedroza agreed that enforcement needs to be a focus. Chairwoman Fregosi commented that the common goal is to improve the appearance of the City.

Milt Trieweiler noted an existing sign in Turlock that he believes is disgraceful and asked the Commissioners to take note in hopes that something can be done to improve existing signs.

J. COMMISSIONERS CONSIDERATION

Item J1 handled previously

K. STANISLAUS COUNTY PLANNING REFERRAL ITEMS

1. Use Permit 2015-0114 (G & G Transportation - 2013 N. Tegner Rd.)

Deputy Director of Development Services/Planning Manager Debbie Whitmore presented the staff report on the request from G & G Transportation to establish a truck parking facility for truck-tractors and trailers at 2013 N. Tegner Rd., noting that staff has provided comments to the County including the request of Capital Facility Fees, expansion of roadway, right away dedication, access of Tegner Rd, storm water run-off be maintained onsite, landscaping at the front of property be consistent with City standards, drainage basins, drive aisle paved, and continuous landscape screen on truck parking area. Ms. Whitmore noted that the project also includes construction of a storage shed, fuel tank, and the demolition and reconstruction of a single family dwelling.

L. COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Commissioner Pedroza stated that he was happy to see community members express their concerns about from RAM Farms and asked when the temporary building over the ice rink is scheduled to be removed. Ms. Whitmore stated that it is her understanding that it will be removed in approximately two weeks. Commissioner Pedroza stated that he feels the Commissioners were very specific about the intent of the property, but doesn't feel that their expectations were met.

Chairwoman Fregosi welcomed Joanne Foster, noting that she looks forward to working with her. Ms. Whitmore also expressed enthusiasm, noting Ms. Foster's start date of January 19, 2016.

M. STAFF UPDATES

1. Update on certification of the City of Turlock Housing Element 2014-2023.

Deputy of Director of Development Services/Planning Manager Debbie Whitmore provided an update on the certification of the City of Turlock Housing Element 2014-2023, noting the various comments received from the State Housing Department of which most of the comments have already been addressed. Ms. Whitmore also noted that the state uses the City's Housing Element as part of their consolidated planning for HUD; therefore, the standards have become more specific.

- N. ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Commissioner Pedroza, seconded by Commissioner Bean, to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

Soraya Fregosi
Chair

Debra A. Whitmore
Deputy Director of Development Services

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