



**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
July 27, 2016 6:00 PM
Hanford Civic Auditorium
400 N. Douty St**

6:00 PM - 6:30 PM:

- A. Open House on the Zoning Ordinance Update

6:30 PM CALL TO ORDER SPECIAL SESSION:

Mayor Mendes called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK:

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Russ Curry	Council Member	Present	6:00 PM
David Ayers	Council Member	Present	6:00 PM
Gary Pannett	Council Member	Present	6:00 PM
Francisco Ramirez	Vice Mayor	Present	6:00 PM
Justin Mendes	Mayor	Present	6:00 PM

FLAG SALUTE:

Mayor Mendes led the flag salute.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS:

Community Development Director Darlene Mata introduced Steve Brandt of Quad Knopf and John Zumwalt of Zumwalt-Hansen. They provided a PowerPoint presentation noting the new General Plan designations. Staff discussed the actions and recommendations that have already taken place and the next steps to adopt the General Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

*Comments from the public are limited to items listed on the agenda (GC 54954.3a). A maximum of **five minutes** is allowed for each speaker. Please begin your comments by stating your name and providing your city of residence.*

Patricia Dickerson read a statement on behalf of Jeff Porterfield which was submitted to the City Clerk. He expressed concerns regarding banks and the negative side effects from the current zoning despite the good intentions.

A resident was concerned that changes will have a negative impact and would like to remove the redtape for downtown businesses, but not change the zoning. He supported adding incentives. He also commented on the number of acreage for parks and opposes the sale of Hidden Valley Park.

Lee Wisecarver discussed the loss of revenue to other communities.

Dominique Butler of Comfort Inn opposed an incentive to a potential hotel developer to construct a conference center.

Shellie Talbert, Main Street Hanford, believes the zoning is what protects the downtown. She commented on the recommendations by the Downtown Revitalization Committee and encouraged the Council to maintain the current zoning.

Kalish Morrow, a downtown business owner, has seen some businesses close, but that new types of businesses have also opened. She expressed concerned about urban sprawl and believes that the current zoning has worked at keeping businesses downtown.

Jan Gray, owner of Castaway Consignments, stated that banks create foot traffic in the downtown area. She also agreed with the recommendations made by the Downtown Revitalization Committee including increasing the Transient Occupancy Tax.

A Visalia resident stated that she drives to work everyday to Hanford and discussed the limited locations on where businesses can be located. She sees potential in Hanford, but it is limited due to restrictions. She does not like going downtown for shopping and supports changes to the zoning.

A resident spoke favorably of downtown Visalia and questioned why Hanford would not follow that model. He perceived that the Hanford downtown businesses do not want changes, because it protects them from competition.

A gentleman reflected on the changes made to restrict signage and how Hanford used to look. He commented on current blight and supports some changes.

Ramon Mendoza spoke about youth activities and does not want the zoning to put children at a disadvantage, so the City should keep that in mind when thinking about the zoning.

Parm Johal believes the current zoning hurts businesses and that it needs to be opened up to allow innovation and take down the barriers.

Paula Massey commented on some out of town visitors that wanted to know what there was to do, and she said that there was very little that she could recommend.

Wendy Raygoza, a downtown business owner, supports free market and competition but wants to keep banks downtown because that really helps with foot traffic. She briefly commented on her son's recent participation at a Council meeting to support the skate park.

A resident wants the City to have something for the youth so they have something to do.

Angel Ramirez, an Armona business owner, would love to open a tattoo business in Hanford. He wants his taxes to go to Hanford to support the community.

Chris Soares opposes the sale of Hidden Valley Park and wants it developed as an active park. She also stated that she is tired of tax dollars going to other towns, so changes need to be made.

Fred Guerrero referred to Mayor Mendes' letter in the newspaper and encouraged the Council to analyze the economics and provide full disclosure to the constituents with factual information and data.

Ignacio, a tattoo artist, would like shops to be allowed downtown. He also commented on his support for the skate park.

Joanne Doerter, Hanford Mall, stated the ordinances have worked because they have kept businesses out, but that has also caused a loss of job opportunities and sales tax revenue. She submitted a petition with over 500 signatures to the City Clerk supporting changes to the zoning ordinances.

Sunshine Weihert works downtown and believes changes to the zoning will kill downtown. She supports grants to improve facades and wants the parking issues to be addressed.

Alicia Gregory of the Hanford Mall stated that she has seen little improvement in downtown over the last twenty years due to the restrictions, which have also prohibited businesses from opening at the mall. She is in favor of lifting the restrictions.

A gentleman that works downtown does not want the restrictions to be lifted yet.

Rhonda Mayer, a downtown business owner, fears that downtown will decline like Fresno's Fulton mall. She wants to see the occupancy increase downtown.

Estela Diaz discussed her daughter's plan to open a dance studio downtown in a historic building and hopes downtown will remain beautiful.

Craig Johnson supports changes that will benefit the community. He wants banks and furniture stores to stay downtown.

Mayor Mendes called for a recess at 8:15 p.m., and reconvened the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Paula Lehn, on behalf of FAST Credit Union, stated that they were not allowed to go outside downtown and were assured that the zoning would protect them and their investment. She referenced the current General Plan and that the zoning needs to be consistent with it. She wants issues to be addressed such as signage and permit fees, but not zoning.

Bob Ramos wants to keep the zoning in place and for the Council to follow the recommendations of the Downtown Revitalization Committee. He opposes the selling of the Rabobank building and that the City should look elsewhere for funding.

John Lehn supports having a strategy to make improvements to downtown and that incentives need to be given a chance to succeed.

Dan Chin discussed that zoning is a tool to shape how we want the community to look. He stated that the restrictions were put in place with the intent to review occasionally to determine what is or is not working. He stated that if that tool is taken away then another tool needs to replace it, such as incentives.

Shelly Barker would like the City to do something about the vacant buildings to increase revenue. She stated that fostering additional foot traffic will improve downtown.

Mickey Stoddard discussed the proposed zoning changes to the land next to Hidden Valley Park. He does not want that property to be sold and proposed putting that issue on a ballot.

Mary Beth, a resident of Hanford, said that Hanford used to be vibrant and unique but not anymore. She stated that businesses need to be brought downtown by fixing the policies, not the zoning.

Michael Mayer, a downtown business owner, agrees that some changes need to be made and allow other businesses downtown. He supports competition, but wants everyone to be treated equally and on a level playing field. He does not believe it would be fair to allow businesses in other zones.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

A. Discussion and direction regarding potential changes to Zoning Ordinances

Mayor Mendes stated that specific direction to staff will be given at the next City Council and Planning Commission joint meeting. Mr. Mendes requested staff to pursue new incentives and funding options for downtown and to also put a Transient Occupancy Tax increase on a future ballot as a funding source for downtown. He also stated that if the land next to Hidden Valley Park is sold then he wants those funds to go to recreational opportunities.

Council Member Pannett stated that he would like the Council to have a discussion and possible action regarding blighted buildings.

Council Member Curry stated that he does not want any changes to the zoning.

Council Member Ayers does not want any changes to zoning and would like the City to move forward with a potential Transient Occupancy Tax increase.

Vice Mayor Ramirez agreed with Mayor Mendes that if land is sold next to Hidden Valley Park then the funds should go to Parks & Recreation. He also supported an increase to the Transient Occupancy Tax.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Mendes adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Gomez
City Clerk