

Meeting of the City of Fresno  
Infill Development Ad Hoc Council Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 4, 2013

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The City of Fresno Infill Development Ad Hoc Council Subcommittee met at 3:10 p.m. in Conference Room C (Room 2120), City Hall on February 4, 2013.

In attendance: Councilmember's Brand and Olivier, Keith Berghold, Scott Mozier, Patrick Wiemiller, Mike Sanchez. Councilmember Baines was absent.

Councilmember Brand made a motion to approve the minutes of January 15, 2013. Councilmember Olivier seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a vote of 2-0-1 with Councilmember Baines absent.

1. Introductions - Introductions were made.
2. Discussion of Infill Development policy recommendations.
  - A) Inventory of infill land in the city
  - B) Mapping infill land parcels in the city

Keith stated that there are so many layers in the GIS system, so they are trying to help the committee figure out definitions that are easy to get. In the Act it talked about mapping all vacant land, parcels, underutilized and bypassed parcels. We came up with an initial definition which we hope you will consider. Infill generally is anything within the city limits as of the end of 2012. The committee is setting priorities within the general infill area of the city limits and incentives, streamlining and those kinds of things based on a number of different filters.

Keith distributed a memo with a subject line of: Opportunities for Urban Infill: Taking Inventory of Vacant, Underutilized and Bypassed Parcels, dated February 4, 2013 and went over the various definitions with the committee. Also included with the memo were four maps, (Vacant Land and Open Agriculture in the City of Fresno, Fresno General Plan Update Vacant Land Use, Improvement to Land Valuation Ratio, and General Plan Map Atlas). Keith discussed the maps and explained what they demonstrate. Discussion ensued.

On page two of the memo Keith talked about "Additional Factors & Drill Down Filters" stating that items 1, 2, and 3 are fairly easy and the rest are more difficult. Keith stated that they can bring back items 1, 2 and 3. They are looking at filtering layers that would pop out parcels for the mapping process. Keith proposed that they come back with a set of panels that may be 12 maps so that you can begin to see the streets, the lighting patterns and things like that. Also see what we can do with the first three layers that you identified in the Act. See if we can do a filter on these types of maps to see which ones exists in the highest crime areas, which ones exists in the highest poverty areas, and those kinds of things. Councilmember Olivier asked if it was

possible to get those maps by Council District. Keith responded that they can do the first layer so it is generic and they might be able to come back and define the other. Councilmember Olivier thinks it will be helpful for the other Councilmember's to see exactly what their own district looks like.

Councilmember Brand stated that the goal of the subcommittee is to make recommendations and vote on items that will be adopted or incorporated into the General Plan by March or April.

Councilmember Brand asked if there was anyone from the public that would like to speak before they move on to items A and B below.

**Public comments:**

Jeff Roberts; Granville Homes. He thanked staff for creating the maps. Suggested cleanup in the Copper River Ranch area, the first map shows Copper River Ranch with some significant vacant land, but it doesn't show all of the land that has been annexed to the City. It will show a greater inventory of vacant land than what we have today. On the second map it looks more accurate, and on the third map it shows that the golf course is available for development. He thinks a district by district map is a great idea because I would be interested in seeing what the percentage of vacant land is available in each district.

Craig Brean; Sierra Club. He recently read in the Bee about the proposed medical facility in the Friant Millerton area. It struck him that the facility could be a wonderful booster to fulfilling the vision of your General Plan if it could be located in the City. He doesn't know if this is the right committee, but he hopes there would be some attempt in the city to identify an area or a parcel where it might be looked at as appropriate for that sort of facility. I urge you to compete for it.

**C) Infill Development Overlay Districts**

Councilmember Brand began by describing what he was thinking about when he wrote this. There are existing overlay districts that are being proposed in the General Plan, and there are two in the downtown area (the Fulton Mall Corridor and Downtown Neighborhood Community Plan). Other cities that he looked at have used Overlay Districts as a way to incentivize Infill Developments to relax development codes and standards to make it more economical to do this. His thought was to expand beyond just the downtown area but all the areas particularly in Southeast and Southwest that may lend themselves (overlay districts) and he put some specific policy recommendations (page 24 of the Act) to evaluate other impacted neighborhoods outside the current zoning areas with similar demographic, geographic and social economic profiles to consider zoning and overlay districts. He also recommended reducing the size of the zoning overlay districts to concentrate resources on a smaller footprint. He felt a smaller area would be easier to define and get a handle on. He wants to evaluate the potential gains of creating sub-overlay districts within a defined district, and provide more flexible development and design standards within Overlay Districts that reconcile reasonable and appropriate design standards and finding cost efficiencies. Councilmember Brand provided examples and discussion ensued.

Councilmember Brand stated that it might be best if Keith could identify one or two case studies. The subcommittee could go out with Keith one day where he could show them areas that meet this criterion. Then come back in a couple of weeks and look at some pictures and see an actual neighborhood that would benefit and be the perfect candidate for an overlay district. Mike Sanchez

stated that they could design some flexibility into the zoning ordinance. Clint asked if the committee could address that in outlying areas, he met with a gentleman last week who wanted to do housing development and he right away asked if I could waive his fees like they do in other communities. Councilmember Olivier asked how real is it as part of this committee and as part of fact finding for us to look at the policies of some of these other communities around us and determine if these things are gimmicks or if these are workable solutions that could be adopted here. Additional discussion ensued.

Public comment - Ruby, California Rural Legal Assistance – Are these Overlay Districts going to be straight out of the Development Code update or is this a separate set of Overlay Districts? I was wondering how this will be coordinated with the update for the Development Code, Chapter 15.

Keith responded that the structure of the Development Code is the citywide code and the area covered by the downtown neighborhood community plan area has a chapter in its own development code. They are all part of the major code. These overlay districts are going to have to be some sort of an addition to this process. We are going to come forward with a proposal for an updated development code it doesn't have these overlay districts in them yet. More discussion ensued.

Jeff Roberts, Granville Homes - there is a reason why vacant properties are vacant. Usually the owner thinks the property is worth more than it really is. A developer can't make it pencil out because the rents are not high enough, so one of the things a developer of an infill piece is always faced with is trying to increase the density. Maybe the city could contact the air district and tell them they are trying to incentivize on a development on an infill development can you give it a pass or a waiver? He isn't sure the city could be successful with the flood control districts or not.

It was also suggested that a massive rezone take place to be in line with the General Plan.

Councilmember Brand asked Keith to come back to the next meeting with a couple of recommendations on how the overlay district will fit into the development code update and the downtown plan. Keith stated they will iterate the maps and try to get some of the criteria mentioned today plus some of the filters built into the Act, and try to figure out a process of how the overlay district might work and those kinds of things.

Keith asked Jeff Roberts what he thought would be some good case studies in south Fresno where we could look at the whole range of issues that this would be to address to be an effective infill incentive and priority kind of process. Jeff responded that the first thing that comes to mind is the northwest corner of Sierra and Fresno Street; it backs up to highway 41. Another one is Ashland Avenue close to the airport (168 to 41). Jeff said that another he thing he failed to mention is that when buildings become 50 years and older it is considered historic. Councilmember Brand asked for one or two areas that seem to fit the criteria so the subcommittee can examine and see some specific applications. Councilmember Olivier also thought he could provide some suggestions. Suggestions and locations are to be emailed to Keith so they can begin to develop the case studies. The next meeting is Tuesday, 2/26/13 at 3pm.

Interdepartmental infill development team - See pg 25 of the act and their responsibilities.

Councilmember Brand said this team is typically headed by someone at the Assistant City Manager level position. It would have someone from Planning, Public Works, and Public Safety on it to be able to move things on a faster pace. It would be someone from the City Manager's Office and then the City

Manager would select the team. Councilmember Brand thinks this has been tried before in the past but for one reason or another was never seen through. Keith feels that Mark needs to weigh in and hopefully there will be a new DARM director that could focus on the procedures and timelines, or maybe there would be an infill project manager.

Public Comment - Ruby, California Rural Legal Assistance, it sounds like you're trying to come up with an expedited service for infill development, how does this align with the proposals on Chapter 15 of the code update which sounds like they are reassigning a bunch of different jobs and who is in charge of processing what permits. Is this going to be a separate process just for infill? Councilmember Brand stated that's to be determined. He really can't answer that right now.

Jeff stated there is a state law, a subdivision map act says when you file a tentative tract map in a municipality that you have 50 days to act on that map or deemed approved. He doesn't think there has ever been a map be approved in 50 days. Perhaps there could be a way a map or a CUP could avoid a public hearing and then have the director approve it. I know state law allows for that, but we don't do it here. It could takes some weeks out of the process and for infill projects, maybe the director puts the final stamp on it rather than having to go to a public hearing of the planning commission. Councilmember Brand said that is something we could work on.

Public comment, George Hotstetter - On the infill development, he walked over to Diamond Avenue to Diamond Plaza apartments which is at a dead end street; Jefferson school is there too. There are steel posts that go up about six feet with barb wired on top of that and a beware of dog sign. He thought this must be something that the Infill Development subcommittee must have in mind. Is that correct as to improving infill areas? Then he went to Illinois and Mariposa, there is a rundown apartment complex next to it is an empty lot. His question is - are both of those properties items that will be addressed by this committee? Councilmember Brand responded, yes they fit the criteria and that is the goal. Councilmember Olivier stated the area George described is in his district. He believes that if improvements in this area are done, we would see more improvements. It's our responsibility as electives to set the policies that allow them to do that.

Adjourned at 4:19pm

*The minutes of February 4, 2013 were approved on March 12, 2013 with a motion by Councilmember Brand and a second by Councilmember Baines. The motion passed on a 2-0-1 vote with Councilmember Olivier absent.*