

DOWNTOWN FRESNO PARTNERSHIP

Executive Committee

Thursday, May 25, 2023
8:30 A.M. – 10:00 A.M.

Downtown Fresno Partnership
845 Fulton Street

Minutes

- **Present:** Jackie Anaya, Jayni Wong, Phil Kliewer, Scott Anderson, Channelle Charest
- **Absent:**
- **Staff:** Elliott Balch, Lara Agulian
- **Public:**

I. **Call to Order** – Meeting was called to order at 8:33am Kliewer

II. **Public Comment**

No public in attendance

III. **Approval of Agenda (*Action*)** Kliewer

Motion made by Kliewer, Wong second, motion approved unanimously.

IV. **Approval of the April 13, 2023 Minutes (*Action*)** Kliewer

Motion made by Anderson, Wong second, motion approved unanimously.

V. **Acceptance of the Financial Report (*Action*)** Balch/Wong

Balch was hoping to have a midyear budget check ready by the next board meeting in June, but it will not be ready in time. He asked the City what the revenues look like from April property taxes, but they won't be ready for another few weeks. Our event income is looking good and there is an opportunity for more with the Fulton Street Party coming up in August.

The year-to-date is trending higher and Balch wants to look into this. He is committed to bringing updates to the August board meeting. The City has put out an RFP for the Youth Ambassador Program. We will be submitting a proposal and if we get it, this could affect staffing and operating budgets. We have received six proposals for the office rental RFP that we put out. Clarity on what we will need will come in the next few months, which will affect the office decision.

Balch also wants to clean up the balance sheet and see why line items are designated the

way they are. Wong stated that this will take about a year to really get through. It is fine to take the time to investigate it. Kliewer stated that if we are bringing in revenue to cover expenses and know how much to bring in, it will be fine.

Motion made by Kliewer, Wong second, motion approved unanimously.

VI. **CEO / President Update**

Balch

a. **State Budget Infrastructure**

There is a proposed \$250 million of the State budget for Downtown Fresno. There is a Senate and Assembly hearing today. We are working to mobilize folks to call in, in support of the funding. We did have 75 letters of support with 44 being from downtown businesses. The DFP staff went door-to-door to each business to get their support. We didn't get as many property owners to sign, but that was just due to time constraints. We are still reaching out and looking for that support. This funding will result in housing. If it passes, the next challenge will be accelerating housing construction.

b. **City Ambassador Program RFP**

The City has hired 25 ambassadors that are from the Foster Care system or have barriers to employment. They put out an RFP for a nonprofit to take over the program in Downtown. There is a total of \$1 million for this program, but the RFP states that they will give \$300,000 for operations, meaning that the DT ambassadors from this program will likely come down to about 5-10 and will be in operation until June of next year. They will be expanding this program to include other areas of Fresno. The RFP is due June 14.

c. **New Office Space**

DFP put out an RFP for a new office lease within Zone 3. Looking at a cost of more than \$25,000 and wanting to narrow the area to Zone 3, this seemed a fair way to go about the searching process. We have received six proposals. We have until the end of October to move out of our current space. Kliewer mentioned to keep tenant improvements in mind as they will take time. The decision on the space will come down to what we can take on now and how we can grow into a space. Rick Roush has proposed for TW Patterson, Rick Ellis has proposed for the 1025 Fulton property. Mario Gutierrez has proposed for 1250 Fulton. Sevak Katchadourian has proposed for one of his properties. A property at Fulton and Fresno has also been proposed. We will work to narrow it down from here.

d. **Storefront Improvements**

We have an MOU with the Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation to help with the Façade Grant. This is a City program which the FAHF is heading up. Our MOU states that we need to help at least 12 individuals apply for the grant and we have met that threshold already with Gloria Valdavinós' dedication. We did put out an RFP, which one contractor responded to and it happens to be the one already working with the FAHF. We hosted a meeting with the contractor and six businesses, which went well. The contractor has also already been out and about downtown talking to the businesses.

There has been some lack of communication with the FAHF, but we are moving forward. Businesses can get paint jobs, update ADA compliance, get new signs, and more.

e. Upcoming Vacation Time

Balch has a 2-week vacation starting on Sunday. Agulian has a 3-week vacation starting tomorrow. Brian Kelly has been working closely with Balch on the City Ambassador RFP so he will be point on that. The Urban Institute and Kresge Foundation will be in Downtown Fresno for the Central Valley Community Foundation retreat on June 12. The Kresge Foundation has asked us to put together a proposal for sustainable work in Downtown Fresno, which they will fund. The CEO of Kresge will get a tour of downtown and more. If we get this grant funding from them, it will have to go through the DFF. Balch will be back from vacation just in time for this. Our bookkeeper David Williams is also aware of the vacations and will continue to get things through.

f. Budget Review

This was already discussed during the financial review, but Balch did bring up board member transitions such as Anaya leaving the board when her building is sold. There is also talk of Charest’s position transitioning to Thilani Grubel. According to the Bylaws, it seems that even with the changes, the board still has enough members. We may just need one more property owner from zone 3. Balch has been considering Dr. Carole Goldsmith from the State Center Community College District since they do so much downtown. There are also other individual property owners that would be good. If no one is opposed, we may bring this to the next board meeting if Dr. Goldsmith is interested, but this is not the most pressing issue.

VII. Resolution: Authority to Enter Contracts (Action) Balch

In the City Ambassador RFP, it mentions that there needs to be a person with the authority to sign off. It seems that DFP has not had one in the past. This vote would give Balch the authority to submit proposals, enter contracts, gives power for the Board to authorize other individuals for such purposes, and applies retroactively to March 20, 2023. Once approved, Anaya will sign the resolution.

Motion made by Kliewer, Anderson second, motion approved unanimously.

VIII. Selection of Contractor for to Recommend for Storefront Program Balch

In the agenda, this was an action item. An action is not needed as only one contractor submitted a proposal to the RFP. DFP has gone out of their way to find a good contractor. At the end of the day, the businesses are the clients and can use the money for the improvements of their choosing. Kliewer asked who is responsible for auditing and making sure the individuals don’t pocket the money. That would be a question for Valdovinos, but there are parameters in the application that state one must show the work they have done.

The members are all agreed on the contractor.

IX. Designation of Labor Negotiator: Elliott Balch, President & CEO (Action) Balch

Under the Brown Act, there must be a designated individual to negotiate for the staff. This person must be designated during an open session and the negotiating is done during closed sessions. This vote is to approve Balch as the negotiator.

Motion made by Kliewer, Wong second, motion approved unanimously.

X. Closed Session

- a. Labor Negotiations: Conference with Labor Negotiator (Gov. Code §54957.6) to discuss personnel policies including benefits affecting all employee positions (unrepresented).
 - A newly adopted employee handbook has been approved unanimously by the committee.

XI. Attendance Report Kliewer

Agulian asked if Kliewer would like to receive the attendance reports as this had not been discussed before. We will start going over this in the next executive meeting. We can also add this to the Board minutes.

XII. Board Meeting Preview: June 21, 2023 Balch

The marketing and clean and green committee meetings have been moved to accommodate for Balch's vacation in June. Just for June, the meetings will take place one week later than usual. The meeting location may be Los Panchos for the Board meeting in June. With Agulian gone, Valdovinos is aware and will be the one working on the meetings. There will be updates on the City RFP, office spaces, the City budget, and maybe bringing Dr. Goldsmith onto the Board.

XIII. Board Open Discussion

Kliewer mentioned that the owner of Fresno Fuego, Jamie, wants to start a youth soccer academy in downtown. It would be a nonprofit bringing high levels of soccer to any youth interested. It was mentioned that Bitwise once had a soccer program. It was also mentioned that there were talks to open a soccer stadium in a Fresno Convention Center parking lot with the City, but no one here knows what happened to those plans. Anderson says that a soccer program here and a team seem like a natural fit for downtown. Balch would like to talk to Jamie to learn more about his plans and get updates on the Convention Center.

Kliewer mentioned that Warnors is still looking to rehab their building and Frank's Place. They have asked Tom Connelly to resign and are looking for funding. Measure P funding can bring some in to Warnors as it is cultural. Balch has tried to work with

Warnors when he was at CVCF to get them funding. DFP is working with them now to still try to get them planters as they were winners of Planter Program. This has been an ongoing issue with the City to get the planters reallocated.

Kliwer asked for any updates about ballpark lot across from Tioga. There are no real updates from the City. Kliwer believes that it could be good to know what the City is planning to do with the properties they are holding for housing.

Anaya updates the committee about the sale of her building, Joe's Steakhouse. They have had five showings recently to people who want to open up a restaurant right away.

Balch updated the committee about the DFF retreat in Paso Robles. He attended the first half of the retreat. DFF has historically been a way to come up with engagement ideas downtown, but typically the DFP staff works to put these together with DFP funding. The role of DFF as our 501c3 should be to reliably apply for a receive grant funding that both DFF and DFP can use. We need an operations agreement within the 2 boards as DFP staff answers to the DFP board. Because of this, the role of Executive Director may change as well. It has been the DFP Program Manager as part of their job description but may shift to the DFP CEO. It makes sense to reorient these things.

XIV. **Adjourn** – The meeting adjourned at 9:46am.

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