

DOWNTOWN FRESNO PARTNERSHIP
Marketing & Business Development Committee

April 5, 2023
1P.M. – 2P.M

Downtown Fresno Partnership
845 Fulton Street

MINUTES

- **Present:** Channelle Charest, Phil Kliewer
- **Staff:** Elliott Balch, Lara Agulian, Gloria Valdovinos, Marissa Arreguin
- **Public:**

I. **Call to Order-** The meeting was called to order at 1:04pm

As Balch's first Marketing Committee meeting, he was interested to hear the thoughts of Charest on marketing for DFP. Charest mentioned that she has talked to Jordan Sanchez about what is most important marketing-wise. There is a lot of room for growth. Charest has been a contributor on the backside of the marketing versus the creative side. We do need to see what the best and most effective way would be to spend our marketing dollars. Thilani Grubel has also been active and focuses on these things so she could be great addition to this committee. Grubel's focus is more local to the area. Charest has been working with DFP through different leadership and is very supportive and happy to see the growth.

Balch stated that the management plan for the PBID requires that we provide marketing and businesses development to the area. We want to optimize how we do that. We will put out an RFP for marketing services. We do have a good grasp on the social media channels but could use a marketing company to maximize past the day-to-day. This can help us get more connected with community engagement and communication. One thing that is important to Balch is to get DFP and DFF more integrated. This partnership will be an asset and help us get more grants and funding. We have had some issues recently with our golf cart getting stolen from our equipment storage. The environment where we are located right now is a practical issue. By moving somewhere else, we have the opportunity to figure out grants for raising the value of an area and the properties there.

Charest asked what the most immediate needs are. Balch answered with two things, the first being how to scope RFP for a marketing company. Businesses want us to do things a certain way to support them. The second would be more activations through events. We want opportunities for weekly activation. Some merchants had a great sales day during FresYes Fest even outside of their normal demographic of patrons. How do we create that for them more often, especially in Zone 3? We do have a FresYes Fest debrief with the organizing parties on April 6. We want to know how rent paying tenants can be involved and included.

Kliewer mentions that identifying goals with this reset is going to be very important. We can do a deep dive and figure out what worked and what didn't in the past. Maybe we need to introduce more TikTok. Once we recognize and reevaluate what we do and set some goals, then we can put a plan in place. How do we get peoples' attention and get them to come downtown? We may have to get a little weird in ways like Downtown Austin and Portland have done. We should lean on the fact that we are different from the rest of Fresno. Charest mentioned that we should show people how to go out downtown. We should also show businesses how to do events and marketing on their own through workshops and other

means. This way we can champion other's events with less work on our plates. There may even be a way to give businesses money from our budget as incentives to throw their own events. Valdovinos mentioned that she is working on this with Bad Kids Club, a business inside Mammoth Mall. She asked them to do a vintage and thrift section at Fulton Street Party and they literally did everything from getting the vendors to the set up. They do photos walks now and have a photo studio inside Mammoth Mall as well. As we have been wanting to do another downtown photo contest, we will bring Bad Kids Club in to collaborate with this process. Putting the power and resources in the hands of local business owners and community members to throw their own events is something that the DFP staff has been talking about. This is something they do hope to implement and is a big goal for Arreguin. DFP has a meeting with the known event throwers downtown to motivate them and see how we can assist where needed.

Kliewer stated that events bring money in for the City so hopefully the City can incentivize these event throwers. We can just be part of the process. Since we are downtown, we know what downtown needs. Balch can then focus on how it works with the government and infrastructure, and how to make it sustainable. He can tell the property owners that we are taking them into account and how these events benefit them.

Balch mentions that State of Downtown is going to be an important moment to maximize the present and future. We are an owner led organization, but we need to build the bridge between activation and revitalization. This means bridge the gap between current and future tenants, some becoming tenants through vendor events. Charest stressed that it is important to make sure current tenants and owners understand the purpose of events. Residentially there are no vacancies downtown and this is because the public knows that this is the only place where you can walk to cool events from where you live. If we do help others plan events, we can show our value. We should also help businesses with their own social media with workshops. This could be part of the RFP. Valdovinos is working with the Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation on Spanish Merchant Meetings. We have also received a grant from FAHF to do these kinds of workshops and trainings for Spanish speaking merchants.

Charest asked for specifics on the RFP. What are we asking to do in house versus what we outsource? Balch said that we will start from last year's approach and adjust from there. We do have to be firm on what our expectations are. This will be different from standard marketing. Google ads are great and needed, but what kind and how? Can it be done differently? We need to decide what kind of marketing we want with the vision we have. From there, we do research on what marketing firm we go with. We are authentically diverse in downtown so let's tap that and market it. That is what people are after now and it is our market. We are a factory of opportunity.

Balch spoke about the timeline he sees for the RFP. He has a roadmap of board meetings for the year. He hopes to have the RFP process done and ready to bring that action to the board by the October meeting. Charest believes this is a reasonable timeline. We have to be intentional in this process, which is why we cannot fully rush it. For now, we have been asking Floyd Sanchez to help with marketing materials and graphics. This has been helping keep our vision similar during this time, which Valdovinos appreciates.

The Façade grant through the Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation is another big thing on the horizon. We still have to finalize the contract on that, but Balch has been communicating with Dora. There is no real timeline yet. The plan that Jordan Sanchez had been working on was for DFP to apply for the grant for the 900s Fulton block. Sanchez had contacted Fresno Neon Sign already to see what they could do. Having more lights in downtown with neon

signs is never bad, but we could run into some electrical and theft issues. We just need to have a consistent and practical solution of something that we can upkeep.

Parking has been something that businesses would like a solution for, especially south of Tulare. No one is really happy with the monthly rate of \$95 for a garage parking permit. If you buy in bulk of 50 or more with a 12-month contract, the price drops to \$68 a month. DFP is thinking of bulk buying a bunch to then sell to the businesses for their employees at the cheaper rate. Parsec, Tioga, and Full Circle are already interested. We can help facilitate this, but can businesses commit for the 12 months? We have to decide if this is something we can realistically do and figure out the logistics. It is large cost for us up-front, so it has to be worth it. We should have a contract for the commitment. There may be the possibility of us charging two different prices ourselves. If someone does commit to the year, they get a cheaper rate, but have to pay all at once. If someone wants to stay month-to-month, they will still get a discounted rate, but it will not be as much as the yearly one. We will be advocating for changes in the Master Fee Schedule.

II. Next meeting – June 7, 2023

III. Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned at 2:07pm.