

DOWNTOWN FRESNO PARTNERSHIP

Marketing & Business Development Committee

October 4, 2023
1P.M. – 2P.M

Downtown Fresno Partnership
845 Fulton Street

MINUTES

Location: Downtown Fresno Partnership, 845 Fulton Street
This meeting will also be accessible via video at the following:

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Meeting ID: 816 7933 0792

Password: 996964

Present: Lupe Perez, Beth Wilkinson

Staff: Elliott Balch, Lara Agulian

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

II. Recent & Ongoing Events

For both Fulton Street Party and Fiestas, we saw larger number of attendance and beer sales compared to the year before. Both were successful with great energy.

- a. **Fulton Street Party Recap:** This took place August 26. We had 70 plus acts with a tight budget. A lookahead for next year is that we are looking into Measure P to fund performing arts in public spaces so we can better pay artists. Perez asks if we have to apply for that type of funding. We do with applications due mid-January and awards announced in April.

Fulton Street was six blocks and we had many indoor venues. With this, the streets didn't feel quite full, but we know the event was well attended, just spaced out.

- b. **Fiestas Recap:** This took place September 24. Unvision was a sponsor, and they were impressed. They did a lot of airtime for the event this year but did not bring a lot of their clients out to the event itself. They saw a really good turn out and want to do even more next year. Perez asked what the attendance was. We can't say for sure, but the event was three blocks and looked packed the whole time. We are waiting to get this data and will look into talking to the police to see if they have an estimate. We intentionally chose to do this on a Sunday to target families.

We are already thinking ahead to next year and are set to meet with Councilmember Arias' office to debrief next week. A parade kicked off the event on Sunday. Balch is thinking of doing the Parade on a Friday evening next year and then having the event run for two weekend days. This way most of the setup happens on a Friday and we won't incur the overtime costs that came with setting up on a Sunday. We are hoping that next year DFP will be more of an operational lead so we can plan things way further in advance. We came out close to even financially so want to do better on that next year. The earlier we start to plan, the

earlier we can reach out to sponsors. The Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation and Councilmember Arias got most of the sponsorships this year because they have those relationships. We do not want to lose their partnership.

Perez asked if we used Lot 6 during Fiestas Patrias, but we did not. She was hoping Madison Beard from Tioga would be on to talk about Oktoberfest as they were charged last-minute for using that lot. This was another big event in the middle of all of this time. Balch is also curious about how much parking made from our last two events.

- c. **Market on Kern:** The last market day is Wednesday, October 25. Perez asked if this breaks even for us. Balch does not believe it does. We have only a few sponsors. Every week we incur a street closure cost of about \$300 for about 20 weeks that the market runs. This is something Balch wants to look into more. He wants to break the budget down even more for next year with per event numbers and targets. Perez also asked if we are charged by parking at the City for the Market as well. Agulian does not think so and there are no bills coming in. Perez does not want this to creep up if parking does decide to come after the cost.

Wilkinson asked about the indoor farmer's market as she saw a post about it and wondered if we are affiliated. That is actually an independent market separate from ours on Sundays inside Sun Stereo Warehouse. One of the businesses inside Sun Stereo started it. This is also separate from the Flower Market that runs there on Saturdays. The Sunday farmer's market is nice because it means that Downtown still has a farmer's market once the Market on Kern season is over. Balch says that it has been nice that more and more people are putting together events, not just us anymore. Our role of events is more outdoor and in between properties so it is nice that people are taking initiative inside their spaces.

- d. **ArtHop:** We had a conversation about ArtHop with Events at the City and we shared our rough sketch of costs if we were to be more involved with ArtHop. It is a conversation to have with the City Administration with costs being revised.

III. Coming Events

- a. **Taco Truck Throwdown:** This is not a DFP event, but it is coming up on October 21 at Chukchansi Park.
- b. **Christmas Parade:** This will be December 2nd. We have been talking to sponsors and have solidified a few. We will have a meeting later today to decide a theme and then we can put out the official parade participant application this week.
- c. **2024 Plan:** Balch is working on the programmatic playbook and sponsor packet for all the things we have coming up for next year. We have a calendar and new ideas we still need to develop. The historical society and FMBCC are interested in a BBQ on Kern Street. Another new event would be a Sikh parade. Wilkinson thinks this would be great as there is a large Sikh population here. Vaisakhi is the celebration of the founding of Sikhism. We have also been talking about block parties that would be on third Thursdays. This would rotate through downtown each time, and we would make it a destination. We are also working with the entrepreneur behind Sun Stereo Warehouse, Jamin Brazil, for an academy to help entrepreneurs start a successful business. This would help keep the innovative side of downtown in front of people. These would monthly last Thursday events

in the evening, and we would just be promoting. We want to do a mural project next year and move State of Downtown up to March.

A major thing for next year is a winter with an ice rink. Councilmember Arias wants this, and we want to get ahead of planning it and making it great. Construction on the Mariposa Plaza should be done by Spring of 2024. A stage will be part of the rebuild and then we need to consider the lighting and signage that will need to be added on for each event. This is not part of the build now but are separate pieces that we can purchase. Balch will reach out to John, who is part of this building, to talk to him about this. There is a preconstruction meeting next week. We would just like CAD files so that we get something to go with the stage. Perez talked to the Papel Picado artist and he is willing to create matching art for the new plaza

IV. Economic & Business Development Update

a. **City Façade Grant partnership with Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation:**

There are projects in various stages. Some have started renovations, and some are in the second phase of the application. Edward Fanucchi is approved and is waiting to receive the funding for his property. Hightower is the developer for the downtown facades, and they are working with Chicken King for an ADA ramp. We don't have an update on Lune this time, but we will have our own application to the historic committee to have a sign put up at our new office. Perez asked if there is money left over from the grant as a business had asked her. All the funding has been spoken for at this time. We helped 16 businesses apply. We are under contract with FAHF to do publicity for this grant but had agreed that we would do it on the finished product to drive foot traffic. This would celebrate it and help rally support if there ends up being another round of funding for this from the City. We did not super promote the opportunity and reached out to the businesses one by one. Anyone with a public facing façade and meeting all the other requirements could apply.

b. **Parking Validations:** This is something we want to inform the businesses about. We will talk about it at the next Down-Town Hall meeting, and it is in the newsletter. Perez suggested that we reach out to Jeffery Maxies from ACE Parking. Agulian has already reached out and is using the information he gave to share with the businesses. The garages they accept the validations are Convention, Spiral, Underground, and 4.

Wilkinson asked if the office is moving. It is to 2020 Tulare St. It has an office up front and a bigger space for meeting and storage in the back. We are also getting free separate storage. The Internet is also included so it will save us some money. We want our official move date to be October 24. We will probably be offline on October 23 as we move things over. We do have the current office lease until the end of the month. We are thinking of having an Open House on Wednesday Dec. 13 from 5pm-7pm as our grand opening.

c. **Retail Master Plan:** This is something Sevak Khatchadourian and Balch have been talking to a broker about through Bob Gibbs with Perez involved as well. Next steps are to talk to Kelli about things she is working on related to urban design, retail marketing, and community engagement around infrastructure. There is a document of the concept and purpose that Balch feels comfortable sharing.

- d. **Kresge Foundation/Inclusive & Sustainable Development:** We have a grant pending with the Kresge Foundation. This would be two years of funding for a position and other expenses related to work on inclusive and sustainable development. This is outside the scope of our management plan, but we have expectations to address it already.

V. Marketing and Communications

- a. **Campaign Update – Engagement Data:** Agulian shared reports from our social media channels. Since our last meeting, we have gained 264 followers on Facebook and 1,657 followers on Instagram. The Facebook crowd is older while the Instagram crowd is younger. The gain in Instagram followers was likely due to Fulton Street Party, our photo contest, and Fiestas Patrias. This is the fastest we have been growing with followers. We see more reach on Facebook, but more interactions on Instagram. We are on a trend with posts on Instagram getting more than 1,000 likes, which is also trending higher than usual. Some highlights of posts that did well on Instagram are of our ambassadors cleaning graffiti, a Fulton Street Party post, and highlighting the papel picado that was put up downtown. The papel picado post also did well on Facebook along with the indoor farmer’s market. We do also have Twitter with 14K followers. We post weekend roundups each week, which don’t always get many likes, but do well on Twitter. We started a TikTok right before Fulton Street Party and are up to 52 followers and we haven’t posted on there for a month. This is something we want to do more of, but we don’t have any Marketing interns this semester, so it is not as easy to keep up with everything with just Agulian and Valdovinos working on it. Balch asked if we reached out to City Colleges to see about more intern avenues. We haven’t yet, but it has been on our radar. Balch always gets comments on how great our content is. We have done paid sponsor posts for our events and Agulian will check to see how well they did. It is an avenue of advertising we are trying.
- b. **Community Engagement Conversation with City:** We have a two-day event coming up on October 19 and 20 with the Urban Institute and Central Valley Community Foundation. It will take place in the TW Patterson Mezzanine and people can choose which session they go to. It is equitable development scenario planning, helping folks think about trade-offs and principles of what goes into this kind of development downtown. This was put together before infrastructure funding and not specific to it. This is not the community engagement process for the State funding but will help start that process. We want to answer the question of, how do we create an entity of community development corporations so that those in the community can help make the development they want to see happen? We haven’t really had that tool downtown, so we want to get input from those interested enough to come to a meeting like this. Balch is optimistic that we will have a coordinated approach soon to community engagement with the State funding. Kelli wants to have a larger meeting with the folks to help lay this out together.

VI. Comments

Wilkinson asked more about the Christmas Parade. We have had some outreach from school districts who want to participate. We want to make sure to be attentive to them. We are still looking for sponsors and are open to ideas on this. Balch met one of the sponsors, a construction company, at the State of the College breakfast, who just wanted

to be more involved in our downtown. Balch is interested in the educational institutions being involved with the parade.

Wilkinson mentioned that Fresno State used to have a greater presence downtown. Balch mentioned that he had a conversation with Scott Moore about developing a downtown visitor center facility. We would have to get some funding to do it, but it would help solve the restroom challenge, childcare challenge, get an ATM on Fulton, and have pop up space for retailers. This is a more long-term project. We would want to have some kind of meeting space in this center, and this could be where Fresno State comes in. Perez asked if Fresno State is still involved in the M Street Art Complex. We are not sure, but we can look into this. Balch had the thought that the assistant dean at Fresno State, Frank Puccio, would be a good fit for the DFF board. Perez is trying to see if the Gibson Market at Fresno State would be interested in expanding a store to downtown. There are 31 other California visitor centers that get about 1,000 visitors a week. This could be where the Fresno State wine and market could come in.

VII. **Adjourn** – This meeting was adjourned at 2:10pm.

Next Meeting – December 6, 2023