

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE OWOSSO PLANNING COMMISSION
Council Chambers, City Hall
May 27, 2014 – 7:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairman William Wascher.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

ROLL CALL: Roll Call was taken by City Clerk Amy K. Kirkland.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman William Wascher, Secretary Tom Kurtz, Commissioners David Bandkau, Michael O'Leary, Brent Smith, and Randy Woodworth

MEMBERS ABSENT: Vice-Chairman Frank Livingston, Commissioners Thomas Taylor and Craig Weaver.

OTHERS PRESENT: Susan Montenegro, Assistant City Manager and Director of Community Development; Ryan Henry, Kincaid Henry Group; Jeff Deason, Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce President/CEO; and Justin Horvath, Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership.

AGENDA APPROVAL:
MOTION BY COMMISSIONER BANDKAU, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER KURTZ TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR MAY 27, 2014.
YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES APPROVAL:
MOTION BY COMMISSIONER KURTZ, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER SMITH TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF APRIL 28, 2014 AS PRESENTED.
YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

- COMMUNICATIONS:**
1. Staff memorandum
 2. PC minutes from April 28, 2014
 3. East Main Street Map Changes
 4. Public Hearing Notice
 5. Conceptual parking lot drawings for DIG

COMMISSIONER / PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. EAST MAIN STREET REZONING

The public hearing was opened for comment.

Reynold Batteen, owner of home at 515 East Main Street, inquired why the rezoning was being proposed if no one had petitioned for it, he also inquired how the property at 525 East Main was rezoned without his knowledge, and what value the rezoning would be to him. He said he felt the new zoning designation would negatively affect the value of his property and he didn't see the need for changes. Commission Chair Wascher and Commissioner Woodworth indicated the change in rezoning was proposed to bring the area into compliance with the Master Plan adopted in 2012, reduce spot zoning issues, and establish consistent zoning for future potential development. It was further indicated all existing purposes may remain and any new zoning designation would only become effective if the purpose of the property changes.

Randy Smith, owner of 830 East Main Street, inquired whether his taxes would be affected by a change in zoning. He said he too, didn't see the need to change the zoning and felt that allowing business development along that stretch of the highway would increase traffic problems. Chairperson Wascher noted that his taxes would remain the same and said any new development along that stretch would need to present a site plan to the Commission for review and the Commission would have the authority to demand changes if it is felt traffic issues would be increased. He also noted that the changes proposed are for the future, the affects will not be seen tomorrow.

Cathy Schmidfrantz, owner of 828 East Main Street, inquired whether she would be able to rebuild her house if it were to burn. Commission members noted that her lot is not proposed for rezoning, but if it was and her home burned it could potentially be rebuilt using a waiver process that has been established.

There was free discussion between citizens and Commission members regarding whether homes in the proposed rezoning area could be rebuilt under various circumstances.

Gary Schmidfrantz, owner of 828 East Main Street, inquired whether he as a property owner would have any say in the site plan of a business if one were to move next door to him. Chairperson Wascher indicated the property next door would not revert to the commercial zoning designation until the home on the property is gone and all proposed site plans would be presented to the Planning Commission for review. He further noted that he could appeal any decisions of the Planning Commission to an appeals board.

The public hearing was closed.

SITE PLAN REVIEW: NONE.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

1. East Main Street Rezoning – Washington Street to Gould Street

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER WOODWORTH, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER KURTZ THAT THE OWOSSO PLANNING COMMISSION FIND THE PROPOSED ZONING OF THE PARCELS IN QUEST TO MEET THE STANDARDS OF THE ZONING CODE, HEREBY RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF THE REZONING OF THE FOLLOWING PROPERTIES TO THE OWOSSO CITY COUNCIL:

Address	Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning
515 East Main	R2	OS1
615 East Main	RM1	B1
617 East Main	OS1	B1
827 East Main	OS1	B4
831 East Main	OS1	B4
835 East Main	RM1	B4
508 East Main	RM1	OS1
512 East Main	RM1	OS1
830 East Main	RM1	B4
832 East Main	RM1	B4
834 East Main	RM1	B4
910 East Main	B1	B4

YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED

Chairperson Wascher noted that the item would be forwarded to City Council for a second public hearing and final consideration.

ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:

1. Review of conceptual drawings for DIG parking lots as pertaining to the Master Plan

City Manager Donald Crawford relayed the details of the DIG grant to the Commission as follows: the grant is for more than \$650,000, the City must match \$125,000, and the DDA must match \$225,000, all construction must be completed by November 30th or the money is forfeited. City Manager Crawford said the item was being presented to the Commission now because the area proposed for construction is included in the Master Plan. He went on to detail the proposed improvements for the parking lot on Curwood Castle Drive and the parking lot south of the Armory.

The Castle parking lot improvements are relatively straight-forward involving the closure of a portion of Bradley Street to allow the enlargement of the current lot, paving the current lot, providing screening around the lot, installing speed bumps on Curwood Castle Drive to discourage people trying to avoid the light at Main and Shiawassee, creation of a bus loading zone, and installing lighting.

Piper Brewer of the Arts Council had questions regarding the lighting of the Curwood Castle Drive lot, if the grade of the lot would be changed, and if the closure of a portion of Bradley Street would cause traffic congestion when there are events in the park. She also asked if the proposed bus parking could be moved to an area that was accessible by both patrons of the Castle and patrons of the Arts Center.

Commissioner O'Leary inquired whether the flood plain was involved in the project. It was noted certain areas had been intentionally avoided to keep the projects free of flood plain issues. It was further noted the existing storm sewer would be utilized to drain the Curwood Castle lot and a small retention pond was proposed for the Armory lot.

The proposed improvements for the Armory lot will be broken into two phases with all items related to the river in one project and the remaining items, including the Armory parking lot, in the other. He indicated the parking lot would be repaved and marked for 78 spots to maximize use of the area, screening similar to that found around the Exchange Street lot will be erected, and updated lighting installed. Drainage for the lot is proposed in the form of a small retention pond in one corner of the lot. A pavilion, bike racks, and kayak storage are also proposed along the riverfront.

Ryan Henry, of Kincaid Henry Building Group, said he was concerned and confused by the current plan for the Armory parking lot saying he thought his developments were going to benefit directly from the DIG grant. He distributed copies of the conceptual drawings that were included in the City's DIG grant application and said he felt the current plan is not consistent with the grant application and would not work with the plans they have drawn for the Armory. He said he felt the DIG grant requires the City to build a large pavilion, a new retaining wall, and coordinate the proposed developments at the Armory and Matthews Building.

City Manager Crawford indicated the City had submitted conceptual drawings with the DIG application but the plans were fluid, there is a need to move immediately to fulfill the time requirements of the grant and the Armory redevelopment is not as far along as was originally planned. He said the City wants to see the redevelopment of the adjoining buildings tied together with the parking lot improvements and he respects the fact there are details that have to be worked out with the grantor but he is also cognizant that neither the redevelopment of the Armory nor the Matthews Building is entirely assured and he has a duty to ensure that the taxpayers of Owosso do not get left holding the bag should one of those projects not come to fruition.

There was significant discussion regarding the early conceptual drawings and the latest proposed drawings.

Chairperson Wascher ended the discussion saying he wasn't sure why the item was brought before the Commission as they had no authority in the matter. He encouraged the City and the developers to work out the issues worked out.

COMMISSIONER / PUBLIC COMMENTS:

City Councilman Burton Fox said he had not heard the Armory project was a definite go and he knew the DIG grant projects had to be finished by the end of the year or the money would have to be returned. He said it seems as if “everyone thinks that everyone else is in the wrong” and he would like to see more communication between the Chamber and the City. He said he would be thrilled to see the Armory redeveloped and was happy to hear there was a proposal to redevelop the Matthews Building. He said as a citizen of the City he wanted the parties to reach a resolution and suggested the Chamber pledge to pay back the DIG grant funds if the City ties its projects to the Armory redevelopment as requested and the development doesn’t go through.

Jeff Deason, CEO of the Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce, said they have made every effort to include the City in their development discussions. They are trying to secure financing as soon as possible but such activities take time. He said he was sad things had gotten this contentious and suggested all the parties sit down together to reach a resolution.

Chairperson Wascher said he thought the project was a great idea but the parties involved need to get together to make it work, the Planning Commission is powerless to anything at this point.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER KURTZ, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER SMITH, TO ADJOURN AT 8:43 P.M.

YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

Tom Kurtz, Secretary

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