

**OWOSSO CITY COUNCIL**

**AUGUST 30, 2010**

**7:30 P.M.**

**PRESIDING OFFICER:** MAYOR BENJAMIN R. FREDERICK

**OPENING PRAYER:** COUNCILPERSON THOMAS COOK

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** MAYOR BENJAMIN R. FREDERICK

**PRESENT:** Mayor Benjamin R. Frederick, Councilpersons Thomas B. Cook, Michael J. Erfourth, Christopher T. Eveleth, Joni M. Forster, and Gary W. Martenis.

**ABSENT:** Mayor Pro-Tem Cindy S. Popovitch.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

**NATIONAL ADDICTION RECOVERY MONTH**

Mayor Frederick read aloud a proclamation of the Mayor's Office declaring September 2010 as National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month in the City of Owosso as follows:

**A PROCLAMATION  
OF THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OF THE CITY OF OWOSSO, MICHIGAN  
PROCLAIMING SEPTEMBER 2010 AS  
NATIONAL ALCOHOL AND DRUG ADDICTION RECOVERY MONTH IN THE CITY OF  
OWOSSO**

WHEREAS, treatment and recovery improve a community's welfare and provide a renewed outlook on life for those who struggle with substance use disorders and their family and friends; and

WHEREAS, 23.2 million people aged 12 and older in the United States needed treatment for a substance use disorder in 2009 and less than 10% were able to access treatment; and

WHEREAS, the stigma attached to alcohol and drug disorders has kept a significant number of Americans from seeking treatment for their use; and

WHEREAS, resources exist online and in our community, willing, ready and able to provide education, prevention, treatment and a welcoming hand to help change and redirect lives; and

WHEREAS, it is critical that we educate our community members that substance use disorders are treatable, yet serious health care problems, and by treating them like other chronic health conditions, we can improve the quality of life for the entire community; and

WHEREAS, to help achieve this goal, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, Recovery Network Inc., and the Recovery Month Coalition invite all residents of the City of Owosso to participate in National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Benjamin R. Frederick, Mayor of the City of Owosso, Michigan, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2010 as NATIONAL ALCOHOL AND DRUG ADDICTION RECOVERY MONTH in the City of Owosso.

Proclaimed this 30<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2010.

**ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

**BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS APPOINTMENT**

Motion by Councilperson Martenis to authorize the appointment of Christopher Eveleth to the Shiawassee Area Transportation Agency Board to fill the unexpired term of Michael Cline ending October 1, 2010.

Motion supported by Councilperson Cook.

Roll Call Vote.

AYES: Councilpersons Cook, Forster, Martenis, Erfourth, Eveleth, and Mayor Frederick.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Mayor Pro-Tem Popovitch.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **HOUSING ISSUES, INCLUDING THE RENTAL REGISTRATION PROGRAM, POTENTIAL INSPECTION PROGRAMS, AND POSSIBLE GRANT PROGRAMS**

There was discussion regarding City-wide problems with housing including abandoned homes, foreclosed homes, potential excess housing, dilapidated housing, properties that could potentially come back to the city, increases in code enforcement complaints, the drop in population, and the poverty level within the city.

Next there was discussion on what the City is doing currently to try to mitigate these issues. It was noted the City adopted the BOCA National Property Maintenance Code of 1990 (now known as the International Property Maintenance Code), though there had not been strict enforcement of the code in the past. There are currently plans in place to establish a program for code enforcement involving the police department. Public Safety Director Michael Compeau briefly described how that program will function and when to anticipate seeing results. The desire is to eventually inspect homes and develop plans of action for homeowners and landlords.

Housing Coordinator Sarah Warren-Riley described the programs the City is currently involved with in an effort to assist homeowners and rental owners. She indicated she would like to see the development of a revolving fund for homeowners as well as a volunteer corps to assist those that cannot perform maintenance themselves. There was further discussion regarding the improvements taking place at the Ginger Square Apartments, the development of upper story housing in the downtown, the new tax credits available in the downtown, the establishment of a land bank and self help housing programs.

## **CITIZEN COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

Roger Snyder, 211 North Washington Street, said he felt the Council was targeting landlords and they were putting them out of business.

Jane Settington, 3900 Krouse Road, asked why new housing was being developed if there were empty houses in town. She asked that Council put their efforts into creating jobs instead of creating a program for rental inspections as it would be very burdensome to landlords.

Joe Zlomak, 1104 South Shiawasse, indicated he is a rental property owner and feels inspections would be a burden. He also suggested the City license cats in a fashion similar to that required for dogs.

Dick Bowen, 217 Curwood Castle Drive, said being a landlord is tough right now and he feels efforts to establish a rental inspection program would simply be a mechanism for the City to raise funds.

Dave Miller, 206 Corunna Avenue, indicated he owns a number of rental homes and feels the City is hurting landlords. He asked what the current registration fee is being used for.

J. Jill Schiebner, 620 Grand Avenue, indicated that some landlords do not care about their property. She said she lives in a neighborhood with a number of poorly maintained rental homes and they cause upset in the area as well as drive down values.

Mark Hanna, owner of 220 West Main Street, said he would like to see a committee of private landowners put together to collect citizen sentiment on programs the City would like to implement. He also pointed out the present opportunities to redevelop the downtown and other areas of the City using a neighborhood approach.

Bozena Bienias, 1432 Mallard Circle, inquired about using abandoned homes for potential senior housing.

Justin Horvath, 818 South Washington Street, indicated he hoped the City would explore alternative housing opportunities similar to the project in Durand that created apartments in the old middle school, noting there is a market for developments of this type.

City Manager Crawford noted the current registration fee is deposited into the General Fund.

**RECESSED AT 8:52 P.M.**

**RETURNED AT 9:01 P.M.**

Council continued the discussion with individual questions on statistics, programs, and proposals. They were generally supportive of the suggested list of areas of enforcement that was presented. The discussion went on to cover the idea of preventing more houses from reaching the point

where demolition is the only option, then moved on to current rental fees, developing an even handed program to address both rental houses and owner occupied houses, the status of the Neighborhood Watch program, and voluntary inspections.

**NEXT MEETING**

September 7, 2010

**BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS OPENINGS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilperson Eveleth for adjournment at 9:47 p.m.

Motion supported by Councilperson Cook and concurred in by unanimous vote.

---

Benjamin R. Frederick, Mayor

---

Amy K. Kohagen, City Clerk