

**MINUTES – CITY OF OWOSSO
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF JANUARY 4, 2006**

Chairman Wright called the meeting to order at 7:55 a.m.

Roll Call.

Members Present: Chm. Wright, Hankerd, Oliver, Gilbert, Irish and Popovitch

Members Absent: Howe, Bucsi (excused), and Mayor Robertson

Others Present: Dir. Hathaway, Ramos, Constine, Horvath, Eister, P. Brewer, R. Snyder, and Hecox

Approval of Minutes. The minutes of the meeting of December 7, 2005 were approved.
Oliver/Popovitch m/s/p

Communications: None.

Citizen/Member Comments: Roger Snyder commented on the need to reduce property taxes, the sandwich board sign program, new legislation aimed at reducing property taxes and City fees attached to going out-of-business permits.

Financial Status.

A. Operational Budget.

Checking.....	\$	971.22
Savings.....	\$	15,037.39
Total.....	\$	16,008.61

B. Development Plan Budget.

Funds Expended.....	\$	18,559.00
Projected Project Costs.....	\$	61,206.00
Fund Reserve.....	\$	5,016.04

C. Budget Comments: The 2004-05 audit will be presented at the February meeting.

Items of Business.

A. Payment of Bills. The following expenses were authorized for payment:

A. *Organizational Expenses:*

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(1) Independent Advisor (Coordinator Adv't).....	\$	30.00
(2) Saginaw Valley Rehab Center (Cleaning Contract)..	\$	535.00
(3) Fred Peterson (sandwich board sign).....	\$	120.00
Total:.....	\$	685.00

B. Tax Increment Development Plan Expenses—None
Gilbert/Oliver m/s/p

B. Focus Owosso Report. The Focus Owosso Coordinator, Tammy Smith, resigned for personal reasons, effective December 13, 2005. The Focus Owosso Board of Directors authorized the advertisement for the position again and expects to have a new contractor by February 1, 2006 in time for the annual membership drive and the appreciation breakfast. In other news the Board of Directors has decided to expand the sidewalk sales into a street fair and to add one promotional event in the fall.

C. Former Hotel Site. Project signs are installed and the investors are taking inquiries for both condominiums and first and second floor commercial users.

D. Entertainment Districts. DDA Board Members and those in attendance conducted a question-by-question survey response about the status of Owosso's entertainment venues. The evaluation was conducted in three parts: 1) The support structure for entertainment districts; 2) Destination entertainment venues, and; 3) Marketing of the entertainment venues.

1) Support Structure for Entertainment Venues. There was a consensus to: actively change over the sidewalk trees to a more attractive and less dominating species; add artwork to the downtown—lights, sculpture, fountains and murals; promote temporary occupancies of long term vacancy structures preferably from downtown businesses; add foot traffic in the evenings to dilute the vagrant population and the abandoned feeling; use the banner poles with greater frequency; place wayfinding signs about the downtown; direct newcomers to parking facilities; to make the downtown more festive; and to build the welcoming character of the downtown with designs and behaviors that project warmth; to work at making the state highways less disruptive to upper story residents and pedestrians (e.g., prohibit "jack braking").

2) Destination Entertainment Venues. There remains the void for offering restaurants and activity directed at the 20 to 40 year old age group. Owosso is primarily a lunch environment. The evolution of the downtown should progress in the direction of pubs and small scale offerings that are unique. Parking policies and supply needs to be evaluated and adjusted to fit this changeover. The activities at this time are too dispersed and unrelated. The destination oriented activity centers would improve with cross-marketing to serve a three to four hour stay in the district.

The discussion ended here to complete the balance of the agenda. At the February meeting the evaluation will begin with the culture and theater question.

E. Sandwich Board Signs. A model sign was shown. It was accepted with the recommendation to offer alternative writing surfaces and to lessen its weight. Both suggestions will be implemented. The sign will be placed at a store location as a model for others to evaluate. The next step is to have the City Council adopt a voluntary special assessment for those businesses that wish to participate in the sidewalk sign program. The program should be underway in Mid-February.

G. Business Retention and Development. George Ramos reported that several moves are in progress but un-reportable because affected sites and businesses are not ready to make their intentions public.

K. The Owosso Armory. The Neighborhood Planning Team met in mid-December without specific recommendations on the Armory's future development. There was a walk-through, a visioning session and an analysis of the vicinity. The Team will continue to meet throughout the winter.

L. Work Plan. It was agreed to publish the work plan in the form of a bulletin to downtown businesses, residents and building owners.

M. Executive Session. The Board of Directors adjourned to executive session after a unanimous vote to do so.

Oliver/Hankerd m/s/p

The Board reconvened at 9:40 a.m. for the purpose of adjournment.

Citizen/Member Comments. None

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

Philip B. Hathaway, Secretary-Treasurer