

**MINUTES
OWOSSO DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF DECEMBER 5, 2007**

Chairman Hankerd called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

Roll Call.

Members Present: Barb Bucsi, John Hankerd, Dave Lazar, Linda Moiles-Foster, Doug Peterson, Rich Collins, Mayor Mike Bruff, Bill Gilbert, and Krista Strong

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Phil Hathaway—Ex. Dir., Joe Fivas-City Manager, Bill Constine, George Ramos, Ron Baker-City Engr, John Archer-City Bldg Off'l, Renita Mikolajczyk

Review and Approval of Minutes. The minutes of the November 7, 2007 meeting were approved.

Gilbert/Lazar

m/s/p

Communications. John Hankerd announced that Doug Peterson had submitted his letter of resignation effective after the date of this meeting. His store will close before January 1, 2007.

Financial Status and Reports.

A. Operational Fund from 2 Mil Assessments.

Checking.....	\$ 3,856.50
Savings.....	\$ 30,635.00
Total:.....	\$ 34,491.50

B. Tax Increment Development Plan Budget Status.

Beginning Balance plus Projected Revenues:	\$ 217,940.00
Amount Expended through Nov 30, 2007:	\$ 67,205.51
Balance Available for Projects and Fund Equity:	\$ 35,698.00

C. The DDA Audit rough draft is finished and in review. Audits are more thorough this year, because it was time for the periodic in-depth check-up of all transactions.

Citizen Comments. None.

Items of Business.

1) Invoices to be Paid.

• **Organizational Budget Expenses.**

Bronners Christmas Wonderland-Holiday Decorations.....	\$2,931.38
Saginaw Valley Rehab Services—Cleaning Contract.....	\$ 676.00
City of Owosso—Overtime for Holiday Decorations	\$ 744.97
Treasures Restaurant—Room Rental/Refreshments	\$ 215.00
Total:	\$4,567.35

• **Tax Increment Development Plan Expenses.**

City of Owosso—Advances on Rain Garden	\$ 10,000.00
Rock Solid Associates, LLC	\$ 8,794.49
Town Plans, LLC (Phil Hathaway); Admin Services	\$ 1,730.40
Loop Park Plantings:	
a) Acorn Farms – Trees for Loop Trail	\$ 4,741.70
b) Great Lakes Landscape Supply—Trees for Trail..	\$ 4,939.10
c) McLaren Rentals—Bobcat for Tree Planting.....	\$ 248.40
d) Searles Construction—Topsoil for Tree Planting .	\$ 831.59
e) Constine Inc – Trucking of Cedar Fence Posts	\$ 400.00
f) Action Property Services—Labor and Equip.....	\$ 980.00
Total:.....	\$ 32,665.28

Motion adopted: Gilbert/Peterson m/s/p

Notes on Invoices:

- a) The Rain Garden Watershed Demonstration Project costs will be reimbursed either this fiscal year or next by 3,748.35 when the second of the two grants involving Watershed Demonstration Projects is completed along the Loop Trail.
- b) The Executive Director fees are for the past two weeks.
- c) Rock Solid's blight removal is completed after an inspection by the City Building Official.
- d) The Loop Trail tree project expenses (totaling \$12,140.79) will be offset \$6,000 in reimbursements to the DDA from the Voight family and the Friends of the Shiawassee River. Additionally \$2,500 in volunteer hours was donated in-kind at the tree planting event on November 10th. A community thank you letter will be released to the media soon.

2) Vibrant Cities Initiative Grant. The community meeting on November 28th revealed increased attention for greenspace. The Lebowsky Center restoration remained the number one priority. Others stated that the mix of all the project areas carried equal weight because of their effect on one another. The City Manager has written the grant proposal that is due as an initial draft today with a final draft required on December 21st. The City Council will see the full display of the grant application at its regular meeting of December 17th. The project committee members, John Hankerd, and Phil Hathaway will see drafts later this day and have an opportunity to comment before submittal.

The known aspects of the project areas include:

- a) Cultural Centers—The City would become the owner of the Lebowsky Center for at least five years to permit the investment of public dollars. It is not known if the City will be the contractor for the restoration. The State of Michigan is working its way through this program that is brand new to them too. The Owosso Community Players are aware of this likely scenario and continue to encourage this project approach. The two year budget is \$950,000 with 50% commitment from each party. The City/DDA source will be a combination of bond revenues and block grant funds. Additional assistance will be in the form of 50% of the architectural design contract but only after the acquisition of the parcel.
- b) Greenspace—The riverwalk, a town greenbelt and park upgrades are all included in this category. Details are not known except for the DDA design of the Loop Park ramp at Chemical Bank.
- c) Infrastructure—Parking lot revisions are in store for upgrades to the Ball, Water, Exchange Lot. Washington Street is the largest project with the need to start design work immediately if the Block Grant schedule requires 2009 completion. The largest funding source, \$750,000, is an MDOT Enhancement grant for which funding has not yet been secured.
- d) Façade Preservation—Six buildings will be invited to participate in an historic preservation upgrade to building fronts. The average project cost is estimated at \$40,000 with 50% grant funding, 10% bond revenue grants and 40% building owner cash. The work will be completed by the City and the DDA architect.
- e) Signature Building—There is one building in this program—the Wesener Building. The land and building will be acquired in late spring and an open competitive selection process for a developer will ensue. The building would be leased for five years and turned back to the developer at that time without the original acquisition cost.
- f) Planning/Marketing—The planning and marketing approach had to do with the pending transition from Focus Owosso to the Main Street approach and because that does not involve hard costs as in construction, this program area will likely be dropped from the grant package and the Main Street decision will be made independently of the VSCI.

In Preparation for the October 17th Council meeting, Chairman John Hankerd appointed a committee to meet with the City Manager for additional comment on the project and the proposed uses of the bond revenues. That committee consists of John Hankerd, Dave Lazar, and Bill Gilbert.

3) Design Consultant Contract with Rowe Engineering. Doug Schultz of Rowe presented a work plan for the river overlook at the S. Washington St Bridge on the Loop Trail. The concept plan proposal estimated to cost \$1,000 to \$1,800 was approved.

Lazar/Gilbert

m/s/p

4) Focus Owosso/Main Street Program. The State of Michigan is offering a Main Street Associates Program for downtowns that want to gradually work into this popular approach to conducting promotions. Members reviewed a MSHDA outline of the four point Main Street program. The decision to enter into Main Street would result in Focus Owosso folding into the DDA as a standing committee. There would be clear advantages in administration, increased attention to promotions and marketing, continued involvement of the Focus Committee members, and an increase in volunteer levels. It is a five-year program with State assistance. Dave Gapinski who is the Focus Coordinator will take the concept to Focus Owosso for discussion at its next meeting. The transition period should wait for the hiring process of the next DDA Director to ascertain the level of involvement in promotions for that position and the influence it has on the decision to hire someone with a promotional/marketing orientation and skill level.

5) Project Report Status.

a) *Focus Owosso.* The Car Show will not be scheduled again unless another organization surfaces to take it on. A Focus/Chamber press release to be issued today will explain that opportunity.

b) *Old Hotel Lot.* Fifth Third Bank will approach its own Board of Directors about a new bank and, if authorized, approach the City for acquiring the lot. The bank representatives have been advised that the process begins with the submittal of a site plan to be negotiated for preserving downtown design values and, if accepted, for proceeding through site plan review process with the City Planning Commission. Hathaway advised to keep an open mind on this despite the view of some individuals that this site should become a city park. There are positive design values, the need for downtown bank commerce, and the refunding of the Block Grant Loan Fund (\$400,000) involved as equal or greater needs than a City Park at this location. The evolving nature of the Vibrant Cities Program will offer another downtown park and greenspace strategy for consideration of a town square.

c) *Wesener Building.* With the blight removal complete, the roof reconstruction has started with a projected mid-February date. This should take care of future water damage at this site and with the adjoining buildings. The building will "rest" in that state until the City acquisition of the site in the spring.

d) *Loop Trail.* MDOT has the plans and has asked MDEQ for a design alteration to widen the boardwalk to 14 feet. If MDEQ wetland permitting allows that, now at 12 feet it may have an affect on the cost of the trail. The DDA should reserve funds in the event that does influence the cost. Ron Baker is the point person for the City on the project and its estimated costs. The easements for the trail at Chemical Bank and the School Bus Garage are on the next Council agenda. A fence will be constructed on the west trail this winter.

e) *Chamber Letter of Intent.* The letter of intent for the DDA to acquire the Chamber building and land was sent to the Chamber and quotations for appraisals will arrive this week. The appraisal should be completed by mid-February and will assist the Chamber in its decision to relocate or not. The Armory appraisal is underway and should be offered to the City and Schools for purchase at appraised value within 30 to 60 days. The current public assistance strategy for the Armory development is to acquire and move the Chamber. In addition developers will have a battery of tax incentives to seek as was accomplished with the Woodard Station project.

f) *Retail Recruitment/Retention Report.* George Ramos reported that there was no activity in the past month except for the Fig Tree closing. He has no current prospects. Phil Hathaway mentioned that Bob Brewer (property owner of Springrove, JoAnn Fabrics, and First American Title) called and asked that the DDA consider reinstating the Bounty Hunter program. That program paid persons a bounty of \$2,500 for securing a retail store in the downtown under a targeted strategy guideline. This request will be placed on the January agenda for discussion.

6) DDA Director Contract. Members approved a revision to the Independent Contractor Agreement for the name of the "Contractor" from Philip B. Hathaway to Towns Plans, LLC. Mr. Hathaway is the sole member of the corporation and prefers to use this now-established consulting firm for DDA administration services.

Strong/Collins m/s/p

7) Adjournment for Executive Session. An adjournment to an Executive Session was approved for the purpose of discussion property acquisition.

Bucsi/Strong m/s/p

The meeting was adjourned for Executive Session at 8:43 a.m.

Chairman Hankerd called the public meeting back to order at 9:45 a.m. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:46 a.m. on a motion by Member Peterson and with support from Member Lazar.

Motion adopted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 a.m.

Philip B. Hathaway, Secretary