

**MINUTES
OWOSSO DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF April 1, 2009**

Chairman Hankerd called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Roll Call.

Members Present: Barb Bucsi, Richard Collins, Mayor Bruff, Bill Gilbert, John Hankerd, Linda Moiles, Krista Strong Michael Rice, Susan Treen.

Members Absent:

Others Present: Brent Morgan, Natalie Burg, Ron Baker, Dave Acton, Diane Acton, Lorraine Weckwert

Review and Approval of Minutes. The minutes of the March 4, 2009 meeting were approved.

Motion Adopted: Bucsi/Gilbert m/s/p

Citizens Comments

None.

Financial Status and Reports for January 2009

Check Date From 07/01/2008 – 01/29/09\$ 8,220.40

Citizen Comments.

Lorraine Weckwert, president of the Friends & Neighbors discussed the benefits of obtaining a historic district designation in Downtown Owosso and urged the Board to move forward with the process.

Significant discussion was held regarding the process of establishing a historic district, the tax benefits available, and the need to preserve buildings.

Dave Acton, a member of Friends & Neighbors and potential downtown developer suggested the board pursue the designation for the historic district for redevelopment purposes such as tax credits.

The board held significant discussion regarding the action taken at the last council meeting, the previous attempts at creating a historic district and the need for the board to obtain further education on state and federal historic district designations.

The board was in agreement that by applying for and obtaining the Select Level Main Street Program designation would provide free technical experience from both state and national experts versed in the establishment of historic districts and historic preservation.

Items of Business.

A) Invoices to be Paid. The following invoices were approved for payment:

Operations Budget

Train Festival Brochure Focus Owosso	\$ 500.00
Downtown Watering Focus Owosso	\$ 1,840.00
The Bake Shop (Seminar Coffee & Bagels).....	\$ 46.00

Total:.....\$ 2,386.00

Motion adopted: Gilbert/Treen m/s/p

B) Train Festival 2009

T.J. Gaffney Steam Railroading Institute, Executive Director

Director Morgan reviewed and updated the board regarding the upcoming Steam Railroading Institute Train Festival to be held July 24-26, more specifically that the purpose of this meeting was to inform the DDA of the details of the upcoming event and answer any questions Board Members may have regarding the event. City Manager Fivas and Director Morgan have met on several occasions with Mr. Gaffney in regards to the impact this event will have on the City and how we can facilitate the Steam Railroading Institutes needs. City Engineer and Gary Burke, Utilities Director have met with Mr. Gaffney on the SRI site in regards to some request. A Downtown Owosso Merchants' Train Festival 2009 Informational Meeting has been set for Thursday, April 23, at 7:30 a.m. at City Hall.

Director Morgan reiterated that this is an SRI Event and the purpose of the event was to raise funds for the 1225 Federal Compliance. He introduced T.J. Gaffney the Steam Railroading Institute Executive Director to the Board. Mr. Gaffney reviewed the event in it's entirety with the board.

Discussion was held regarding how the downtown merchants could benefit from the event and what role the DDA would play. The Board thanked Mr. Gaffney for attending the meeting.

C) Main Street Select Level

Director Morgan reviewed the Main Street Select Level Application process with the Board of Directors. The application requires the DDA Board of Directors to adopt a resolution of support for the Select Level Main Street Program proposing the DDA Board becoming the Main Street Board.

A motion by Gilbert to adopt the resolution of support for the Select Level Main Street Program proposing the DDA Board becoming the Main Street Board.

Roll Call Vote.

AYES: Busci, Collins, Moiles, Mayor Bruff, Hankerd, Gilbert, Treen and Rice.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

The resolution, attached to these minutes by reference was adopted

D) DDA BUDGET

Director Morgan submitted the proposed DDA Budget and Fiver Year Plan. This budget and Five Year Plan illustrates support of the Main Street Select Level Program for five years as requested in the application. The City Budget Process is underway; therefore, the DDA budget adoption is an unofficial act of support until the City completes is own evaluation of the ability to complete the projects and programs.

A motion by Mayor Bruff to adopt DDA Budget and Five Year Plan in support of the Select Level Main Street Program for five years.

Roll Call Vote.

AYES: Busci, Collins, Moiles, Mayor Bruff, Hankerd, Gilbert, Treen and Rice.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

The budget and five year plan, attached to these minutes by reference, was adopted:

**E) DDA Merchant Seminar: Your Business in the News
...how a little PR can mean a lot of business**

Director Morgan reported that the first Owosso DDA Merchant Seminar Series: *Your Business in the News How a Little PR Can Go Along Way* was held on Monday, March 23 from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. at City Hall. The intent of this seminar was to educate local merchants how to use the power of the media to draw focus to their businesses and bring new patrons in the door. He thanked all the work that was put in by the Community & Economic Development Coordinator Natalie Burg for making the event a huge success. Those attendees were appreciative of the seminar and the opportunity to network with other merchants. Natalie Burg e-mailed the PowerPoint and workbook she prepared and presented to those that attended the event. Approximately 13 merchants attended the event.

F) Downtown Business Survey Results

Director Morgan reviewed the following background with the board, at the November 5, 2008 meeting of the Owosso DDA a business owner survey was presented to the board. Over the past few months we have been collecting surveys from merchants and compiling the result of the Survey. Businesses were contacted numerous times either in person or by mail regarding the survey. There are approximately 184 businesses in the DDA District and we have received 110 surveys. The response rate was approximately 60 percent. The survey was reviewed with the board.

Natalie Burg has been compiling the results of the survey since November and presented them to the board.

Chairman Hankerd thanked Natalie Burg for all her work on the survey.

G) Update: VSCI Project #3 & Loop Trail Project

Director Morgan reported that a Downtown Business Owners Pre-construction Meeting was held at Olivers Restaurant on Thursday March 12, 2009. The following City Administration comprised of Brent Morgan, John Archer, Natalie Burg and Ron Baker were present to review the Vibrant Small Cities Initiative Grant Project #3 Downtown Streetscape and Public Greenspace with the affected business owners. The meeting lasted approximately 1 ½ hours and the project was very well received by those in attendance. Additional meeting will be held prior and during the construction. Pending MSHDA approval construction is anticipated to begin the first week of May and be completed before Curwood Festival.

Construction on the Loop Trail Project has started and the project is anticipated to be completed by the end of May.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Motion adopted: Hankerd/Gilbert

m/s/p

Brent D. Morgan, Secretary