

Owosso Main Street Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 7, 2009 --- 7:30 a.m.
Owosso City Council Chambers – 301 W Main
OWOSSO, MICHIGAN

Chairman Hankerd called the meeting to order at 7:37am

Roll Call.

Members Present: John Hankerd, Mayor Mike Bruff, Barb Bucsi, Susan Treen, Mike Rice, Bill Gilbert, Jeff Reeves, Barb Spagnuolo

Members Absent: Alaina Kraus

Also Present: Ron Baker, Jackie Leone

2) Review and approval of minutes of September 2, 2009 meetings. A motion was made to accept the minutes of September 2, 2009. Motion passed. Bucsi/Rice m/s/p

3) Citizens Comments and Communications. - None

4) Financial Report for September 2009

a. Check Register from 09-29-09.....\$1,770.38

Chairman Hankerd shared that Manager Burg will put a one-page financial statement together for board members by the November meeting that will explain the entire budget. This will be emailed out in advance of the meeting and discussed the day of the meeting.

Board Member Gilbert requested to see a financial statement explaining the budget for the streetscape projects that have been completed through the Vibrant Small Cities Initiative. Manager Burg will speak with Rick Williams and locate this information to be shared at November's meeting.

Board Member Rice added that this information will be especially helpful for new board members.

5) Items of Business.

a. Branding Update

Branding Committee Chair Rice gave the following update of the branding process: This month has been a data-gathering month for our Branding Committee. Seventy-two community surveys were collected from our last Artisan Market and 126 were collected during the Artwalk event. The 198 data sets were compiled into a spreadsheet and forwarded on to Donovan & Smith.

After the results of these surveys are analyzed, Donovan & Smith will develop and share a creative brief with three graphic designers who will begin the creation of logo options. These options will be brought to the Branding Committee, and if a preferred logo can be identified, the final edit process will follow. Our hope is to have a logo concept to present at the November board meeting.

Burg added that a meeting between Katie Donovan and herself will be scheduled in the next week.

Reeves asked when the next Branding Committee meeting would be. Burg answered that this would be determined after her meeting with Donovan.

b. Artwalk Wrap Up

Chairman Hankerd commented that this was a very good event. He had people coming into his store for the first time and commenting that they didn't know he was there.

Rice stated that it was a really great event for retailers.

Burg gave the following update: The Owosso Main Street Artwalk took place Friday, September 18th from 4:30pm-9:00pm. The Artwalk Committee, headed by Chairperson Beth Kuiper, worked diligently to make this a successful event that was enjoyed by all.

Below are some Artwalk highlights:

- Feedback surveys distributed to merchants via email and door-to-door with largely positive results. Spreadsheet with results and summary attached.
- Anecdotal feedback from visitors and artists very positive. Some wished passports were available throughout town, but many appreciated Main Street Plaza as a central meeting spot. Many positive comments regarding the live music.
- Approximately 400 passports were handed out during the event, and many visitors declined to use the passport system
- Thank you notes were mailed to sponsors and volunteers

c. Downtown Flower Program

Burg gave the following update: Last Fall, a team of volunteers headed by Lorraine Weckwert and Joni Forster donated and planted 1,400 tulip and daffodil bulbs in downtown. These beautiful flowers were enjoyed by all during the Spring.

This year the group would like to join with Main Street to do the same project on a larger scale. In order to fill new planting areas along Exchange, the Spring Flower Committee has a goal of raising enough funds to plant 2,000 bulbs this Fall.

With the approval of OMS Chairman John Hankerd and Design Committee Chair Mike Rice, the attached donation requests have been distributed throughout downtown and the community via flier, email and Facebook message. The committee intends to buy only as many flowers as they can afford with the funds raised (requesting no allocations from the board) and will request volunteers for planting assistance in the future.

Board Member Gilbert asked how much 2,000 bulbs would cost.

Chairman Hankerd stated that he remembered seeing an invoice from last year for about \$150. He said that if that was for 1,400 bulbs than 2,000 would probably be around \$200.

Gilbert suggested that the board allocate enough money to cover the bulbs in case donations do not come through in time.

Hankerd asked if bulbs from the previous year would re-grow.

Burg answered that she believed they would, but the additional bulbs would be planted in the new planting areas along Exchange Street.

A brief discussion followed regarding the upkeep of hanging flower baskets in Frankenmuth between Mayor Bruff, Gilbert, Reeves and Bucsi. It was stated that Frankenmuth's flower baskets lasted much longer than Owosso's. It was decided that when the promotions committee investigates the flower program for 2010, a change in maintenance would be considered.

A motion was made to allocate enough funds to cover the purchase of 2,000 bulbs for the flower program. Motion passed. Bucsi/Gilbert m/s/p

d. Harvest Walk Committee Update

Harvest Walk Chair Spagnuolo gave the following update: The Owosso Main Street Harvest Walk is scheduled to take place Friday, October 23rd from 12pm-8pm. The Artwalk Committee has been meeting regularly to organize the event.

Crafters and artisans will be invited to set up vending booths on sidewalks throughout downtown. They will only set up in front of businesses who are participating and give them permission. In addition to street vendors, we will be advertising Harvest Walk sales throughout downtown will be entertaining guests with Fall decorations, cider and donuts, music and pumpkin judging contests.

Projected expenses for the even include:

Newspaper advertising

Cider and donuts

Misc. event supplies

Spagnuolo added that the cornstalks for decorating downtown would not be donated but would cost \$3 per bundle.

Gilbert asked about newspaper advertising and suggested a shared advertising spot for downtown merchants and the event.

Hankerd asked if there would be enough room on the sidewalks for vendors to have tents.

Ron Baker verified that as long as a 4' clearance was maintained on the sidewalk, no ordinances would be violated.

A motion was made to allocate \$1,500 for the Harvest Walk event. Motion passed. Treen/Bucsim/s/p

e. Winter Holiday Event Committee Update

Winter Holiday Event Chair Treen gave the following update: The Owosso Main Street Winter Holiday event is scheduled to take place the first weekend in December. The Winter Holiday Event Committee, headed by Chairperson Sue Treen, met for the first time on September 29.

This event is still in the general planning stage, though the committee has a desire to have a much more highly coordinated and involved series of activities and marketing for this event.

A motion was made to allocate \$4,500 for the Winter Holiday Event. Motion passed. Rice/Bruff m/s/p

An addition was made to the agenda by Chairman Hankerd: Discussion of design of planters for new streetscape.

Ron Baker explained that the planters would be placed in the ally behind the Fortune House where the new streetscaping has occurred.

Mayor Bruff explained that the approval to purchase these planters had reached the City Council two days prior, but because it was a design issue, he referred it back to the Main Street Board.

Chairman Hankerd asked if the planters should be consistent with Main Street Plaza.

Mayor Bruff stated that the MS Plaza planters were existing planters that were salvaged from Exchange Street. He asked if the long-range plan is to have these planters coordinate throughout downtown.

Baker stated that he believed so.

Reeves asked if it would be possible to order coordinating planters in the future from the same company.

Burg said this would be possible.

A motion was made to approve the design of the planters as presented by City staff.
Motion passed. Bucsi/Rice m/s/p

An addition was made to the agenda by Chairman Hankerd: Discussion of Washington Street streetscape for 2010.

Ron Baker presented maps of proposed Washington Street streetscape.

Board discussed the bump-out features of the design and the mixed feedback from the public. Gilbert stated that the bump-outs made traffic travel more safely.

Mayor Bruff said that safer is better, and the shorter distance between the curbs made it a better situation for everyone downtown. It forces people to slow down.

Rice asked when the construction would begin.

Baker said it would be roughly April of 2010 and would take about a month for each block.

Mayor Bruff said that while some people may complain, he believes that just like the controversy over Main Street Plaza's design dissipate once people are used to it and have the chance to utilize it.

The board was in general agreement that the design was good but they would recommend a 28' space between curbs at the bump-outs.

f. Main Street Organization Efforts

- i. Vision/Mission Statements**
- ii. Development of By-Laws**
- iii. Discussion/Appointment of Officers**

Chairman Hankerd stated that the first two items should be referred to the Organization committee, but that a discussion should take place today regarding board officers.

Gilbert stated that he believed that at one time he was vice-chair of the board, but the position disappeared, but that this did not necessarily mean he needed to take that spot back.

It was suggested that Gilbert could serve as treasurer. Burg stated that according to Main Street policies, committee chairs were discouraged from serving as officers.

It was also suggested that Bucsi serve as treasurer.

Chairman Hankerd suggested that this issue should also be addressed by the Organization Committee.

An addition was made to the agenda by Chairman Hankerd: Discussion of group advertising through NCG Cinemas:

Treen shared that for \$1,500 an ad can be updated 7 times in a year and will run 103,000 per year. This information was supplied by Rick Abraham of Prefix. She said that they would need to know our decision around November 4th.

Mayor Bruff suggested that the board solicit input from businesses who had advertised in theaters in the past. In his experience, the movie theaters had not been helpful for real estate agents.

Reeves stated that he used to do movie theater advertising, but that the market changed. Now most movie theater customers are teenagers and do not own cars, making it not a good investment for his business any longer. He stated that this would be basically subsidized advertising, and the decision to be made was is this the right market, and do we want to provide subsidized advertising to downtown merchants.

Gilbert stated that demographic information could be acquired from NCG and if the numbers were right he didn't see why we wouldn't advertise there.

Chairman Hankerd suggested this decision be handled by the Promotions Committee.

g. Historic District Discussion

Bucsi related that she received a phone call from Lorraine Weckwert on the Historic District issue. She asked Bucsi why she had not been allowed to present to council yet.

Gilbert explained the timeline that was discussed in his meeting with Weckwert and Burg two weeks prior. He stated that she was aware of this timeline.

Burg gave the following update: The discussion of creating a historic district in Downtown Owosso is one that has been going on intermittently for some time. It has come to the attention of the Main Street Board that a desire exists within the community to explore this option more thoroughly at this time.

We are in the process of coordinating with the Michigan Main Street Center to host an informational meeting for all downtown stakeholder regarding the various forms of historic districts, what they could mean for Downtown Owosso and what steps are necessary to create one such district. This meeting will include experts from the State Historic Preservation Office, the Michigan Main Street Office and private developers who have used historic tax credits to complete renovation projects.

It is the intention of this meeting to inform the members of this board of the benefits and challenges of a historic district so that we might discuss a possible recommendation to the City Council to appoint a Historic District Study Committee. It is projected that our meeting will take place during the month of October so this discussion may take place at the November 4th meeting.

Treen stated that with or without Weckwert's efforts, historic district designation should be pursued by board.

h. Meeting was adjourned at 9:37pm Bucsi/Bruff m/s/p

[The City of Owosso will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon 72 hours notice to the City of Owosso. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids on services should contact the City of Owosso by writing or calling Amy Kohagen, City Clerk, 301 W. Main St, Owosso, MI 48867 (989) 725-0500 or on the Internet. The City of Owosso Website address is www.ci.owosso.mi.us.]