

MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING
OWOSSO HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Wednesday, January 15, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
City Hall Conference Room

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: at 6:00 p.m. by Chairperson Steven Teich.

ROLL CALL: was taken by City Manager Nathan Henne.

PRESENT: Chairperson Steven Teich, Commissioner Ainsworth, Commissioner Gallinger, Vice Chair Omer, Commissioner VanEpps, Commissioner Byrne, Commissioner Powell

ABSENT:

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: City Manager Nathan Henne, Mayor Teich, Nick Pidek, Mandy Pidek, Ryan Suchanek, Elizabeth Byrne.

AGENDA APPROVAL: January 15, 2025.

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA WITH COMMUNICATIONS MOVED TO END OF MEETING BY VANEPPS. SECONDED BY OMER.

AYES ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES APPROVAL: November 20, 2024.

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF MINUTES AS PRESENTED BY VANEPPS. SECONDED BY GALLINGER.

AYES ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS:

1. Letter of Support for CLG Grant for Congregational Church

Henne explained the process for a CLG grant application to SHPO – starting with the HDC approving a letter of support and moving to City Council for approval of the application.

MOTION BY GALLINGER TO APPROVE CLG GRANT LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH INTERIOR PLASTER PROJECT. SUPPORTED BY OMER.

AYES ALL. MOTION CARRIED

2. HDC Application Approval Policy

Henne explained that Chairman Tiech approached him with a proposal to update the HDC application process to include a one-year completion deadline that would be consistent with the city's building permit application schedule. It was also proposed to start charging the building permit application base fee amount for future HDC applications. Finally, the policy would be applied retroactively for all approved HDC applications that have not been completed yet.

MOTION BY POWELL TO APPROVE POLICY AS WRITTEN. SUPPORTED BY VANEPPS.

AYES ALL. MOTION CARRIED

3. Application for Certificate of Appropriateness – 214 W Exchange St – Siding

Owners wish to replace the vinyl siding on the façade with ribbed steel to comply with the HDC's design guidelines and the recent enforcement letter sent regarding the vinyl siding. Henne explained that the vinyl was installed by the previous owners.

MOTION BY POWELL TO APPROVE THE CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR 214 W EXCHANGE WITH A DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION OF 1 YEAR. SUPPORTED BY BYRNE.

VANEPPS ABSTAINING. REMAINING MEMBERS VOTE AYE. MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Elizabeth Byrne spoke about the importance of communication and that it will help and encourage development. She talked about when a local jeweler owned the property and about his leadership.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Mandy Pidek spoke regarding the demo by neglect letter and possible court action against the property at 110 W Main for the crumbling façade. She apologized for not getting back to the commission on the matter. Stressed the importance of communication and that any letters should go to her home rather than the "shop." She explained that she and her husband are passionate about Owosso and own 4 businesses – 3 of which are in historic buildings – with a total of 24 employees. She explained that the quotes to repair the façade at 110 W Main St are between \$3000 and \$30,000. She said that there are more crumbling and vacant properties than "actual properties." She asked the HDC not to sue them but help them find a grant.

Nick Pidek spoke and asked the HDC not to proceed with legal action. He said he is open to a solution but not at the expense of his family. There was not adequate time to solve this problem. He said he talked to MEDC and SEDP about a grant but that no grant application will be considered if legal action is pending. He said his time as a councilmember and on other boards should play a role in the HDC's decision to sue so he is asking for the demo by neglect to be rescinded.

Henne explained the timeline for attempting to gain compliance with the needed repairs of the property at 110 W Main St. The process started over 4 years ago with multiple demolition by neglect letters sent and then rescinded by the HDC. Multiple promises by the Pideks to execute their ever changing plans to comply with the HDC's letters were not met and the process would start over. Omer commented that it is difficult for property owners to keep their historic buildings maintained. Henne explained that grants often require a lien or conservation easement and that is unattractive to building owners because it clouds the property title if they go to sell it, but that ultimately, owners are responsible for running their business and maintaining their own properties without the expectation of local government money.

Ainsworth said he did not want to sue. He proposed Pidek bring an action plan to the next HDC meeting.

Omer asked if the HDC could email official letters as well.

Byrne said he agrees with Ainsworth that the HDC should not sue.

MOTION TO RESCIND THE DEMOLITION BY NEGELCT LETTER FOR 110 W MAIN ST AND TO PLACE THE REISSUANCE OF THE DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT LETTER FOR 110 W MAIN ON THE AGENDA FOR THE FEBURARY 19, 2025 HDC MEETING. SUPPORTED BY OMER.

AYES ALL. MOTION CARRIED

BOARD COMMENTS: Gallinger asked to discuss the property at 123 N Washington St. After a brief discussion about the current Certificate of Appropriateness that was issued for the project at the November 2024 HDC meeting:

GALLINGER MOVED TO RECONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF THE CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS ISSUED AT THE NOVEMBER 2024 HDC MEETING. SUPPORTED BY OMER.

AYES ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

GALLINGER MOVED TO DIRECT THE CITY MANAGER TO DRAFT A DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT LETTER FOR 123 N WASHINGTON ST FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE FEBRUARY 19, 2025 HDC MEETING. SUPPORTED BY VANEPPS.

AYES ALL. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING: February 19, 2025

CHAIRMAN TEICH ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 7:10 P.M.