

MINUTES FOR
REGULAR MEETING
OWOSSO HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
OCTOBER 19, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS / CITY HALL

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6:01 p.m. by Chairperson Scott Newman.

Chairperson Newman welcomed the new board member, James Eaton.

ROLL CALL was taken by Recording Secretary Marty Stinson.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Scott Newman, Vice-Chairperson Vincent Gonyou, Commissioners James Eaton, Lance Omer, and Gary Wilson.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Secretary Phil Hathaway and Commissioner Matthew Van Epps.

OTHERS PRESENT: Sarah Warren-Riley, Housing Program Manager; Diane Shack, representative for the business owner of Ashleigh's Dance Shack, 206 – B W. Main Street.

AGENDA APPROVAL: Motion by Commissioner Eaton and supported by Commissioner Omer to approve the agenda for October 19, 2011 with the addition of business item # 3, Application for a sign at 206 – B W. Main Street .

Yeas: All. Motion was passed.

MINUTES APPROVAL: Motion by Commissioner Wilson and supported by Commissioner Omer to approve the minutes of the meeting for July 20, 2011,

Yeas: All. Motion was passed.

COMMUNICATIONS:

- 1) Staff memorandum
- 2) Meeting minutes of July 20, 2011
- 3) Robert Christensen email

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS:

- 1) Election of Officers

Motion by Commissioner Omer and supported by Commissioner Wilson to select Scott Newman to serve as Chairperson; Vincent Gonyou to serve as Vice-Chairperson; and Phil Hathaway to serve as Secretary for a term of approximately one year, ending at the next annual meeting in September, 2012.

Yeas: All. Motion was passed.

- 2) National Register

Chairperson Newman referred to e-mail communications that he had with Bob Christensen from National Register of Historic Places; Adam Zettel, City of Owosso Community Development Director; Robbert McKay, State Historic Preservation Office; and Lorraine Weckwert, volunteer for historic preservation. Mr. Newman mentioned that he did not involve other board members in these communications to avoid any misunderstandings with the Open Meetings Act. He stated that money for historic preservation used to be easy to get, but with Governor Snyder's cuts and with the new program, money is not so available.

The first e-mail from Bob Christensen sounded like he was disappointed that Owosso is no longer interested in pursuing a national register designation. Mr. Zettel replied that Owosso was very interested and just waiting for the dust to settle on the topic. It was noted that the applicants would have to use federal funds first and then state funds. Federal funds require a larger project; state funds can work with smaller investments.

Mr. Newman replied to both Mr. Christensen and Mr. Zettel that he would love to obtain a National Register designation for downtown Owosso. However his first obligation is to the downtown building owners. He didn't think we were ready yet for the national designation.

Mr. Robbert McKay's e-mail noted that the state's new development assistance program will be exceptionally competitive and has the potential to be extremely political and is remarkably likely to be difficult for small projects. He also noted that at this point, not getting your downtown listed on the National Register and thus eligible for Federal Historic credits is simply insuring that projects in your community will have an even more difficult time finding and accessing the dwindling resources available to support downtown investment and revitalization.

Chairperson Newman stated that Mr. Guy Bazzani has done about 150 restorations and is an expert in these. He believes very strongly in the state. Yet, the state officials think we should go national.

Ms. Weckwert advised staying with the state and echoed Mr. Bazzani's advice.

Mr. Christensen noted in an e-mail to Mr. Zettel that the National Register will be meeting on the 20th (tomorrow) and is prompting for a decision as time is running out.

Mr. Newman stated Mr. Christensen is offering money to make an application to the national registration nomination with no local match required.

Commissioner Wilson stated that we have very knowledgeable people advising us. Mr. Bazzani says the federal registration is an obstacle to state credits; McKay says state credits are going away. We need clarification. We are not in a place to make a decision today.

Commissioner Omer noted that state officials aren't even in the know – who do we contact? Commissioner Wilson said we need to get Bazzani, Christensen and McKay in one place and get some questions out there.

Chairperson Newman said we need to indicate tonight because of the October 20 deadline. He doesn't know who to believe. Commissioner Wilson said the new state program hasn't been passed yet.

Commissioner Eaton said it doesn't commit us and he likes Commissioner Wilson's suggestion to invite those in the know to come to a meeting. Commissioner Wilson said that Bob Christensen has done a lot for Owosso before and after the Historic District Commission began. He's very invested in Owosso. He doesn't want to lead us down a path. Mr. Wilson wants to see us have more information before we register.

Chairperson Scott feels we don't even need this money. He thinks we can put the application together with our own people here in town. Commissioner Eaton said it would be nice to have money to pay staff. As long as we're honest that it doesn't mean that we're going to do it.

Chairperson Newman asked if he could e-mail Bob Christensen that information.

Motion by Commissioner Eaton and supported by Commissioner Omer to allow Chairperson Newman to contact Bob Christensen to be in consideration, but not pursue a definite designation yet.

Yeas: All. Motion was passed.

3) 206 - B W. Main St. (Sign)

Ms. Diane Shack made the application for her daughter, Ashleigh. They have a temporary banner, but want to pursue a permanent sign. Brian Godfrey owns the building. Chairperson Newman noted that the commission works to keep the signs on the same level on the downtown buildings. Application appears to be above the current sign. The downstairs business is dominating the middle section of the overhang. He suggested Ms. Shack go back to the landlord, Mr. Brian Godfrey, and see if the first floor business could move their sign over to make room for their sign.

It was also noted that the sign needs a wood or metal frame. It was requested that the application be resubmitted with the corrected property owner name and correct drawing. Sign is to be placed on the overhang.

Motion by Commissioner Eaton and supported by Commissioner Omer to extend the temporary banner permit for 30 days.

Yeas: All. Motion was passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Commissioner Omer and supported by Commissioner Eaton to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Yeas: All. Motion was passed.

Phil Hathaway, Secretary