

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE OWOSSO PLANNING COMMISSION
Council Chambers, City Hall
December 12, 2011 – 7 pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman William Wascher.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

Roll Call was taken by Recording Secretary Marty Stinson.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman William Wascher, Secretary Melvin Renfrow, Commissioners David Bandkau, Terri Brown, Cindy Popovitch, Brent Smith, and Thomas Taylor.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Vice-Chairman Francis Livingston, and vacancy.

OTHERS PRESENT: Adam Zettel, Assistant City Manager and Director of Community Development.

AGENDA APPROVAL:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER POPOVITCH, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER BROWN TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR DECEMBER 12, 2011 AS PRESENTED. YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER BANDKAU, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER RENFROW TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NOVEMBER 14, 2011. YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Staff memorandum
2. PC minutes from November 14, 2011
3. Survey summary
4. Small turbine wind energy ordinance draft
5. Housing conformance ordinance draft

COMMISSIONER/PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

PUBLIC HEARING: None requested

SITE PLAN REVIEW: None requested

BUSINESS ITEMS: None requested

ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:

1. Master Plan Survey Report

Mr. Zettel, Assistant City Manager and Director of Community Development, commented that the results were in. He still wanted to visit some high school groups to round out the younger sector under age 25. There were 574 respondents which represents 1 out of 30 people in the community participating. Many more used the paper responses which required data entry than the computer resources.

One surprise for Mr. Zettel was the connection to the Lansing area being stronger than the Flint area. The survey showed an overwhelming desire from the public to increase the code enforcement for blight and housing. That represented a good use of resources already being used for enforcement. There was mixed support about Owosso becoming a college town; however, there was more support for Owosso to be a tourist destination town. A lot of people still look to manufacturing to improve Owosso's economy.

Respondents had a high priority for Westtown redevelopment. At this point, Mr. Zettel moved to the projector and presented cross tabulation charts for discussion.

2. Wind Energy Ordinance

Mr. Zettel doesn't see wind farms in the city, so this ordinance is written for smaller conditions such as a single turbine at a home or industrial site. Permits will be required for turbines on the ground or for rooftop. There are provisions for flicker. A wind turbine will be an accessory structure. It must meet setbacks and nuisance controls. The roof top will have a 15 foot clearance from the roof. They are not intended for residential use because they would have to be about 30 feet tall.

Commissioner Popovitch stated she would hate to see one along the river bank as she kayaks down the river. Mr. Zettel agreed it is a highly controversial subject.

Chairman Wascher stated that because of the close proximity in town, there can't be too many. They can't be built on vacant lots. It would be an accessory structure to a house or other building.

Mr. Zettel said there is a possibility they could be limited to an industrial park only. Some people will be annoyed by the hum or the sight of them. Our next steps are to get a public notice, news articles and put the information on Facebook. The public hearing will be in January.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER POPOVITCH, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER BANDKAU TO SET A PUBLIC HEARING FOR JANUARY 9, 2012 FOR AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 38, ZONING OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REGULATE WIND ENERGY CONVERSION SYSTEMS, WITH PROPER NOTICES.
YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.**

3. Housing Conformance Ordinance

Mr. Zettel noted that banks are less likely to lend money in the OS-1 District for residential uses. They are not accepting of letters that state if a home is damaged that they will have to depend on the Zoning Board of Appeals to approve the rebuild at the time of the damage. This will be a one phrase amendment – *Residential structures existing as of January 1, 2012*. If a structure becomes an office, it can never go back to residential. This brings stability for home improvements or refinancing.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER BANDKAU, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER BROWN TO SET A PUBLIC HEARING FOR JANUARY 9, 2012 FOR AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 38, ZONING OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES TO PERMIT THE CONTINUANCE OF RESIDENTIAL USES IN NON-RESIDENTIAL ZONES, WITH PROPER NOTICES.
YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.**

BOARD COMMENTS:

Chairman Wascher noted that he has been appointment to the position of County Surveyor for one year. This will not interfere with his position on the Planning Commission. It's a big job as he detailed some of the projects he will be working on.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER POPOVITCH, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER RENFROW TO ADJOURN AT 8:50 P.M. UNTIL JANUARY 9, 2012.