

OWOSSO CITY COUNCIL

MARCH 15, 2012

7:00 P.M.

PRESIDING OFFICER: MAYOR BENJAMIN R. FREDERICK

PRESENT: Mayor Benjamin R. Frederick, Mayor Pro-Tem Cindy S. Popovitch, Councilpersons Loreen F. Bailey, Thomas B. Cook, and Burton D. Fox.

ABSENT: Councilpersons Michael J. Erfourth and Christopher T. Eveleth.

This meeting is an inter-jurisdictional gathering to explore the options available for regional parks and to gauge interest in such a concept.

WELCOME

Mayor Frederick welcomed all those present and expressed his excitement at having the opportunity to learn about something that had the potential to benefit the entire county.

All those present introduced themselves. There were representatives from the County, Corunna Public Schools, the Village of Morrice, Friends of the Shiawassee River, Venice Township, the City of Corunna, the City of Owosso and a local trail organization.

Mayor Frederick introduced the evening's presenters: Ann Conklin of the Michigan Recreation and Park Association and Harry Burkholder of the Land Information Access Association.

PRESENTATION

Ms. Conklin began the presentation by noting the trend toward placemaking and how parks & recreation is a key component of that concept. She went on to note the benefits of a strong commitment to parks & recreation including: the positive effects parks can have on the value of adjacent properties, the potential economic benefits, building a sense of place, parks as a symbol of a community, reductions in crime, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

She pointed out that trails systems are the number one request of community members, though encouraged careful planning and the use of hard data to ensure any parks & recreation projects meet the demographic of the community. She also encouraged communities to use various means to financially support their parks including contracting for naming rights.

Mr. Burkholder noted the benefits of cooperation and pointing out the State is strongly encouraging the consolidation of services. He spoke about the barriers to cooperation including a history of past disputes, fear of losing control, and a narrow focus due to reduced staffing levels, among many others. Despite the potential difficulties he encouraged everyone to work together to at least improve the facilities that already exist.

He went on to note different ways to cooperate, from sharing equipment and programs with other communities to public/private partnerships. He listed all of the legislative options available to develop and adopt a joint recreation plan, discussing in some detail the various acts that govern such organizations. He also talked about how cooperative ventures can be funded through special millages and grants.

There was a brief question and answer period and names were collected for those interested in meeting on the topic again.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Benjamin R. Frederick, Mayor

Amy K. Kirkland, City Clerk