

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE OWOSSO PLANNING COMMISSION
Council Chambers, City Hall
January 23, 2012 – 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, Vice-Chairman Francis Livingston, Secretary Melvin Renfrow, Commissioners David Bandkau, Terri Brown, Tom Kurtz, Cindy Popovitch, Brent Smith, and Thomas Taylor.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

Mr. Adam Zettel introduced the new member to the commission, Mr. Tom Kurtz. He has been at Baker College for ten years and is the Dean of the CIS and Technology programs. He has lived in the Owosso area for many years and is married to Athena Kurtz.

AGENDA APPROVAL:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER POPOVITCH, SUPPORTED BY VICE CHAIRPERSON LIVINGSTON TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR JANUARY 23, 2012 AS PRESENTED.
YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

MOTION BY VICE CHAIRPERSON LIVINGSTON, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER BROWN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JANUARY 9, 2012.
YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Staff memorandum
2. PC minutes from January 9, 2012
3. Master plan draft sections

COMMISSIONER/PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

PUBLIC HEARING: None

SITE PLAN REVIEW: None

BUSINESS ITEMS: None

ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:

1. MASTER PLAN DRAFT DISCUSSIONS

Mr. Zettel said there were two sections in the draft form – Chapters 6 and 8. He reviewed the process to date. We now have the reference material and are working on the visioning. The goal is to achieve a vision for the land use for the downtown. He will do more mapping work as goals and implementation steps are decided towards the end of the process.

Commissioner Popovitch appreciates the maps. Mr. Zettel commented that some may be split in quadrants or may be presented in an 11 x 17 inch format. Mr. Zettel discussed the development of the narrative in the land use chapter. It's a complex subject.

Commissioner Kurtz asked if we can list some of the quantifiable items. Mr. Zettel replied that if we can find some of the statistics, yes. It helps tell the story.

Commissioner Popovitch asked about a traffic count. Mr. Zettel said yes. He continued, it's difficult to work on this. There are so many ways and a huge fiscal impact study could be done, but he's not sure what direction the planning commission wants. It could be a 300 page document.

Commissioner Taylor said to hit on some of the major items that we can do something about. Mr. Zettel agreed in the five years time until the master plan is reviewed again, then we can delve deeper.

Chairman Wascher asked, do we look outside our area? Mr. Zettel replied for future land use, yes; to match their future with ours.

Mr. Zettel is challenged by the industrial sites by the railroads. It's a really good mix except for the brownfields. Commissioner Smith asked what other cities had done with their rails. Mr. Zettel replied that New York City built elevated walkways; west of Owosso is a walkway. With active rails, we don't have a lot of choices. They can be used for light rails like Brighton to Ann Arbor or an Owosso stop on the way to Traverse City.

Commissioner Popovitch asked if it is worthwhile to work with the railroads for walking trails. Mr. Zettel said it's easier to do it without contacting the railroads. It's just impossible to get anything from the rails.

It was suggested to use a bus to tour some of the areas for land use to make determinations. Ms Popovitch mentioned space along the river – like the riverwalk. Mr. Zettel commented that recent survey remarks mentioned closing off a portion of Jerome Street and using it for developments.

Mr. Zettel further discussed brownfields along rail lines. The flood plain map with exceptions by letter map amendments, but not an actual map change. People pay \$50 to \$100 per month for flood plain insurance on their mortgages which makes some houses worth \$20,000 less than neighboring homes that are not in the flood plain. Chairman Wascher suggested a FEMA Flood Plain map with the letter residences another color.

Commissioner Popovitch asked what the planning commission could do to help Mr. Zettel. Mr. Zettel replied that he needed to know the issues in the community and what do we want to be. We're looking for critique.

Commissioner Smith asked if Mr. Zettel had a magic wand to use for the city, what would he work on. Mr. Zettel replied 1) housing – we have a new building official starting full time on Monday. 2) Corridors. 3) A handful of properties redeveloped like the Matthews Building, the Armory and the Middle School.

Commissioner Taylor asked what is the best use of Armory? Mr. Zettel replied, theater or community center. Basketball court or residential, but it doesn't have parking. He was asked what he would personally do with the building. He stated he would make a wedding chapel and banquet hall. He would encourage the city to be a wedding destination with the castle, etc.

Commissioner Taylor asked about the Chamber building and its status. Mr. Zettel discussed details.

Mr. Zettel invited personal visits to his office by the board members regarding the Master Plan. Commissioner Taylor said he likes what has been started.

ADJOURNMENT:
MOTION BY COMMISSIONER POPOVITCH, SUPPORTED BY VICE CHAIRPERSON LIVINGSTON TO ADJOURN AT 8:34 P.M. UNTIL FEBRUARY 13, 2012.