

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE OWOSSO PLANNING COMMISSION
Council Chambers, City Hall
October 24, 2011 – 7 pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:01 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, Terry Brown, Burton Fox, Cindy Popovitch, Brent Smith, and Thomas Taylor.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Vice-Chairman Francis Livingston

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

AGENDA APPROVAL:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER FOX, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER POPOVITCH TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR OCTOBER 24, 2011 AS PRESENTED.

YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER POPOVITCH, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER TAYLOR TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2011.

YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Staff memorandum
2. PC minutes from September 26, 2011
3. Focus group list notes

COMMISSIONER/PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

PUBLIC HEARING: None

SITE PLAN REVIEW: None

BUSINESS ITEMS: None

ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:

1. Master Plan Survey Report

Mr. Zettel, Assistant City Manager and Director of Community Development, received quite a few surveys last week. He expects 300 – 400 by the end of the survey. Some people received duplicate surveys and he noted that they did try to sort out duplicate labels. He doesn't have any results to report on yet and they are still receiving surveys even though the deadline was last Friday, the 21st. The bulk mailing took a lot longer to deliver than expected – some up to six days.

Discussion about the Focus Groups was reported. Mr. Zettel noted that experts were brought into each group. Each was centered on:

1. Goals & Values
2. Strengths, Weaknesses
3. Implementations & Strategies.

The groups were:

1. Economic Development
2. Education & Healthcare
3. State Highways
4. Westown

The groups ranged from four to five members up to ten. The State Highways is still controversial. Commuters want to drive quickly through town; and others want a slower pace streetscape setting on the state highways. Mr. Zettel reviewed the recommendations and found that there are three things that the city can be doing: code enforcement; blight enforcement; and stabilization of the neighborhoods. We need to encourage home ownership with 50% or more ownership and then the value of the houses will go up. Enforcement will encourage some landlords to sell out to the occupants. It's a slow process. Maybe we can get some enhancement grants; corridor improvement authority could bring on changes. It takes a long time to accomplish.

Discussion continued about Baker College and the student residential needs and possibilities. Ms. Sarah Warren-Riley will have a focus group meeting on housing and will bring in some other experts.

Westown corridor and the neighborhoods surrounding that area was another focus group discussion. Mr. Zettel is encouraged with the responses. People are interested and excited about the potentials.

In December he may have a draft ready; January, February may have some public presentations and feedback; in March it may be ready for the City Council. Then it would have about 60 – 90 days for the public to examine it before it can be adopted.

Commissioner Renfrow asked about speaking with the Historical Society about the historical houses. Mr. Zettel responded that the Historical Downtown District not so much, but the Historical Commission yes. The Shiawassee Arts Council, not so much. Education needs to be a priority in the community. Dr. Andrea Tuttle has a lot of good ideas.

COMMISSIONER/STAFF COMMENTS:

Chairman Wascher asked about the conference last week. Mr. Zettel said there was lots of "good stuff". Commissioners Brown and Renfrow attended and received certificates. Commissioner Renfrow commented that it was an eye-opening experience. That he learned about some new ideas to consider and that maybe meeting with other boards occasionally would be a good idea. Commissioner Brown said it was interesting to hear with other communities are addressing also.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER FOX, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER BROWN TO ADJOURN AT 8:41 P.M.

YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

m.m.s.

Melvin Renfrow, Secretary