

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE OWOSSO PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Council Chambers, City Hall**  
July 11, 2011 – 7 pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Burton Fox.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

Roll Call was taken by Recording Secretary Marty Stinson.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Burton Fox, Commissioners David Bandkau, Francis Livingston, Cindy Popovitch, Melvin Renfrow, Brent Smith, Thomas Taylor, and William Wascher.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Commissioner Christopher Brummel.

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

**AGENDA APPROVAL:**

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER POPOVITCH, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER LIVINGSTON TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR JULY 11, 2011 AS PRESENTED.**

**YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.**

**MINUTES APPROVAL:**

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LIVINGSTON, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER POPOVITCH TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JUNE 27, 2011.**

**YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.**

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

1. PC minutes from June 27, 2011
2. Master plan components from June 13 meeting – cont.

**COMMISSIONER / CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

Chairman Fox commented that the bylaws for the planning commission state the election of officers should occur at the first meeting of July. Tonight is an added meeting, so the election will occur at the next meeting on July 25. Mr. Fox will not be available for the chair position as he is running for a council position. If elected, he would no longer be eligible to be on the planning commission.

Adam Zettel, Assistant City Manager and Director of Community Development, stated that Commissioner Brummel will be resigning his position on the board due to time constraints. New members should get their e-mails to Mr. Zettel. Mr. Zettel introduced the new board member Mr. Brent Smith. Mr. Smith stated he lives at 717 W King and has a banking background. Mr. Melvin Renfrow has lived in Owosso for about ten years and works in the IT Department at Memorial Healthcare. Mr. Zettel stated that both men bring new economy principles to the table with their experiences.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** None

**SITE PLAN REVIEW:** None

**BUSINESS ITEMS:** None

**ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:      **MASTER PLAN****

Mr. Zettel started the discussion at page 15 of the master plan packet from the June 13 meeting. Chairman Fox stated we have a lot of obsolete structures for single business. They need to be busted up for several businesses. Mr. Zettel stated Owosso could plan for office spaces. We need to work on parking for some of the moderate size businesses. Mr. Fox stated we need to be able to come up with

some properties for some “big box stores”. Mr. Zettel stated these plans will be very helpful to staff when visitors or developers come to town. Decisions have to be made what the city is willing to do for a street front.

Mr. Zettel continued with the primary focus being users who don't need their own dedicated parking. Maybe we need a transition area near Jerome Street. Commissioner Popovitch said there is a perception that there is a shortage of parking in Owosso. Maybe there is a need for a parking ramp.

Mr. Fox stated we have an entertainment district with the bowling alley, community theater and restaurants. Is there a way to look at setting aside an area for entertainment? Mr. Zettel replied, absolutely. There are other sections coming up in the master plan that may address this. What philosophy does the board want? Do you want walkability with parking or parking right in front of a particular business?

Mr. Fox commented on the parking lot by the fountain. Tenants are gone all day long. Employees can walk from farther away rather than using the prime parking. We need better management of the rental parking. Commissioner Popovitch added, maybe even a shuttle for downtown employees. Mr. Fox said we are encouraging walking in the downtown.

Ms. Popovitch asked if we can't provide designated parking for expectant mothers or handicap parking in front of businesses. Commissioner Taylor stated to attract businesses, we need to keep it more liberal. Maybe some reconstruction is necessary for the good of the entire area. Maybe some run-down areas could be reconstructed within walking distance.

Mr. Zettel mentioned that in the 1960's the philosophy was “parking” first. Now the philosophy is pedestrians in the downtown. We need to determine the happy place between the two extremes. Discussion continued about walking downtown and comparable walking distances inside malls and big box stores.

Commercial parking was discussed. Mr. Zettel asked what is Owosso's capitalization. Ms. Popovitch said a vibrant community for retail stores with some mix of office space. Mr. Burton stated our downtown needs to have a niche that compliments “big box stores”, not to compete against them. We need specialty businesses and restaurants. Commissioner Smith stated banks are scared to finance old downtown buildings. What means can we use to help with the financing? Mr. Zettel replied TIFA's; Historical Preservation funds; we need to encourage entrepreneurship; we need risk takers.

Commissioner Bandkau talked about electric vehicles. Do we need special areas for parking of electric vehicles? Mr. Zettel replied there are now crashless cars on the horizon. They are basically small cars that communicate with each other. We have a company here in town that is working it out, and also an experimental intersection at M-52 and Oliver. That would be neat if Owosso was a forerunner in this technology.

Commissioner Taylor said we haven't really talked about the M-21 corridor. Mr. Zettel commented we will talk about specific areas block by block at future meetings.

#### Public & Natural Areas:

Mr. Smith asked about a regional consolidation coming down from the state. Mr. Zettel said it has been talked about, but not forced yet from the state. Ms. Popovitch said we see some cooperation maybe, but not consolidation. She then asked if Justin Horvath could join them at the next meeting for the Economic Development Section of the Master Plan. Mr. Zettel said yes, and possibly representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and the Owosso Main Street groups including Renita Mikolajczyk.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

Chairman Fox noted that the Premier Waste site appears to be doing some building prep for the third building. Has the permit been issued? Mr. Zettel stated that he didn't have that information. Mr. Fox stated that it looked like it's going to be a smaller building.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER WASCHER, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER LIVINGSTON TO  
ADJOURN AT 8:55 P.M.  
YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.**

m.m.s.

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Frank Livingston, Secretary