



OWOSSO HISTORICAL COMMISSION
THE CURWOOD COLLECTION

Special Meeting of the Owosso Historical Commission

Minutes of February 27, 2024 – 6:30 P.M. at Owosso Public Safety

PRESIDING OFFICER: Chair Mark Erickson

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice-Chair Debra Adams, Commissioners Susan Osika, Bill Moull, Elaine Greenway, Lance Little and Robert Hooper

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

CHAIR ERICKSON CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:30 P.M.

APPROVE MINUTES – February 12, 2024

Motion by Commissioner Osika to approve minutes as presented, supported by Commissioner Hooper.

Passed by voice vote.

APPROVE AGENDA – February 27, 2024

Motion by Commissioner Greenway to approve the agenda as presented, supported by Commissioner Osika.

Passed by voice vote.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Gould House Contents: Amy Fuller summarized past meeting discussions regarding the items in the Gould House; that books, photos, and documents are being taken to City Hall for cataloging, all Curwood-related items have been moved to the Castle, the Commission is in talks with DeVries to loan them the carriage and sleigh, and Rebecca McClear's chairs and burial décor will be returned to her. She also shared that the Shiawassee Historical Society located on M-52 had been invited to the Gould House but did not see anything they would like to add to their collection. She explained that a contract with the realtor had been signed and items should be removed before the house was listed. She stated that the Commission had considered a storage unit or an estate sale to help with the extra furniture, dishes, and other misc. items they have.

Commissioner Little expressed that he thought the Commission needed to be able to take time going through each item.

Commissioner Greenway said she thought it was important nothing was thrown away and that the important items were saved.

Motion by Commissioner Osika to authorize staff to move items to a storage unit. Motion supported by Commissioner Little. Passed by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Jane Ferraro: Asked if City Hall had room for the items and stated that she has never been inside the Gould House and would like to do so before it is sold.

Rebecca McClear: Asked for details on items going to City Hall and suggested the Commission focus on something other than James Oliver Curwood, stating he and the Curwood Festival are “white trash”.

Gary Wilson: Noted that as a past Commissioner, he spent time helping to inventory items in the house. He said he was happy to hear Commissioner Greenway state that things would not be thrown away. He asked for more information on possibly archiving efforts.

Robert Doran Brockway: Expressed his disbelief and disappointment in the current state of the Commission. As the previous director, he left them with a strategic plan which they are not following. He expressed concern about the artifacts in the Gould House and asked them to reconsider their decision.

Cathy Runyan: Shared that she has fond memories of the Gould House and volunteering for the community. She also said St. John has a nice house museum.

Jerry Jones: doesn't agree with selling the Amos Gould House. Also doesn't agree with hiring an out-of-town Realtor.

Karen Mead Elford: Asked about plans for storing things at the Castle, mentioned that the building can be damp.

Leisa Moffatt: Stated that she lives at the Gould House and is upset at the sale of the house. She listed her husband's family's long history in Owosso and expressed dissatisfaction with the Commission's caretaking of the house.

Piper Brewer: Shared that she considers the Gould House a second home. She discussed the light fixtures in the home and asked that those who have donated items to the house have them returned.

Hannah Bignall: Stated that she thought the sale of the Gould House should have been brought to the voters.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioners Erickson and Little responded to a previous question regarding possibly archiving documents at a historical library to make them available to the public and ensure they are properly indexed and stored in a climate-controlled environment.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, March 11, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Osika moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Moull supported. The voice vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by:
Amy Fuller, Assistant City Manager