

MINUTES
CITY OF WOODSTOCK
OLD COURTHOUSE AND SHERIFF'S HOUSE ADVISORY COMMISSION
June 20, 2016
City Council Chambers

A Regular Meeting of the City of Woodstock Old Courthouse and Sheriff's House Advisory Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Dennis Sandquist on Monday, June 20, 2016 in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

A roll call was taken.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynde Anderson, Jim Campion, Trisha Doornbosch, Jodie Kurtz-Osborne, Jim Prindiville, David Stumpf, Tammy Townsend-Kise, Joseph White, and Chairman Dennis Sandquist.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Economic Development Director Garrett Anderson, Grant Writer Terry Willcockson, and City Planner/Staff Liaison Nancy Baker.

OTHERS PRESENT: City Clerk Cindy Smiley

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by T. Doornbosch, second by J. Prindiville, to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2016, meeting of the Old Courthouse and Sheriff's House Advisory Commission as presented.

Ayes: L. Anderson, J. Campion, T. Doornbosch, J. Kurtz-Osborne, J. Prindiville, D. Stumpf, T. Townsend-Kise, J. White, and Chairman D. Sandquist. Nays: none. Abstentions: None. Absentees: none. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Stumpf introduced his grandson who is visiting. There were no public comments.

SURVEY UPDATE

Chairman Sandquist thanked Commissioner Doornbosch for her work on the survey, including seeing that it was placed on the City's website. He also thanked City staff for compiling the results received to date so that the Commission can review them this evening. He noted he is pleased with the number of responses received thus far.

N. Baker noted there have been 70 responses received and stated that Terry Willcockson has written a press release to make the public aware that the survey is available and to encourage them to complete it.

T. Doornbosch thanked N. Baker and G. Anderson for their assistance on this project. She noted she is pleased with the finished product.

Chairman Sandquist opened the floor to questions or comments from the Commission concerning the survey and the results received thus far.

T. Townsend-Kise noted the response is a small sampling, noting the comments made are from a small group. She noted what she is seeing is what she has been hearing. She stated it appears the art aspect is important and there is a demand for dining. She again stated she hears this repeatedly so the responses received are reaffirming.

J. White stated the public wants to see interesting and unique uses to draw people but does not want to pay for them. He noted this is what the City and the Commission will continue to run into so funding will play an important part. He stated it will be up to the Commission to find a creative way to fund this project without the public paying for it, which will be a challenge.

Chairman Sandquist stated the people seem to want what is already there, i.e. arts and a restaurant. He also noted the desire for retail, stating this surprised him.

J. Campion noted one the ideas is patterned after something in Stevens Point, Wisconsin and asked if anyone is familiar with that facility. J. White stated it is a food co-op in a historic building. G. Anderson stated he is very familiar with this, noting it is similar to the Food Shed Co-op that is growing in this area right now. He described this for the Commission, stating the facility in Wisconsin has been a model for the Food Shed. He also stated the Food Shed is looking for a grocery store-style building.

In response to a question from Chairman Sandquist, N. Baker stated the public cannot see the results of the survey due to the version of Survey Monkey the City has will not allow this.

Noting not everyone will read the newspaper, Commissioner Stumpf suggested using signage in front of the Old Courthouse to invite people to take the survey. G. Anderson stated there was a post placed on both the City's Facebook page and the Woodstock Square Facebook page and has received 2,500 views.

Discussion followed concerning how to provide information to the public and encourage participation in the survey. Chairman Sandquist suggested placing the results on the City's webpage once 200 responses have been received. Commissioner Anderson suggested placing signage or information at the Farmers Market concerning the survey. T. Townsend-Kise noted this would require permission from the Farmers Market which has not, in the past, allowed any type of political surveying to take place. She stated in this case, however, they may allow it. Chairman Sandquist suggested placing a table in front of the Old Courthouse. J. Prindiville noted he has been to a number of historical sites which have a phone number posted on site. He stated when a visitor calls this number, they hear a recording giving information about the building, stating this may garner interest in the Old Courthouse. J. White suggested taking advantage of the City's many public events to engage the public and setting up tables at the events to invite people to take the survey.

T. Doornbosch asked if N. Baker would check with the City Council to see if they would permit placing signage on the Old Courthouse concerning the survey. N. Baker stated she believes the Council would be supportive but is not sure City Staff would have the expertise to place the signage on the building. She stated she will investigate this. T. Doornbosch asked if information could be placed at the Opera House in the location where they have placed other brochures.

In response to a question from Chairman Sandquist, it was the consensus of the Commission that its members are willing to man a table at the Farmers Market or various events.

A discussion followed of some of the uses mentioned by the survey participants. Chairman Sandquist noted that entertainment is a very broad category. T. Doornbosch stated this is more than just food or a restaurant but could be something such as a small theater, a small event space, or gallery or art space. Chairman Sandquist suggested perhaps a microbrewery. He noted that it was interesting that some of the comments mentioned residential.

In response to a question from D. Stumpf, N. Baker stated almost all respondents were from the 60098 zip code. Chairman Sandquist noted this is probably a result of the survey being on the City's webpage. T. Doornbosch noted there will probably be a wider response once the press release goes out.

ANALYSIS OF FUTURE USES

REPORT REGARDING SHERIFF'S HOUSE RFP STATUS

Chairman Sandquist stated he would like to see a strategy developed on how the Commission should move forward with what he considers to be its primary charge, that being gathering public input, identifying funding opportunities uses, and then, ultimately, ownership of the structure. He noted they have started to gather public input through the survey and that the Artspace process has also gotten public input. He noted the Commission has come to the conclusion that relocating City Hall to the Old Courthouse would not be an appropriate use of that building. He opined that the Commission should prioritize uses for additional consideration and develop standards to use to evaluate the uses which would allow them to be removed from the list or move forward.

Discussion followed of how the uses would be identified for consideration. It was suggested that the uses be financially feasible, have public support, draw people to the Square, and provide a seven-day-a-week presence of the Square. It was noted that, at some point, a space needs analysis would be required and a market demand study done. In discussing financial feasibility, it was noted the use should have the financial capacity to cover maintenance and operational expenses at the least, and also pay for building restoration and tenant finishes if possible, and that other funding sources for the use should be considered as well.

J. Prindiville stated he would like to see the idea of a food service establishment taken off the table for the jail as it is his opinion that the changes that would be needed to that building would be irreversible. He stated his feeling that the changes necessary would take the historic fabric away from this building. He also opined that the restaurant business is risky and should be left to the private sector and that it would better for the City to assist a restaurant in a better location elsewhere on the Square.

Chairman Sandquist noted perhaps there is not consensus to move forward with an RFP for a restaurant. D. Stumpf stated he would like to keep options open and get a broader perspective with T. Doornbosch expressing agreement. T. Townsend-Kise disagreed, stating people are requesting a dining establishment and there is a need for a high-quality restaurant to come in that meets the criteria of enhancing the historic quality of the building. J. White agreed, stating perhaps a restaurateur could come in and create a nice restaurant, giving the Commission the ability to concentrate on the Old Courthouse. J. Kurtz-Osborne stated she would like to see a classy restaurant. L. Anderson urged the Commission to keep an open mind, stating a restaurateur may

come forward who is interested and matches what people are asking for. Chairman Sandquist stated any restaurant would have to respect the integrity of the structures, particularly the jail cells. He also stated that the Commission should be sure that the RFP would be the appropriate thing to do and that it is prepared to consider all responsible, reasonable proposals.

In response to a question from Chairman Sandquist, D. Stumpf stated he drafted a mission statement, noting that one of the things that came out of the Artspace discussions was the idea of an anchor tenant. He emphasized the portion of the proposed statement that says, "will feature an anchor tenant to attract, mentor and manage other occupants." This led him to the question of whether the City wishes to manage the building or have an anchor tenant who would manage it. He stated if the anchor approach is desired, then the Commission would be challenged with soliciting proposals for an anchor tenant, noting this could be a restaurant or any one of many other types of tenant.

A discussion followed of the anchor tenant concept and of tenancy in general and of the tenant-landlord relationship. D. Stumpf noted this anchor would be asked to do more than occupy the building but to manage it as well. Further discussion occurred concerning the terminology to be used to describe this entity.

J. Champion noted his opposition to the formulation of a mission statement, stating the focus seems to be on the wording of the statement rather than accomplishing the necessary tasks at hand. T. Doornbosch opined that using the terminology in the proposed mission statement narrows the choices down too much. She noted she would prefer to discuss the list of uses and criteria the Commission wishes to consider and that any business coming in must meet these criteria. Commissioner Stumpf opined that it would be beneficial to potential investors if there is a mission statement in place which could describe a vision for the building and that this would also make it easier to solicit proposals. He stated the more the Commission can define what is acceptable, the better. T. Townsend-Kise stated she does not wish to spend more time word-smithing a mission statement but would not oppose developing an overarching vision, perhaps two sentences, to assist when soliciting proposals. Discussion followed of this, including of Messrs. Anderson, Stumpf, and White using some of this information to re-work the statement.

Chairman Sandquist opined that the Commission should select the categories, define them, and come up with as many uses as it can into these categories. The next step, then, would be to ask questions about the uses. He asked each Commissioner to volunteer to study and research a particular use using the same set of criteria/questions to evaluate each use and report back at the next meeting.

Following further discussion, the criteria/questions to be used when reviewing the categories/uses were agreed upon as follows:

1. Community Support: Is there public support for the use as documented by the on-line opinion survey or other informal sources?
2. Economic Vitality of the Square:
 - a. Will the use attract residents and out of town visitors to the square?
 - b. Will the use be open seven days per week?

3. Space Needs: Do either the Court House or the Sheriff House meet the floor space (size, configuration) and parking needs of the use?
4. Real Estate Demand:
 - a. Is the use a growing sector with a demand for new locations?
 - b. What site selection criteria are employed by the use? Do either the Court House or Sherriff House meet the criteria?
5. Financial Capacity:
 - a. Can the use pay the operation and maintenance (O&M) for the building space?
 - b. Can the use pay for tenant finish of the building space?
 - c. Can the use assist with financing building restoration, replacement of building systems (electrical, HVAC, plumbing); and accessibility improvements?
6. Funding Sources: Are federal, state, local, or foundation grants, or other sources of funding available to assist with financing building restoration, building systems, accessibility improvements, and tenant finishes for the use?
7. Ownership/Management Options: What building ownership and building management options are most appropriate for the use?
8. Examples: Are there other examples of historic buildings being occupied by the use?

Following further discussion, it was agreed that the Commissioners would research the following categories/uses as follows:

Education & Dining – Commissioner T. Townsend-Kise & Chairman D. Sandquist (Education)

Congressional Library – Commissioner J. White

Arts – Commissioner T. Doornbosch and Commissioner L. Anderson

Community Center – Commissioner J. Prindiville

Fine Dining – Commissioner J. Kurtz-Osborne

Incubator & Historic Center – Commissioner D. Stumpf

Museum – Commissioner J. Campion

The Commission members discussed various aspects and avenues they would explore when reviewing the aforementioned criteria, including possibly visiting other sites with similar uses, reviewing previously-proposed projects, researching on the Internet, and talking with realtors who have handled this type of usage.

Chairman Sandquist requested that this be placed on the next agenda. In addition, it was the consensus of the Commission that G. Anderson, D. Stumpf, and J. White work on the vision statement based upon this evening's discussion and that this item will be placed on the next agenda as well.

STAFF REPORT

N. Baker stated the windows on the Sheriff's House are almost all installed.

She stated window replacement on the Old Courthouse will begin on the west side where it will be necessary to remove the entire windows and install new. She described the new windows, which will closely duplicate the details of the existing windows and noted they will go to the Historic Preservation Commission next week for their approval. It is hoped to then immediately go out for bid and award the contract sometime in August.

In response to a question from Chairman Sandquist, Ms. Willcockson stated the Artspace should be transmitted to the City sometime in August.

ADJOURN

Motion by J. Prindiville, second by D. Stumpf, to adjourn this regular meeting of the Old Courthouse and Sheriff's House Advisory Commission to the next regular meeting on Monday, July 18, 2016 at 7:00PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Ayes: L. Anderson, J. Champion, T. Doornbosch, J. Kurtz-Osborne, J. Prindiville, D. Stumpf, T. Townsend-Kise, J. White, and Chairman Dennis Sandquist. Nays: none. Abstentions: none. Absentees: none. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:35PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Smiley
City Clerk