

MINUTES
CITY OF WOODSTOCK
OLD COURTHOUSE AND SHERIFF'S HOUSE ADVISORY COMMISSION
May 16, 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 7:03 PM by Chairman Dennis Sandquist on Monday, May 16, 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, Joseph White, and Chairman Dennis Sandquist.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Tammy Townsend-Kise.

STAFF PRESENT: Economic Development Director Garrett Anderson, Opera House Managing Director John Scharres, City Planner/Staff Liaison Nancy Baker, and Chief Deputy Clerk Jane Howie.

OTHERS PRESENT: Susan Stelford.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by L. Anderson, second J. Kurtz-Osborne, to approve the Minutes of the April 18, 2016, meeting of the Old Courthouse and Sheriff's House Advisory Commission.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Susan Stelford, Friends of the Old Courthouse, informed the Commissioners of the Dick Tracy Day event and the page on the City's website, which contains information about the July 2nd event on the Woodstock Square. The event, which is hosted by the Friends of the Old Courthouse, will raise money to assist with the costs to restore the Old Courthouse & Sheriff's House on the Woodstock Square. The group is also encouraging people to trace a comic strip section with the hopes of breaking a world record in the Guinness Book with a mile long (longest) cartoon strip by a team. The group is looking for donations and sponsors to support the repair and/or replacement of windows throughout the building. Hundreds have people have already participated in the tracing events, although there is a need for more participation. J. Kurtz-Osborne mentioned that several hundred thousand dollars are needed for this project. J. Prindiville asked if the group had received any donations yet. S. Stelford replied that they are currently doing the ground work, looking for donations and sponsors. The Commission thanked Susan Stelford for her presentation and for the information she shared.

WOODSTOCK OPERA HOUSE INFORMATION:

John Scharres, Managing Director of the Woodstock Opera House, gave a brief presentation about the operations of the Opera House and then answered questions from the Commission.

J. Scharres gave an overview of the Opera House saying it was built as City Hall in 1890 and included the Police Station and Fire Station. In time the community felt the city needed an auditorium. Modifications were made to the building to get more space out of it for the growing community. The building was added on to and updated throughout the years with the community's changing needs. In the late 1960's, the City outgrew the space and started using the current City Hall building on Calhoun Street for office space. Around that time the Courthouse went into private ownership. A group was created that assisted with raising money to renovate the Opera House building into a possible community center. They put together a plan to create what became the Woodstock Opera House. Since budget is always a big concern, the roof was patched frequently, instead of being completely replaced. Many projects were deferred due to lack of funds. A donor gave money specifically for the elevator. Over the years the roof became unsafe so monies were raised to restore the roof to closely resemble its original. Years ago seat sponsorship program raised money for new seats in the auditorium. Several projects, such as the roof, took close to five years to raise money for the repair / replacement.

J. Scharres opened the floor for questions. T. Doornbosch asked how much operating funds come from the city. J. Scharres said the Opera House handles the City Band, the technical support, manages Stage Left Café, along with other projects for the municipality, such as events management, and installed all the seats in the space along with the sound system. The Opera House doesn't depend on fundraising to operate. In the past, funds were raised for much-needed projects, such as the fire doors. Resident companies, community theatre companies, and the Fine Arts Association has donated money or equipment to help support the facility. J. White complimented J. Scharres on his wealth of knowledge. J. White asked J. Scharres what his thoughts are about the Old Courthouse with regard to its potential and the cost of repair & renovation. John said he would have done a lot more decades and years ago. But, when repairs are made, do it right the first time. Concentrate on the outside; the roof, walls, first and do as much as possible to avoid building damage. D. Sandquist asked if any formal studies were conducted. J. Scharres said it wasn't straight forward, some repairs were necessary while some were budget driven. They had a theatre consultant come in to find out how to preserve the facility. You've got to be flexible and be able to change the direction of the vision. D. Stumpf mentioned the budget and earned income and asked "What's the capacity for earned income"? The courthouse may have similar needs for earned income. How can these things be optimized? J. Scharres said the Opera House is currently close to capacity with existing resources. That could change in the future depending on community events & fund-raisers. Financially, the city doesn't charge market rent; almost everything is subsidized in some way to create the traffic flow. Events bring people into town, which brings money to town. D. Stumpf said it's encouraging that the Opera House is close to capacity. Would this add new administration to manage the Old Courthouse? The Opera House has to turn away some people / groups due to its size; such as wedding receptions that are looking for a larger space. There aren't a lot of spaces that can accommodate the larger groups. D. Stumpf said J. Scharres could help the Commission to see the sustainability if the courtroom is rehabbed and allows for these types of events. By adding the Café with a liquor license, this allows for catered events, support equipment (tables, chairs, etc), This has made the facility more usable for rentals. D. Sandquist asked what other types of events are held besides receptions. J. Scharres said the space is used for classrooms, rehearsals – community theatre. Some groups have to take their members offsite due to size, such as the City Band, which rehearses at the high school. A multi-use space like a community center would be valuable. L. Anderson said he enjoyed the history that J. Scharres shared. J. Scharres said the infrastructure needed to be completely replaced; electricity, heating, plumbing, along with many

surprises. The auditorium ceiling had painting underneath, stenciling work; plaster on the ceiling had been falling off. The contractor had installed a press tin ceiling over the plaster. The original plaster ceiling was restored. The City had to bring in specialists to do this work. This was done in the early 1970's. J. Scharres was contacted by Amy Wagliardo from Lake Forest. Their Community Center was a historic school with a shallow stage, which they want to expand. This is a very active center with multi-use on many levels. Several groups pay for use of the space; earned income. City of Lake Forest maintains the exterior of the building and the ground space for Gorton Community Center. J. Prindiville, asked about the Starline facility in Harvard. J. Scharres is pleased that they made a go of it; now they've got to keep the public interested. The Opera House has been in continuous operation since 1890; one of the few in the country. The Commission thanked J. Scharres for the information and his time.

APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION REGARDING THE POTENTIAL RELOCATION OF CITY HALL TO THE OLD COURTHOUSE AND SHERIFF'S HOUSE

D. Stumpf made a motion to approve, second by J. White. D. Stumpf complimented the staff on the presentation. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

STAFF UPDATES:

G. Anderson informed the Commission members of the Artspace meeting on Thursday, May 19th at 10:30 AM in the Stage Left Café; there will be 4 focus groups. There are additional meetings on Wednesday, May 18th at 2:00 PM, for local artists, Wed., 4:00 PM, for financial partners, Thurs., 9:00 AM, local downtown Woodstock businesses, Thurs., 10:30 AM, for Public Officials. Tuesday, 7:00 PM reception at T. Willcockson's home on Margaret Drive. Wed., 7:00 PM public presentation. D. Stump asked G. Anderson to email this information to the Commission members.

N. Baker said the Debs marker was discussed at the last meeting. It is believed that the 250-word marker would be too large for the site. A 100-word marker is being recommended to City Council. N. Baker read the proposed language for the marker.

N. Baker said the windows are scheduled to be delivered and installed in the jail next week; Gary W. Anderson Architects will begin analysis of the Courthouse windows. N. Baker talked with City IT Manager, D. McElmeel; the City will add an advertisement banner on the City's website to include the Old Courthouse with a link to the survey about the property. J. Campion asked how many windows will be installed in the jail. N. Baker said approx. 2 dozen,

L. Anderson asked about the existing windows on the Old Courthouse; he's concerned that all windows need to be inspected so that the bids can be accurate. G. Anderson said that he'll be attending a Main Street Now conference in Milwaukee next week; he's hoping to bring back some good information that he can share with the Commission. A grant is paying for this conference. The City is not currently a member of this group; however, the organization supports what we're doing here.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – Discussion

D. Sandquist asked how long it will be before we have information from the Artspace event. N. Baker said it will probably take more than a month. Next month they'll have the RFP for the jail. J. White asked G. Anderson if any restaurant owners are interested in moving into the jail. G. Anderson said the City has received inquiries from some interested parties; however, the

information cannot be released at this time. A formal RFP process will be the best way to proceed and make sure we're moving forward in the best way. T. Doornbosch asked about meetings for the TIF district, because it only has a few more years. A developer was interested in the Die Cast site; but nothing has been added to the calendar. TIF has about 5 more years, but it could be extended to 12 years.

ADJOURN

Motion by T. Doornbosch, second by J. Champion, to adjourn this regular meeting of the Old Courthouse and Sheriff's House Advisory Commission to the next regular meeting on Monday, June 20, 2016 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Ayes: L. Anderson, J. Champion, T. Doornbosch, J. Kurtz-Osborne, J. Prindiville, D. Stumpf, J. White, and Chairman Dennis Sandquist. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Absentees: T. Townsend-Kise. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Howie
Chief Deputy Clerk