

## **OWENSBORO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

### **Work Session**

**November 12, 2019 12:00 PM**

Owensboro City Hall  
101 E. 4th Street  
Owensboro, Kentucky

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER - Mayor Tom Watson**

**2. DOWNTOWN MURAL** – Mark Calitri, Visit Owensboro, explained that an effort to repair/replace the Kentucky Mirrored Mosaic located on Second Street began on social media. Funds to cover the cost of the project have been raised less \$8,500. He requested the City consider giving \$8,500 to help reach the goal. Mr. Calitri responded that Daviess County Fiscal Court will participate with in-kind and cash, Neighborhood Alliance, Convention and Visitor's Bureau (will also donate money to have the outline of the mosaic lit), and artist Gary Bielfeld has a list of corporate sponsors and volunteers. Commissioner Conder asked the total cost of the project outside of sponsorships and volunteers, Calitri replied \$13,500. Mr. Bielfeld anticipates the project taking four (4) months to complete. Mayor Watson requested a breakdown of donors and their level of support. Mr. Calitri added that he intends to have a contractual agreement.

**3. SKY LANTERNS** – Chief Steve Mitchell explained that sky lanterns are unmanned, uncontrolled flaming devices of different sizes that can travel 1-2 miles before landing and causing a fire. In 2014-2015, the National Fire Protection Association declared sky lanterns a serious fire hazard. In Kentucky, the State has not banned yet although several cities have. The City receives about six (6) requests each year, typically in the downtown area, for use of the lanterns. An ordinance would allow city staff to deny the use of sky lanterns at events. Mayor Watson suggested a joint ordinance with the County.

**4. GABE'S TOWER UPDATE** – Abby Shelton, Community Development Director, showed a presentation (attached) depicting the history, condition and plan for Gabe's Tower. In summary, Requests for Proposal (RFP) were released allowing developers an opportunity to submit plans for rehabilitation of the property. Mayor Watson asked what direction the City will take if no responses are received. Ms. Shelton explained she has received direction from City Manager to begin looking at other options for the property. If any serious RFP's are received, they will be considered. If no responses are received, there have been plans and discussions to move the transit facility to the property. The City will begin the environmental review process to have the ability to utilize federal funds on the property while coordinating with the State Historic Preservation. The City and State Historic Preservation will need to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement because they have slated it for eligibility on the national register. Mayor Watson asked if there were plans drawn for the property to house a new transit facility. City Manager Pagan said a new transit facility is one potential use for the property, it could be redeveloped or proposals sought to redevelop the site for other commercial uses. Commissioner Sanford expressed his desire to take down the tower. Ms. Shelton said

the planned end use will determine the length of time it takes to demolish it. If federal funds are used to demolish it (after approval from the State Historic Preservation) it will be a lengthier process than if local funds are used. Lelan Hancock, Assistant City Manager, added that Community Vision Funds have been set aside to take down the tower and there are demo specs. The estimated cost for demolition is \$600,000.

**5. ARTICLE 21** – Ms. Shelton gave a brief presentation on Article 21 (attached). She reported the history, investment and description of each character district. The presentation is in response to the concern for limited ground floor residential options within the Article 21 districts. Currently, ground floor store front residential options are available in the three areas: Riverfront Edge, Downtown Transition and Downtown Campus. The commercial storefronts are strongly encouraged due to easy access and safety issues with a residential being in the front of a building. Commissioner Sanford explained that Bowling Green’s downtown has residential areas with first floor living. Ms. Shelton will investigate further. Chief Mitchell added that there is also a fire code implication with such horizontal mixed-use, vertical is easier. Mayor Pro Tem Maglinger asked who can assist a developer to work through the complex Article 21. Ms. Shelton said there is a Downtown Design Administrator employed through the Owensboro Metropolitan Planning Commission. Commissioner Smith-Wright sees the problem with a lack of affordable downtown housing. Ms. Shelton is going to administer the Northwest NRSA and address affordable downtown housing.

**6. CITY PROJECT LIST** – There was brief discussion on bridge lighting and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) reimbursement. Your Community Vision funds will be used to light the bridge and the TIF reimbursement will be used to pay debt service on downtown projects. An update was given on the Fisher Park renovations, Mrs. Rogers anticipates the project being completed on time. Mayor Watson recognized Altaf Merchant and his partner for finishing as silver medalist in the National Pickleball Championship. Commissioner Conder requested Ms. Hamric send the total amount of TIF funds in our accounts.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m. upon motion of Mayor Watson with a second by Commissioner Sanford.

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Thomas H. Watson, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Beth Cecil, City Clerk