

**CITY OF OCONTO FALLS
MAIN STREET OPEN HOUSE
Council Chambers – Municipal Building
500 N. Chestnut Avenue
Oconto Falls, WI 54154**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 2023 – 6:00 PM
MINUTES**

City Administrator Peter Wills called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Roll Call

Present: Chairman Barb Salscheider – Salscheider’s Antique Bar
Stephanie Holman – Senn Hometown Insurance
Peter Wills – City Administrator
Ashley Bahrke – City Alderman
Peter Bruesch – Coachlight Inn

Absent: Jayme Sellen – OCEDC, Melanie Rice – The Flower Shoppe

Also Present: Mayor Brad Rice, and Deputy Clerk Jenny Friedman, Building Inspector Jane Meissner, Fire Chief Tim Magnin, Warren Bloom, Max Mayer, Nate Wellens

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATION/ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:

2. City Administrator
 - a. Downtown Revitalization Presentation for Open House
The committee discussed having guidelines on how the façades, signs and design review would look for business owners looking to improve their businesses on Main Street and how they are zoned commercial. Drafts of the Downtown Review Application and Downtown Oconto Falls Design Guidelines were presented to the committee.

No Action Taken

- A. Main Street Goals for Downtown Redevelopment.
 - i. Establish Downtown Historic Preservation District
 - ii. Downtown Design Review Area (District)
 - iii. Downtown Building Design & Sign Guidelines
 - iv. Establish Revolving Loan Fund-Funded by Payments to Closed RLF
 - v. C-1 Downtown Ordinance Amendment to permit Downtown Upper & Rear Residential

Administrator Wills Presented the Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the recommendations contained in the City of Oconto Falls Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2008. The entire district is currently zoned General Commercial. This zoning designation allows for retail, restaurant, entertainment, office, transportation, and warehouse uses. Residential uses are not permitted. However, several commercial buildings in the district are leased and occupied on the first floor by residential tenants. The City would look at the Downtown Ordinance and look into amendments to permit Downtown Upper & Rear Residential living. The objectives of the Redevelopment Plan is to establish and vision and implementation strategy to facilitate revitalization of downtown Oconto Falls. Downtown Oconto Falls was once a vibrant business district. However, over the course of several years, buildings have been allowed to fall into disrepair, and several properties are hosting non-conforming uses, or remain vacant. Understanding the potential downtown Oconto Falls has to be a destination to outdoor enthusiasts, as well as to serve the community as a central business district, the existing group of buildings has potential to perform to higher and better uses. Through this plan the City will be in a position to eliminate blight, ensure proper land uses and attract economic vitality (tax base, jobs and wealth creation) to create a dynamic Main Street for the City of Oconto Falls.

Historical Preservation District

Administrator Wills explained that establishing a Historical Preservation District means any parcel of land whose historic significance is due to a substantial value in tracing the history of aboriginal people, or upon which an historic event has occurred, and which has been designated as an historic site under this section, or an improvement parcel, or part thereof, on which is situated an historic structure and any abutting improvement parcel, or part thereof, used as and constituting part of the premises on which the historic structure is situated. Administrator sought input from Committee members on any changes, will bring back to Next meeting for approval.

Downtown Design Review Area (District) overlap of the Historic District

Administrator Wills presented the Downtown Design Review proposal Guidelines as well as sample application for approval to be managed by main Street Committee with appeal process to Planning Commission and Council. Historic structure means any improvement which has a special character or special historic interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation and which has been designated as an historic structure pursuant to the provisions of this chapter. Improvement means any building, structure, place, work of art or other object constituting a physical betterment of real property, or any part of such betterment. Improvement parcel is

the unit of property which includes a physical betterment constituting an improvement and the land embracing the site thereof, and is treated as a single entity for the purpose of levying real estate taxes. Administrator sought input from Committee members on any changes, will bring back to Next meeting for approval.

Downtown Building Design & Sign Guidelines

Administrator Wills brought forth examples of façades, signs and design that might go with the vision of Main Street. The committee discussed having guidelines on how the façades, signs and design review would look for business owners looking to improve their businesses on Main Street and how they are zoned commercial. Administrator sought input from Committee members on any changes, will bring back to Next meeting for approval.

Establish Revolving Loan Fund-Funded by Payments to Closed RLF

Administrator Wills presented a Revolving Loan Fund Manual. The City of Oconto Falls and citizens could benefit from a RLF. The City of Oconto Falls Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) funds are to encourage business redevelopment and attraction in the city's Downtown. These funds are used to loan to a business in the Downtown. The business, in return for use of the public funds, provides private investment in building improvement. When a business repays City of Oconto Falls the loan (principal and interest payments), these funds are used to capitalize a local revolving loan fund (RLF). With the RLF, the City makes additional loans to businesses wishing to expand or locate in the City's Downtown. This manual contains the policies and procedures for the City of Oconto Falls Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) and governs the use of revolving loan fund. Administrator sought input from Committee members on any changes, will bring back to Next meeting for approval.

C-1 Downtown Ordinance Amendment to permit Downtown Upper & Rear Residential

Administrator Wills review the proposed Amendment to C-1 Downtown Ordinance that would permit Upper Residential and Rear Residential in the C-1 District. Discussion on having this taken up by Ordinance committee. Administrator sought input from Committee members on any changes, will bring back to Next meeting for approval.

No Action Taken

B. Public Input

- Are dumpsters supposed to be enclosed?

This is an existing ordinance of the city that a dumpster should be enclosed.

- Is the City going to grandfather in residential housing in the rear?
This is something the City is looking into but has not made final decisions on any of this. The ordinances are being looked at to see what will need to be changed.
- Will there be restrictions on what kind of siding and signs that can be used on Main Street?
The Main Street Committee is currently reviewing design and sign guidelines for business and citizens to follow. There will also be an application for people to fill out for some of the steps.
- Is residential going to be permitted in the rear of buildings and upstairs?
The Main Street Committee has proposed amending Downtown C-1 Zoning Ordinance to permit residential in Upper stories and rear, as well dedicated Residential homes that are existing.
- How would someone be able to join the Main Street Committee?
To join any committee for the City of Oconto Falls that person should go on the city website and print off the volunteer form and turn it into the City Administrator. He then will present the application to the appropriate committee, to review applications if they recommend to the Mayor and Council approval.

C. Adjournment

Having no further business, City Administrator Wills declared the meeting adjourned at 5:59 pm.



City Administrator Peter Wills