

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

ON JUNE 23, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Those in attendance include the following: Larry Grant, Scott Vorhees, Patricia Hargan, Kaylie Carnahan, Valerie Maus, Duane Roderick, Rod Bannon and Jud Barce. It was determined that a quorum was present. The meeting was conducted via Zoom. Mayor Roderick explained that the purpose of the special meeting was to discuss the purchase of certain properties in downtown Attica that were part of a revitalization effort led by Rod Bannon.

Rod Bannon began by saying that he would be back to a meeting in August to explain long term plans for downtown revitalization. He was prepared to explain some short term plans relating to the revitalization that involved the purchase of several properties.

Regarding the Pickett Building, it recently lost some plaster during a recent wind storm, and it requires some attention in the near future.

Directing the Council Members attention to the south 200 block of Perry Street, Rod explained the status of several buildings:

1. Rohmer Building: the back end of the building fell off and was demolished. The second and third floors have areas which are not safe, there is water getting in, windows and detail are missing, and the building is basically a brick shell.
2. Vacant lot next to Rohmer Building: there isn't anything to save on this lot.
3. Building next to the vacant lot: it is basically a brick shell.
4. Piggott Building: the building is starting to fall, it will be difficult to save.
5. Masonic Lodge: 10 to 15 years ago the owner spent some money repairing the facade, which included basically the forward 10 feet of the building, which was paid for by a grant. The front 1/3 of the building has a roof, the back two thirds of the building has no roof. The back two thirds contained a ball room, and its floors have fallen into the basement. The back of the building just collapsed. There was flooding in the basement due to the rupture of a high pressure water line, causing mold. There is nothing in the building worth saving. In the front one third of the building there is also mold. The building is too large to renovate for the City's purposes. Rod stated that he had been working with Brent Mathers, the owner of the Lodge, who is a conservationist. Even Mr. Mathers believed that the Masonic Lodge could not be saved.
6. The building next to the Masonic Lodge has a roof which is pushing the north wall out due to shifting of the building. It has an old stable in the back of the building.

Briefly addressing future plans, Rod is going to work with an independent contractor to try and rebuild the block on the east side of the south 200 block of Perry Street in 2022. It would be all one building, but appear to have several store fronts. It would be a combination of a two story and three story building. The top floor would have apartments for low income housing, with rent based on market rates. The City can get tax credits which would help to build other parts of the

building. The apartments would be built first and the remainder of the units of the building would be built from the apartments down. Other than the apartments, the different rooms would be built out but not finished until tenants are obtained. Rod plans to set up a non-profit to manage the building. For spaces that are not leased, the City would be able to occupy those. Rod would work with a developer from Chicago to determine the best use of the spaces. The ground floor would be host businesses which would serve the upstairs apartment occupants and provide incubator space.

Rod explained the importance of renovating the downtown and shared with the Council a report that a person from Michigan had considered buying a residence in Attica, but after touring the downtown, declined to make the purchase.

Rod then explained the status of the hotel. He is working with another developer to obtain ownership of the building, remove the wings of the building, then split the cost of an engineering study. The developer would have to complete improvements within a certain time or it would revert back to the City. The owners of the parking lot across the street from the hotel are selling it for \$5,000.00, so the developer would be purchasing it for \$5,000.00, then purchased by the City for \$5,000.00.

On the Bieneman Property, Rod has negotiated a \$15,000.00 purchase price, and is negotiating with the neighboring owners as well, including the Masonic Lodge, the China Buffet Building and the owner of the garage. On the China Buffet Building, Rod has spoken with the owner who bought it for \$5,000.00, and has been offered \$7,000.00 by Rod to purchase the building. The garage had been for sale for \$50,000.00, but the price has dropped to \$30,000.00. Rod is trying to negotiate a purchase of the garage for \$20,000.00.

The total expenses of the purchase of these various buildings totals \$47,000.00, which the City would need to pay for. Of that \$47,000.00 cost, \$5,000.00 will be paid back from the sale of the hotel parking lot, but those funds will probably be needed for the City's share of engineering costs on the one-half (1/2) on the hotel engineering study.

Rod explained that the Blight Program has currently been stopped due to Covid 19. Representative Sharon Negele is trying to find alternative funding for blight projects.

Rod explained that it would cost approximately \$260,000.00 to tear down the buildings on the east side of the south 200 block of Perry Street. He is looking for grants to help pay this cost. With regard to purchasing the property, Rod does not want to wait until next year because he has made substantial progress in negotiating the purchase of these buildings and there are safety issues. Three of the deals were difficult to negotiate, and Rod was asking the City Councils' approval to proceed with the purchase of those properties.

Mayor Roderick explained that the money for the purchases would come from the Economic Development Fund which had a balance of \$159,700.00 at the end of April. Mayor Roderick reminded the Council that the City spent \$130,000.00 tearing down a neighboring building.

Rod Bannon explained that John Smith was becoming a good partner on several projects. Mr. Smith has four sons who want to return to live in Attica, and Mr. Smith is looking for a property to convert into a residence for his sons. One of those sons demolishes buildings.

Rod was asked questions about the plans for the hotel, and explained that it was to become 22 rooms total, but if it did not materialize, money for the demolition would come from a grant to be pursued in 2021 as a last resort.

Larry Grant expressed his support for the renovation idea because he felt that the current owners could not undertake the renovations by themselves. Tricia Hargan agreed with Mr. Grant and believed that the City would be better off taking control of the buildings. Mayor Roderick agreed with Ms. Hargan.

Rod was asked about the Farley Building, and he indicated that some plans are in the works to discuss the purchase of that building as well.

Rod summarized that he will present his long term revitalization plan in August 2020, and will include other areas being considered for redevelopment. Some of the development to revitalize the downtown near Prairie Street would include planting trees, sidewalk reconstruction and other features. Rod explained that he thought it was important to begin with the purchase of these properties while they were available.

Tricia Hargan asked whether parallel parking would continue in the downtown area. Larry Grant explained that a town he visits in Wisconsin has recently redeveloped its downtown, and he would support having the businesses redevelop the fronts of their buildings and the rears of their buildings so that parking may be done at the rear of the building.

Several Council Members recognized the hard work that Rod has done toward the downtown redevelopment project.

Larry Grant made a motion to approve up to \$47,000.00 for acquisition of properties in the downtown; Valerie Maus seconded the motion, and the motion passed 5-0.

Tricia Hargan made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Scott Vorhees, and the motion passed 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.



Jud Barce, Secretary of the Meeting

 - Mayor

 - Clerk - Treasurer