



**Special Meeting with Work Session
February 27, 2020**

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Bob Becker, Board Chairperson.

Roll Call: Pat Norris, Bob Becker, Cindy Lombardo, and Maureen McGinty
Sandy Apidone joined the meeting in progress at 5:33 p.m.

Absent: Art Gonzales and Jeff Deluca excused absences

Also in Attendance: Administrative Coordinator Mindy Remec, and 20 additional residents/attendees

Work Session

Mr. Becker opened the work session and gave an overview of previous discussions on Oviatt House and the motions approved by the Board to request additional information on February 24, 2020 meeting.

Oviatt House - Public Comment:

Ms. Judy Bowman, Richfield resident, thanked the Board for meeting with them. Ms. Bowman, Mr. Ken Bowman, and Mr. Larry Brichacek, presented images of the Oviatt house and spoke about the history of the area, the structure's condition, and the historical elements. Mr. Brichacek spoke about a saw mill that was located on the property. Mr. Bowman provided details on the history of milled wood and historical home construction, which are still evident in the structure.

After a brief recess Mr. Paul Swan, Richfield Historical Society representative, spoke about the historical significance of the house especially to those families with a long history in the community.

Ms. Sue Serdinak spoke about the importance of the house to the RJRD as a draw for tourism and economic benefit. She cited traffic flow statistics on S.R. 303 and Broadview Road and the monetary benefit from the Sweet Corn Challenge for the greater community and the potential to have the Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure (GOBA) come through Richfield and have campers stay at the Richfield Heritage Preserve. She spoke about the importance of having the entrance to the park on Oviatt Road and the part that Oviatt house could play to draw visitors.

Ms. Judy Bowman spoke about potential uses for the Oviatt house, such as a visitor's center, a museum for underground railroad history, a carpentry museum, or a park office.

Ms. Meg Slifcak spoke about fundraising and said that, through one request to friends and family, she received pledges for \$52,000. People donate money because of a story and emotional connection. She asked to preserve the building for potential future uses. She said that the operating budget for the park is 50 percent of what it needs to be and Gund Hall is critical to bringing in revenue. She commented on the community's generosity and willingness to help with this project. She proposed using the money already pledged to save the house and then take time and figure it out the rest of the plan.

Mr. Garland asked the Board to consider saving the house saying that once it's gone you can't bring it back.

Attendees commented on the historical value of the structure and the importance of Oviatt house as part of a historic corridor for local and national parks on S.R. 303.

Mr. Becker said that the Board is grateful that the community is stepping up to help. The purpose of motions approved at the last meeting is to provide a plan to the Board for consideration. The report needs to be submitted in writing and provide the total dollar amount needed. Also needed are the timelines for completion of fundraising and completion of work, as well as future maintenance costs on an annual basis and how those funds will be raised. The Board would like to have the plan submitted by the end of March so the Board can refocus on other priorities.

Additional comments included the difficulty of proposing a final use for the building at this stage, the request for more time to develop a plan, and the proposal to plan work on the project in phases.

Board members and attendees discussed the house's location in a floodplain. Oviatt house would not be able to obtain an occupancy permit because the dam's current classification is Type 2. After the second phase is completed, the dam would be eligible to reclassify as a Type 1 dam. Attendees commented that the current use would be limited until reclassification of the dam.

Final comments from the Board were that the initial work on the house is a good start and it is beautiful; that this could be a kickoff for a capital campaign; and that the RJRD's mission, other priorities of the board, and budget constraints should all be kept in mind as this is considered.

Mr. Becker thanked everyone for attending and their comments.

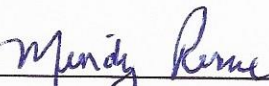
Adjournment:

MOTION by: Ms. Lombardo and seconded by Ms. McGinty to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

FURTHER DISCUSSION: NONE

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by voice Yea, which was unanimous

Submitted by:



Mindy Reme, Administrative
Coordinator

Accepted by:



Bob Becker, Board Chairperson