



**Special Meeting with Work Session
November 16, 2020**

Call to Order: The Board met virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic per House Bill 197. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Bob Becker, Board Chairperson.

Roll Call: Bob Becker, Cindy Lombardo, Jeff Deluca, Pat Norris, Sandy Apidone, Maureen McGinty, and Art Gonzales

Also in Attendance: Park Director Dave Green and Approximately 46 attendees

Work Session

Mr. Becker asked Save the Oviatt House group representative Ms. Judy Bowman to open the work session discussion.

Ms Bowman said their main priority is to have the RJRD Board rescind its previous approval to raze the Oviatt House. She spoke about why they would like to save the house, its historical significance, the investments already made in the park, and the entrance to the park. Ms. Bowman commented on the remaining questions the board had asked such as the maintenance of the property, who would draft the memorandum of understanding (MOU), monetary donations, and donation of a plaque. She said the Save the Oviatt House group, which is a small group of residents, is not set up as a 501(c)(3) so the Richfield Historical Society has offered to partner with the group to accept donations.

Ms. McGinty spoke about other means to tell the history of the area and Underground Railroad that do not involve keeping the house and the historical significance of the structure.

Ms. Bowman commented on the historical significance of the building core as an example of method of construction.

Mr. Gonzales commented in favor of saving the house. His comments included not understanding the logic of arguments against the group's interest in saving the building, the amount of money donated to save the house, and the group's willingness to enter an agreement with RJRD for the long term care of the building.

Attendees commented that the Richfield Town Trust changed its grant mission statement in order to support the Oviatt House, the history of the house at 4284 West Streetsboro Rd, and the history of the Oviatt family and Richfield area and what it could mean to the park.

Mr. Norris spoke about the passion of the people willing to do the work to save the house and that he would not have voted in favor of razing the house if the board had been correctly informed.

Village council member Ms. Sue Ann Philipbar asked what concerns would the Board have for the park if the structure were kept at no cost to the RJRD.

Mr. Deluca said when it was being considered it was in the park plan to raze the building, no money had been offered, and there were safety concerns. He felt the Save the Oviatt House group had done a good job and that circumstances have changed. Mr Deluca is no longer in favor of razing the Oviatt House.

Ms. McGinty said the Oviatt House was slated for demolition, it would dilute resources to save the other buildings, and it was not part of the park's mission.

Ms. Lombardo shared concerns about deviating from the master plan and that the board's responsibility to the whole community is to follow that plan. She spoke about the difficulty of the decision but the master plan did not include saving Oviatt House.

Ms. Apidone asked about the Town Trust and Historical Society's lack of interest in other buildings in the park. Ms. Serdinak said her interest was in the Oviatt House before the park existed.

Additional remarks from attendees included saving the historic buildings as part of the initial campaign for the park, Mr. Bowman's helpfulness to the Historic Home Stabilization Task Force, the historical significance of the structure to the area, the master plan, viability of the building, monetary donations, and the group's willingness to work with the RJRD.

A resident asked which entity would take responsibility for the long-term maintenance of the house.

Mr. Becker said the Richfield Historical Society would be named in the MOU as the party responsible for the Oviatt House. Neither the RJRD or Save the Oviatt House group have expended funds to draft an MOU. Board members also discussed responsibility for insuring the building.

Special Meeting

Mr. Becker outlined the options for the Board, which were to let the decision made to raze the house stand, or to leave that decision in place and also pursue an MOU with the Save the Oviatt House group.

Mr. Norris said the existing motion to raze Oviatt House can be rescinded, according to his research of Robert's Rules, since the action of razing the structure had not yet taken place.

MOTION by: Ms. Lombardo and seconded by Ms. Apidone to proceed with razing the Oviatt House

FURTHER DISCUSSION: NONE

MOTION FAILED: Vote taken by roll call, Ms. Apidone (Yea), Ms. Lombardo, (Yea), Ms. McGinty (Yea), Mr. Deluca (No), Mr. Norris (No), Mr. Gonzales (No), Mr. Becker (Abstain)

Mr. Becker commented that it would be wise to give this more time to allow the new Park Director to weigh in on developing a mission statement for the park.

Ms. Apidone said she would like to give Park Director Mr. David Green an opportunity to weigh in.

Mr. Green said he has been listening and reading and he needs more time to make an informed decision on the Oviatt House. He needs to consider the property as a whole and time to develop a clear vision and mission for the Richfield Heritage Preserve.

Mr. Gonzales left the meeting at approximately 8:05 p.m.

Mr. Deluca proposed a motion be made to save the house so that razing the house would no longer be on the table.

MOTION by: Mr. Norris and seconded by Mr. Deluca to rescind the November 2019 motion to raze the Oviatt House

FURTHER DISCUSSION: Ms. Lombardo said she is not in favor of rescinding the previous decision.

MOTION FAILED: Vote taken by roll call, Ms. Apidone (No), Ms. Lombardo, (No), Ms. McGinty (No), Mr. Deluca (Yes), Mr. Norris (Yes), Mr. Becker (No)

Mr. Becker thanked everyone for attending.

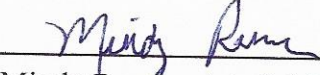
Adjournment:

MOTION by: Ms. Deluca and seconded by Ms. McGinty to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

FURTHER DISCUSSION: NONE

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by voice, which was unanimous

Submitted by:


Mindy Remec, Administrative
Coordinator

Accepted by:


Bob Becker, Board Chairperson