

Downtown Pawnee City Building Issues Discussed

(KLZA)-- Lengthy discussion was held during the Pawnee City Council meeting Monday evening concerning issues in the downtown area.

The Council will notify Ed Raper, new owner of a building at 526 G Street in Pawnee City that he has until December 1 to tear off and replace the back wall of the building which is crumbling and falling in.

The Council also heard updates on the Kobza Building at 501 G Street. Dr. Travis Kobza, DDS previously offered to give the building to the City, an offer that was not accepted.

City Clerk Tammy Stephens reported to the Council Monday, a letter received from Economic Development Group PCDC, that they had also failed to reach an agreement with Kobza on the facility.

The PCDC has also sent a letter to the City, offering up to \$50,000 in funding to be used to save and repair the Kobza building if the City can work out an agreement and undertakes the rehabilitation of the building.

The building has had structural issues in recent years and Kobza alleges the building may have been put at further risk by water used to fight a downtown Pawnee City Fire in September 2015.

Stephens tells MSCNEWS that City representatives, Pawnee City Development Corporation, and Southeast Nebraska Development District personnel have met and are researching how to make changes to the revolving loan fund, re-use funds awarded to the City previously.

The City is looking at updating the plan for revolving loan fund, re-use money to include blight and sub-standard properties in the business district, which could allow funds to be used for upgrades to the Kobza building.

If a solution is reached allowing use of the funding, there are still ownership issues that would need to be resolved. The City cannot be a recipient of those re-use funds so another non-profit organization would have to be the owner of the building.

Stephens says there are some ideas for the building after cutting through the red tape and making repairs. The possibility of turning the building into a small convention meeting place has been discussed. The first priority is to get repairs made so the building is not a danger to people.

The Council took no action, tabling the matter until more research can be completed.

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