**N E W S R E L E A S E**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

TO: NEWS MEDIA

FROM: SCOTT A. KOERNER, SHIAWASSEE COUNTY PROSECUTOR

DATE: December 8, 2023

RE: Investigation into Financial Questions at Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Owosso Armory

# # # # #

**CHAMBER INVESTIGATION LEADS TO NO CRIMINAL CHARGES**

 The Owosso Police Department has concluded its months-long investigation into financial questions that arose surrounding the Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce (SRCC) and its redevelopment of the historic Armory building in downtown Owosso. Based upon information provided to the Owosso Police Department, a number of discrepancies were discovered between initial development budgets and the final redevelopment budget as well as between revenue and expense projects as compared to actual revenues earned and actual expenses paid out at the conclusion of the project. The police were asked to determine whether or not these discrepancies were due to any malfeasance by any individual actors or groups of actors.

The primary scope of the investigation included three key areas of focus: First, whether or not any frauds or false statements were in application for or funding of loans or grants to finance the project. Second, whether excessive commissions were paid on intentionally overstated lease valuations, knowing that final lease revenues would be lower or tenants who signed leases had no real intention of occupying the space. And finally, whether any funds were actually diverted from the project.

 The police conducted an investigation that began in mid-2022 and which just concluded this month. This investigation included numerous interviews of individuals involved in the redevelopment project and the thorough review of countless documents including emails, credit and grant applications, meeting minutes, financial statements, financial reports, tenant rolls, and many more types of records. A thorough and independent analysis was made regarding the finances of the SRCC, the Armory redevelopment project, and all of the subsidiary organizations involved in the project.

 At every step of the investigation process, the Owosso Police Department and Shiawassee County Prosecutor’s Office found the SRCC and its staff, members, and those who participated in the redevelopment project to be cooperative in providing records and providing time for interviews and analysis of the project. At the conclusion of the investigation a some questions remain unanswered due primarily to a lack of documentation regarding certain financial decisions that were made or their rationale, and a lack of memory by some individuals involved in the project. Despite these questions, which will likely remain unanswered, none of the evidence identified and reviewed by the Owosso Police in consultation with the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office discloses anything from which either the police or prosecutors could conclude that any one person or group of individuals committed any crimes in conjunction with the redevelopment project. Specifically, with regard to each of the areas of focus the police found no evidence that would support a conclusion, beyond a reasonable doubt, that there was any fraud surrounding loan applications, grant applications, or lease acquisition, or that there was any theft or embezzlement of SRCC funds.

 As a result, the Owosso Police Department and the Prosecuting Attorneys Office are each closing out their investigation into this matter without further action. The Prosecuting Attorney will be filing no charges against anyone involved in the project, nor will it be filing any civil actions surrounding the redevelopment project.

 “Detective Jon Cecil took on a daunting task in trying to recreate the redevelopment of the Owosso Armory, and he succeeded in finding as much information as there was to find. I really appreciate Jon and the entire Owosso Police Department Team for bringing me such a thorough investigation,” said Shiawassee County Prosecutor Scott Koerner. “While I know that Jon didn’t answer all of the questions he wanted to have answered, he brought in more than enough information from which I could conclude that no charges or suits could be filed by my office.”

# # # # #

**Requests for comment may be directed to:**

Scott A. Koerner, Prosecuting Attorney

989-743-2373

Kevin Lenkart, Public Safety Director

989-725-0580