

Downtown Business Improvement District of Missoula

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 19, 2014

Present: Tim France, Dan Cederberg, Alan Newell, Carma Gilligan, Craig Aasved, Ellen Buchanan

Absent: Charlie Beaton

Staff: Linda McCarthy, Tom Aldrich, Noreen Humes

Approval June 17 Board Minutes

No corrections or questions were noted. The July BID Board meeting was cancelled, so there are no minutes from that month to approve.

Aasved motioned to approve the June 17 minutes as submitted. Newell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Funding Request (up to \$5,000) for Downtown Missoula Housing Study by the Sonoran Institute

Downtown Master Plan Committee representatives have been working with the Sonoran Institute to do a market analysis for housing in Downtown Missoula. The Sonoran Institute has put forth a proposal to do the study this winter for an estimated \$50,000. The Institute will approach a major funder this month and ask for \$40,000, and DMP staff hope to bring an additional \$10,000 to fund the study. Humes asked the Missoula Housing Authority and HomeWORD each for \$2,500, and the MDA and BID are asked to split \$5,000. Buchanan noted the study will be valuable in establishing a roadmap to develop the downtown housing market. The Downtown Master Plan Housing Strategy calls for 3,000 new units in the next 20 years, and the study will help to understand what the market can bear and how the strategy can best be fulfilled. If funded, the study should be completed by spring 2015.

Newell motioned to approve funding of up to \$5,000 from the Master Plan budget, contingent on noted funding from other partner organizations. Buchanan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Financial Report

In Giblin's absence and void of a BID Finance Committee meeting this month, McCarthy gave a brief overview of the financial documents, reviewing the check register, reporting on DMP payroll activities, and noting a new Rhino liner for the Kubota. She also spoke to the expenses on the crime-fighting pianos, and reported that the inactive bank account at Community Bank is the Real Change account, noting it is empty and inactive because change collections were redirected by this board to the Missoula Downtown Foundation. The BID Finance Committee will meet in early September.

Our Missoula Listening Sessions: Update on City Growth Policy

The city growth policy informs development and funding for community projects. The policy is rewritten every five to ten years. The city is currently listening and open to any input from organizations or citizens. Sessions are topic-based, including downtown, economic development, transportation, and more. So far, there has been a lot of input from Downtown organizations. BID board members were encouraged to participate.

Cleanliness Report: Clean Team Stats, Graffiti Removal

The Downtown Clean Team has been diligent in tree grate work, mulching the flower beds, and sidewalk weeding. Their summer schedule is 8:30am-2:30 pm and has been an improvement, given the hot weather.

The list of buildings with graffiti tags was circulated, and McCarthy noted that Partnership staff called all property owners who have graffiti tags to encourage utilizing the BID's removal services.

Safety Report

- 1. Ambassador Stats:** Ambassador Stats were reviewed. June and July stats are much different than those of April and May. Overall, transient activity was relatively low, compared to last year, thanks to the lack of a rainbow gathering, a full time bicycle police officer, the addition of school resource officers to Downtown in the summer, and the diligence of ambassadors.
- 2. Real Change:** Real Change collections are down. The most recent deposit was around \$700. \$2000-\$3000 is expected for the year: much lower than previous years.
- 3. Police Stats-** Officer Andy Roy's timesheets were reviewed. It was decided that he should be invited to a BID board meeting in the near future to give an overview of how this year has been and what suggestions for improvements he might have. France emphasized the positive effects of improved policing services and engagement on both the ambassador activities – as noted by the staff – and for Downtown in general. Ambassadors have been able to focus less on enforcement and problem-behavior and more on visitor services and business contacts. The statistics show a significant improvement from 2013 to 2014. It was noted that the second Ambassador, Brent Dobak, has been a great help.

Downtown Master Plan Report

- 1. Wayfinding-** McCarthy reported the Wayfinding project is moving forward. City staff has agreed to manage the RFP process for implementation, and they are considering the potential for utilizing a bonding process to fund portions of the system with funding partners paying off that bond over time. Humes submitted a proposal for the Tourism Infrastructure & Investment Program (TIIP) for \$110,000. McCarthy showed the conceptual artwork to the board, explaining details and implementation strategies. The entire project is estimated to cost \$1.5 million while the Downtown portion will cost roughly half of that. Details on funding and implementation strategy were discussed.
- 2. Conference Center Study-** A meeting regarding the conference center study took place August 19. The study has determined that there is an untapped market for larger conference space, particularly in the form of break-out space. In order for a large conference center to be successful in this market, it must have an adjoining hotel and vice versa. A large conference center on the riverfront triangle will bring multiple benefits for Downtown and St. Patrick Hospital beyond taxes and rooms being filled. Over 1,000 meeting planners were interviewed and those interviews indicated that approximately 25,000 to 35,000 square feet would most likely be the 'sweet spot' for the target business experts, with 150 or more sleeping rooms, and 25-foot ceiling height for the meeting space. What would set a facility of this type apart from the others is walkability. Meeting planners want a conference venue that has a high walkability score with a variety of activities, including shopping, dining and outdoor recreation, within walking distance of that venue. That's why downtown conference centers are typically more successful than those on the perimeter of town.
- 3. Front & Main Conversion Study-** HDR Engineering recently presented the design options for the intersections at Madison Street and Orange Street to the steering committee, and the group debated the benefits and disadvantages of each design. Consultants noted that the potential for loss of parking was a consistently

expressed concern from all the business owners in the corridor, but that the potential conversion would most likely eliminate very little, if any, parking spaces. Traffic modeling is underway, and greater analysis is needed for the intersections at Higgins. Air quality studies will also be carried out. The study should be complete by the end of 2014. BID stakeholders are encouraged to participate.

4. **Parking Meter Modernization-** The Park Place Parking Structure and the Missoula Parking Commission won the 2014 IPI (International Parking Institute) Award for Architectural Design and was featured on the front cover of The Parking Professional magazine. Having returned recently from the IPI Conference, Anne Guest and her consultants will be working on the development of an RFP for new meters in Downtown.

Committee Reports

1. **Business Development: Delta Magazine, MONTec** - The Delta Sky Magazine August issue included content provided by the Downtown Missoula Partnership organizations, including a hot link to www.missouladowntown.com and the business development brochure. It was reviewed and approved. McCarthy, Newell, and Humes met with MONTec planners to discuss details of the project.
2. **Housing-** Topics for housing had already been discussed.
3. **Marketing-** Topics for marketing had already been discussed.
4. **Streetscapes: Downtown Trees, Sidewalk Dining, & Sidewalk Signs** – A list of trees needed for Downtown was sent to the city. There had been confusion surrounding tree trimming between business owners, the city, and the BID. Parks and Recreation released a list of new tree species and planting details. Those details will be included in the forthcoming MDA newsletter.

Representatives from the city and the Department of Revenue Liquor Division will meet to discuss the sidewalk dining ordinance on September 3. Local attorney Michael Lawlor, who worked for the liquor division the last six years, provided some good background and information on the regulations. The three things Downtown needs to happen were laid out. A city ordinance that allows curbside dining and a pedestrian path that can be four feet wide will be needed. Such modifications would allow sidewalk dining on the Hip Strip, where a six-foot path is not possible.

On the topic of sidewalk signs, more and more businesses have pushed their sandwich boards out to Higgins Ave. Conversation will take place on whether the corner signs should be regulated- whether a one-per-corner rule should be implemented or if it should be pushed to the one board per business in front of their own store rule. Many business operators are not aware of any sidewalk signage rules.

New Business

Gilligan reported the new public restroom project of Casper, WY, which amounted to \$353,000.

A petition is circulating to oppose the MAM Art Park, based upon the both the Loo and the loss of parking.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.