

# Downtown Business Improvement District of Missoula

## Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, September 15, 2015 from 3-5 pm at the DMP Office

**Present:** Charlie Beaton, PRESIDING, Carma Gilligan, Dan Cederberg, Ellen Buchanan, Craig Aasved, Alan Newell

**Absent:** Tim France

**Staff:** Linda McCarthy, Robert Giblin, Noreen Humes

### MEETING COMMENCEMENT & INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS & PUBLIC COMMENT

No guests present and no public comment

### ACTION ITEMS

#### APPROVAL OF AUGUST MINUTES

With no corrections, the minutes, Gilligan motioned to approve the minutes, Cederberg seconded the motion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

#### NON-ACTION ITEMS

**Missoula Art Park:** McCarthy reported the MAM is hosting a reception for the Missoula Art Park project on Wednesday, Sept. 30 from 5-6:30 pm for downtown property owners and business owners. The formal presentation will be at 6 pm, detailing the changes and current plans of the Art Park. She noted it would be nice to have representation from the BID Board at this event. Discussion ensued around if MAM had addressed BID ratepayer and Board concerns. Cederberg offered to write a personal letter to those businesses initially opposing the park stating what changes have been made to the project and addressing specific concerns. He will also encourage those ratepayers to attend the reception. Cederberg will report back on any response he gets from the letter.

**Update on MDAC Activities:** Cederberg reported on the outcome of a recent meeting. Priorities were discussed and finalized as the following:

- Continue to work towards implementation of a No Sell List, which stalled out in the spring due to missing information about offenders on the list. Additionally, the Committee has been making efforts to reach out to the Native American community to discuss the issue. It has been challenging to get a response from anyone, but efforts will continue.
- Continue to advocate for acquiring a 2<sup>nd</sup> Dedicated Downtown Police Officer.
- Continue assisting with building a Missoula Detox Center.

Aside from these priorities above, the Committee discussed the following:

- MDAC and MDA collaborating on our Downtown dog challenges, and how we can effectively deal with unlicensed and stray dogs.
- Developing a livability index to gauge each summer and shoulder season's activities to review and use over time when determining the overall health of Downtown Missoula. This may be developed through a survey of businesses and property owners, and possibly be integrated into a University of Montana professor's class project. This would need to be set up as a long-term project annual assessment in order to have a baseline to start from and to gather quantitative information over time.

Buchanan reported that one of the City Council candidates noted at a recent MDA membership luncheon that several business owners noted the most effective program for addressing those problematic issues has been the Downtown Ambassador program.

## **FINANCE REPORT**

Giblin reported on finances, noting the difference in cash between last fiscal year and this fiscal year is due to the City's billing for the DDPO, changing from an annual bill to a semi-annual bill. The current P&L includes the payment for FY2016.

Giblin noted that FY2015 tax assessments are not included in the current report due to timing of receiving the information. Giblin has asked the City for interest totals as well as delinquent tax totals. He anticipates the audit process will begin prior to receiving that information. He will proceed with the audit when needed without these figures.

Revenues for 2015 remain relatively static in comparison to previous years which is quite different than other areas of Missoula with the recent tax assessments. A discussion ensued about how Downtown Missoula properties are one of the few areas of Missoula where the property value has either been maintained or increased, and how this is a good indicator for determining Downtown economic health. Giblin will report on the total increase of assessments once he receives the document from the City.

## **PROJECT UPDATES**

**Missoula Bridges:** Buchanan gave an update on a meeting with MDT indicating they will move forward with renovation of the Higgins Bridge. This includes re-decking and structural repairs, which will extend the life of the bridge by 50-75 years. Conclusions on the allocation of space and widening the Bridge may include revisions to create a seven-foot widening on the west side. Discussion ensued on the impacts on Caras Park, and the Wilma building. MDT will not fund the additional \$1.7 million for the bike-ped expansion. The solution should include treating all modes of transportation equally important, including extra support structures on land, which is feasible, but once it reaches the River it becomes loaded with engineering challenges. It's possible to include other types of materials for MDT to consider that may solve the issue over the River and which would include bikes, pedestrian traffic, and vehicles.

The Madison Bridge will be done first since everyone agrees on how this will occur and no new standards are needed. Madison may be in the funding cycle around 2018 with the Higgins Bridge improvements to follow. Additional challenges occur when deciding on what time of year construction should commence. It was advised to start after the main summer season in Caras Park, but that is yet to be determined. MDT will fund at least \$8.5 million of the total project.

**Downtown Pianos:** Humes gave a summary on the pianos, noting there have been a couple of complaints lately from downtown business owners/managers. Staff has been working on various solutions to address those concerns. The pianos will be out through the month of October if the weather holds. Humes has a list of people wanting to donate pianos to the program and she hasn't found a viable storage location. The current pianos will be stored for another winter season in the basement of the First Interstate Building. Overall, the program continues to be a huge success with a high majority of people really enjoying the pianos. Humes also gave an overview of the October 2 First Friday launch of the Friends of Downtown Campaign and invited all the BID Board Members. The event will be held on Friday, Oct. 2 from 5:30-7pm at the Bank Street Pocket Park.

**Ratepayer Newsletter:** Instead of sending a traditional letter this year, McCarthy reported she and Wagener will develop and distribute an actual BID Ratepayer Newsletter this fall. Using the Downtown Lowdown as a

template, this annual communications will cover a variety of topics with particular focus on the new business development and transportation projects on the horizon. McCarthy encouraged Board members to offer suggestions for the newsletter.

Gilligan asked about holiday decorations. A discussion ensued regarding the holiday décor electrical repairs that are needed and fundraising effort currently underway.

**DMP Strategic Planning:** Strategic planning for all three organizations will take place on Thursday, Oct. 8 from 1-7pm at the GLR Community Room. A survey will go out to all board members and staff to complete, which will be used to set the agenda. Steve McArthur will be the facilitator. The day will include review of the 2015 plan, big-picture planning for Downtown, and organizational planning in break-out form. McCarthy requested all board members set aside the time to participate.

**Update on Police Radios for Downtown Ambassadors:** McCarthy reported that Chief Brady is not comfortable with allowing the Downtown Ambassadors to have police radios. He wondered what problems were trying to be solved with this proposal and wondered if there was another way to solve it. He noted that only sworn-in police officers are allowed on the system.

### **MISSION REPORTS**

**CLEAN:** McCarthy asked the Board if anyone has seen any graffiti or other items we are missing. With the pending arrival of cold weather, the power-washing equipment will be winterized soon. She will encourage ratepayers to consider the BID for snow removal in the newsletter. The group concurred that in general, graffiti seems to be lower than in previous years.

**SAFE:** Ambassador statistics were included in the Board packet. Dave Crismon is coming to the end of his summer service with the BID and has expressed interest in returning next year.

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT:** Newell asked about business development and where Humes has gotten with a plan. A discussion ensued as to challenges of creating a plan since the focus has been all over the map. McCarthy and Humes started work on a document to prioritize what it is we need to be working towards, but that has not been wrapped up. MEP is in its own revision of goals, and the new Growth Policy Plan is unfolding to the public this month. Broadband came up in the discussion, and people voiced their opinions about how we want to interface with this issue on a larger scale.

**MASTER PLAN:** McCarthy reported the City opened the Wayfinding bids today. Once they decide on the contractor, we will have a better picture of the total cost for the pedestrian layer for Downtown. The October Master Plan meeting will be dedicated to discussion on design guidelines and form-based codes with consultant Nore Winter. The meeting will be Oct. 17 from 12-2 pm in the FIB Board Room. There will be a larger group discussion on community design and whether or not Missoula is ready to incorporate design standards and work towards maintaining distinct character for variable neighborhoods and commercial districts.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEW BUSINESS:** Ambassador Laurie Johnson's 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with the BID was September 4, 2015. She has been a great asset to this organization and serves the Downtown community well.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Cederberg reported on the Midnight Development, LLC lawsuit. The plaintiff is preparing a settlement demand but nothing has come through to date.

*The meeting adjourned at 4:46 pm.*