

Great Falls/Cascade County Historic Preservation Advisory Commission
Minutes from the March 10, 2021 meeting held in the Planning & Community Development Conference Room via Zoom

Members Present: Ellen Sievert, Carol Bronson, Ken Sievert, Ken Robison, Steve Taylor, Rich Ecke, Suzanne Waring

Members Absent: Chris Christiaens, Peter Jennings

Staff Present: Tom Micuda

Ex-Officio Members Present: Joan Redeen, Don Ryan

Visitors: Jane Weber

The meeting was called to order by **Rich Ecke** at 12:00 pm. Rich introduced County Commissioner, Don Ryan, as the new County Commissioner Ex-Officio member of the HPAC. Don is replacing Jane Weber in this capacity.

- 1. Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 10, 2021** – Ken Robison made a motion to approve the minutes. Ellen Sievert seconded. The February 10 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.
- 2. Announcement of new Historic Preservation Officer** – Rich requested that this item (Item #4 on the agenda) be next on the agenda due to its importance. Tom announced that a hiring decision for the HPO position has been made. Samantha Long has been hired to be the next City/County HPO. Samantha will be moving from Red Lodge. She was formerly the HPO for Carbon County between 2014 and 2019. Samantha was given a positive recommendation from Kate Hampton of the SHPO. Samantha's first day on the job will be April 5, so she will be in attendance at the next HPAC meeting.

Rich thanked Tom, Craig Raymond, and Melissa [from City Human Resources] for all their work during the interview process. Don Ryan noted that he has a daughter from Red Lodge. It is a great community. Ken Robison thanked everyone for their efforts. Jane asked Tom to explain Samantha's previous CLG program. Tom noted that the program was both a City and County preservation program, so it is similar in responsibility to the program we have here.

Tom also provided the HPAC with a report on Christmas ornament sales. In 2020, a total of 183 new ornaments were sold. Additionally, a total of \$2,745 was collected for ornament sales. Since this amount was higher than expenses for production, the ornament fund made money again. Having a balance in this fund will give the HPAC the ability to support small preservation grants. Tom also announced that bids have been submitted and opened for the Civic Center façade project. A bid to execute the façade restoration work will be considered by the City Commission later in March or in April.

- 3. Upcoming Opening of Historic 10th Street Bridge – Proposed Resolution from HPAC to allow historic bridge to be fully used** – Rich explained the draft Resolution that he wrote and is asking to be considered for adoption. Rich then asked Tom to explain the proposed land exchange between the City of Great Falls and Independence Bank. Tom showed Commissioners an exhibit depicting the properties being considered for the exchange. The Bank wants to acquire a 0.462 acre property owned by the City near River Drive. This property would be used for parking, both for the Bank and River's Edge Trail users. In exchange, the City wants to acquire a 0.336 acre property along the Missouri River to eventually construct a new riverfront section of the River's Edge Trail. Additionally, the City will gain ownership of property linking River Drive and the current River's Edge Trail to the historic 10th Street Bridge. This will open up the bridge for pedestrian usage. The City Commission will be discussing the proposed land exchange at their April 6 meeting.

Carol noted that the resolution was excellent and also indicated that Ken S. and Ellen have worked on the 10th Street Bridge initiative for many years. Ken R. expressed some concern about the impact of the proposed bank building on the view of the river as well as the historic bridge. Ellen was very supportive of the proposed land exchange. A land exchange between the City and Falls Construction has been discussed for many years. It is important that the bridge be returned to its historic use for people to experience. Ken S. liked the draft resolution but suggested that the reference in the resolution to the proposed subdivision as well as the possible

pathway be removed. The focus of the resolution should be for the HPAC to support the land exchange. He also noted concern about the three-story building. Rich also noted that he prefers to use the term “exchange” in the resolution rather than the word he originally used – “swap.”

Ellen moved to adopt the resolution subject to the changes proposed in the HPAC’s discussion. Steve seconded the motion. Rich re-stated the resolution for the record, and it was approved unanimously.

- 4. HPAC Discussion of top priorities for 2021** – Rich introduced this topic by stating that it would be useful to get Commissioner input on top priorities since a new HPO will be starting on April 5. Ellen and Carol both noted that HPAC had just approved its Goals and Objectives document for 2021, so this should provide a lot of guidance. Rich replied by stating that these goals are very broad. His top priority would be preservation of the Boston and Montana Barn on the former Smelter site. Steve indicated that he had the same thought since there was a meeting on the former Smelter site the evening before. Ellen agreed, noting that the barn is part of the Smelter Hill Master Plan. Ellen noted that HPAC needs to have more representation on the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). She thought there was a meeting of this group next week to listen to an amphitheater proposal for the former Smelter property. Rich asked Tom if Samantha could attend these meetings. Tom indicated that he would make sure this happens. Ken S. noted that the barn is the last vestige of the Boston and Montana Company. Ellen noted that the barn belongs to the City, so it must be involved in the discussions. Rich asked to have this item put on the next agenda.
- 5. Big Sky National Heritage Area Update** – Rich noted that letters of support are being solicited. The Heritage Area Board is almost halfway to its goal of having one hundred support letters.
- 6. Reports from Commissioners** – None
- 7. Public Comment** – None
- 8. Adjourn Meeting** – Meeting adjourned at 1:30pm