

Minutes
Business Improvement District
February 9, 2012

Board Present: Julie Duffy, Andrew Ferrin, Doug Lorello, Garry Hackett, Steve Alley
Board Absent: Stacey Schaefer, Hayley Leray
Staff Present: Joan Redeen, Bob Milford
Guests Present: Alison Fried, Brant Birkeland, Wendy Thomas

I. **Call to order:** Julie called the meeting to order at 9:02am.

II. **Guests:** Wendy Thomas informed the Board about the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town grant program. Grants begin at \$25K and go up in \$25K increments to \$150K. Local government has to be a lead on the application; the City is prepared to be lead. Funds can be used for planning, design or arts engagement. The application deadline is March 1st. There is a 1:1 match for this grant, match can be made up of both funds and in-kind. It is a two-year grant with the money being available September. Wendy has approached the CVB and GFDA and is going to connect with the TBID, the museum consortium, Rotary and Cascade County. We are looking at submitting an application for designing a wayfinding system for downtown. Wendy also spoke to Vicky Soderberg with Cygnet in Helena, she is a wayfinding expert. Vicky thought a larger area plan for wayfinding would cost approximately \$60K. Vicky also noted that implementation could be done using TIF and CTEP funds. Wendy is also looking at folding the branding project into this grant application so GFDA's funding could potentially be counted toward the match. Steve motioned that the BID commit \$10K per year for two years for a total commitment of \$20K. Garry seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

Wendy provided the Board with an update on the Rocky Mountain building. A meeting was held with TD&H and Tabacco about the plans to secure the building with a new roof and windows. Set Free has decided against a partnership with Randy Hafer as SFM doesn't want to go into debt. Mike Haynes, Craig Raymond and Wendy met with JT and have told SFM that they must provide the City with a timeline by Monday. If they do not stick to that time line the City will step in. She added that the final decision lies with Craig in regard to safety or health issues. Wendy noted that SFM has \$175K that has been donated to put toward the building. Steve inquired about condemnation and whether or not the building has to be razed if it is condemned. Wendy will inquire with the City Attorney. The Board discussed what the BID did with the Johnson Hotel building and the possibilities with the Rocky Mountain. Alison noted that she will visit with JT.

III. **Approval of minutes from 1-12-12 meeting:** Andy motioned to approve the minutes from the 1/12/12 meeting. Steve seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

IV. **Financials:** The Board received the December & January financials via e-mail. There being no further discussion on the financials Doug motioned to approve the 12/31/11 & 1/31/12 financial statements which include the Balance Sheets, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Garry seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Julie noted that we should expect to pay out the Montana building grant by April and the Subway building grant by June. The Montana building is moving forward with their plans for the 3rd floor. On the 4th floor they have three one-bedroom units and four two-bedrooms. They plan to do six two-bedroom units on the 3rd floor. They've sold three of the two-bedroom units on the 4th floor. It was decided that the BID's funds should stay in the money market account for the time being, in anticipation of these payouts.

V. **Grant Programs:** Interior Grant Program Criteria: The Board discussed the Interior Grant criteria. Joan noted some of the suggested changes that have been made. One suggestion was limiting the number of interior grants on a specific address. Another suggestion was to allow work to begin prior to the application but not fund work done prior to the application being received or approved. The final suggestion was to increase the maximum amount. It was decided not to limit interior grants

based on address. Discussion followed on new and existing; new grants payout at 30% while existing grants payout at 10%; the possibility of utilizing square footage for figuring grant payouts; and the Board's ability to fund special projects. Doug motioned that the maximum payout for interior, both existing and new, be increased to \$10K and the wording on the grant be changed to read that 'no funds will be paid out on work done prior to receipt of the application'. Steve seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Our Town Grant: Discussed above under Guests.

Joan informed the Board that she expects to receive a façade grant application from Stockman Bank. Their initial estimate for the work is \$527K. Tim Spencer has also inquired about a façade grant.

VI. Old Business:

Beautification: 1st Ave N Underpass: Joan informed the Board that the BID has received a formal letter of approval from MDT letting us know that we can proceed on the 1st Ave N underpass project. MDT also noted that they will contribute \$350 toward the cost of paint for the project. Joan added that she had contacted Home Depot to inquire if they would be willing to do the power washing & priming as their community service project this summer. They had expressed interest but she has not heard back. As a result of not hearing back from them she contacted both T&L and All American for bids for the job. T&L e-mailed that they will power wash and prime as a donation, valued at \$3,500. Joan noted that with the 100-day challenge the goal is to have the underpass power washed and primed by April 19th, the deadline for that goal. Joan is meeting with Brian Morger to discuss the possibilities of his working with a group of artists. Joan noted that the project will be cohesive, even though several artists would be working on it. There will also be a committee established that approves of everything throughout the process.

Adopt-a-Tree program: Joan provided the Board with an updated draft of an adopt-a-tree program for Great Falls. She noted that she ran the information by Todd Seymanski with the City and he is on board and approves. Joan discussed what to charge with Todd and he suggested using a formula figuring out what has been spent over the past three years. With that formula adopting a tree broke out to \$75 per year per tree, a five-year commitment would be \$375. Joan noted that she added a multi-tree discount if anyone wishes to adopt more than one tree. Joan expressed a few concerns with the Board: If only a few folks adopt trees do we only maintain those trees? How do we go public with this and reach out directly to our property owners? Suggestions for notification to the public include using the press, DGFA's newsletter, a mailing to property owners, our website as well as Facebook. Joan noted that she's still exploring how to recognize who has adopted trees. She had discussed this with Todd and he suggested putting something at the base of the tree. The Board expressed concerns about that in the winter with snow removal. Discussion followed on the possibility of posting something on the lampposts. Joan will contact a local engraving company and explore this. Joan noted that the City is still responsible for the trees and she wonders if there is any need to address that. Alison noted that we need to point out the benefits of trees. Joan commented that is already somewhat on the information – for every \$1 spent the public receives \$3 in benefits, etc. The Board noted that we don't need to address the City and responsibility of the trees with this program. Joan noted that she'd like to get the Board to approve this program at the March meeting, if possible, and go public with it shortly thereafter.

Downtown Sound System: Joan reported that Good Vibrations replaced three of the antennas and tested the system. Steve inquired where the three are located. Joan knows that one is by Subway and another is by the Rocky Mountain Building but she is not aware of the location of the 3rd antenna. The system was up and running during First Friday Art Walk and was working. Joan noted that if there were problems with the system she'd be getting phone calls and she's had no calls complaining. Garry inquired about the timer on the system. Joan noted that the timer was a big part of the problem, if the power goes out downtown the timer was thrown off and the system would go on in the middle of the night, so the timer has been shut down. Joan suggested that we give these new antennas another month or two and see what kind of feedback we get back and if there is nothing negative we can proceed forward on the remainder of the antennas.

MApril: Joan provided an updated draft of the request that would be sent out to local non-profits giving them the opportunity to come downtown and do a one-time spring clean-up for the BID, few changes have been made since last month. She noted that MApril's dates this year are April 28th and May 5th. Joan added that she is trying to figure who to send this invitation to and also what age is the minimum age the BID will allow. Currently she has 16 as the minimum age, simply because that is the age when an individual can get a paying job. The Board noted that age and permission needs to be a responsibility of the organization. Joan was instructed to remove the minimum age requirement. The Board instructed Joan to mail out the invitation to every non-profit group in the City. Steve brought up his desire to involve the residents and business owners. He'd like to involve as many people as possible. Joan suggested that a postcard be mailed to all of our property owners notifying them that we are doing this and asking for them to participate as well. Joan also noted that Brett Doney had suggested that we separate our event from MApril, whereas NeighborWorks wants us to be included in MApril. The Board instructed Joan to proceed forward with the MApril dates. Joan will send out the flyer to the local non-profits.

Pocket Park: Joan reported that she's been informed by Jolene Bach that they have a solid commitment from the building owner for \$1,000 cash to put toward the project, plus the building owner will do all of the pre-demo as well as upkeep after the park is done. The initial estimate for the entire project was over \$90K and they had already received in-kind donations bringing down the amount they needed to raise to over \$60K. Steve suggested that the BID could match the building owner's contribution and perhaps we could get him to contribute \$5K with that enticement. Alison talked about the façade grants and the back of the buildings and the potential for the property owners on that alley. Joan also suggested that we get written permission from the property owners and the BID gets the artists and pays them directly to create a mural on the back of the building – leaving the property owners on the alley out of the funding entirely. Brant commented that perhaps the property owner views this project as a benefit to the community as opposed to a direct benefit to his property. Joan was instructed to connect with Jolene and get more information.

TSB Project: Joan noted that she wishes to go public on April 1st and have the project happen July 13th to the 18th. We'll be doing seven more on 1st Ave S. Steve suggested moving the dates up and doing it in June. The Board instructed Joan to go public on March 1st and schedule it for June with a rain date as back-up.

Graffiti: Joan has received information from Bozeman on their graffiti program. She provided the Board with a very rough draft of a graffiti removal program for Great Falls. Bozeman, in addition to doing graffiti removal, also paints to cover up the graffiti. Joan noted that she'd rather not have us painting. Steve noted that we should not be painting, we should just do removal. He said that he can work with anyone this summer to instruct them on use of the products. Joan also noted that she has received a gallon of Elephant Snot to try. She added that Stacey has previously said that we could borrow their pressure washer, but if we find that everything works we will need to acquire our own. Joan noted that her goal is to kick off graffiti removal with the MApril clean-up. She inquired about the liability with the property owners and if the Board has any concerns. The Board instructed Joan to have property owners sign a waiver before the BID does anything on their building.

Downtown Action Alliance: Alison noted that the DAA is going to wind up being what the Downtown Partnership is. Alison added that she is working on eliminating meetings that duplicate each other. The DAA will continue until the Partnership is formally established.

Downtown Partnership: Alison noted that the organization/structure sub-committee consisting of Brett Doney, Sheila Rice, Steve Malicott and Bob Moretti are still working on formalizing the partnership. In the meantime, Carol B, Joan, Jill and Alison continue to work on the 100-day challenge, working on accomplishing three of the immediate/short term master plan goals. The goal is to have the TIF established by the April 3rd city commission meeting and the 100-day challenge complete and the partnership formalized. Joan noted that she attended the organization/structure meeting this week as Sheila wanted to explore the possibility of creating one entity that consists of the BID, the association and the partnership. Sheila had taken to heart what Greg Krueger from Billings had said about wishing he had one entity with one board. The thinking was that this was a

good time to discuss the possibility with the creation of the new partnership. Brett Doney commented at that meeting that he did not think it was a good idea, due largely to the legalities of the BID. But he did suggest that at a minimum of one time a year the three boards meet together. The end result was that the Partnership is moving forward on formalizing and the BID and the DGFA will all remain as separate entities. Discussion followed on the creation and the 'pay-to-play' concept of membership and how the board will be established. Joan reported to the board on the status of the 100-day challenge. The 30-day goal was to identify entryway locations to downtown. This goal's deadline was today and the locations chosen are 9th St. & Central; 1st Ave N & Park Dr.; and 2nd Ave and 3rd St. The 60-day goal is tied to promoting downtown during Western Art Week. Last year Carol Place with the trolley included downtown in her WAW route with DGFA funding. Carol noted that the cost is \$220 and suggested that the BID and DGFA split the cost, as we do for First Friday Art Walk. DGFA has requested that the BID fund the \$220, but they will pay half if the BID will only cover half. It covers the trolley running from 9am to 8pm for Thursday, Friday and Saturday of WAW. The Board confirmed that they the BID will pay half of the trolley for WAW. Joan noted that the 100-day goal is the 1st Ave N underpass and things will happen there by April 19th, the deadline for that goal. She added that she will talk to T&L about moving forward. Steve inquired about the color of primer and the need to discuss that with the artists and T&L. Alison noted that we need to be certain we include the stairwells.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan informed the Board that DGFA's general membership meeting was held on Tuesday, January 24th. Kevin remains as Chair, Val is Vice-Chair, Sheila is the Secretary and Derrick remained as Treasurer. New board members include Brian Kaufman and Jodie Minitsiveris of 5th Street Diner.

Downtown Safety: Joan informed the Board that the Safety Committee continues to move forward on finalizing the Safety Plan by the end of the 100-day challenge. The committee is also moving forward on establishing a volunteer program of folks who will be downtown keeping an eye on things, similar to what our Community Ambassador does but on a volunteer basis. Trina with DGFA who works for Farmers Insurance had brought up the issue of insurance and covering these volunteers. She had informed the Safety Committee that it should not increase premiums at all, but we need to be sure the insurance agent is aware that the program is covering these individuals. The committee had asked if the BID would be willing to cover the volunteers. Joan added that this will be temporary until the Downtown Partnership is formally established and funded; once that occurs the volunteers can fall under their insurance. Alison noted that the City likely won't do it. The Board asked Joan to contact our agent to confirm that there is no additional premium to cover volunteers. If there are no issues with covering volunteers the Board noted they have no objections. Julie commented that we need to advertise the volunteer opportunities on volunteergreatfalls.org.

Great Falls Development Authority: Joan reminded the Board of GFDA's request for \$10K in funding for their branding project. GFDA's total estimate is \$29K and they still need over \$18K. They already have several commitments and have secured a commitment from NeighborWorks for \$1K. GFDA continues to solicit from other entities as well. Joan added that GFDA made a formal request of DGFA but they haven't made a decision. Discussion followed on this being a city-wide project. Alison inquired about GFDA's capital campaign and Joan confirmed that they are currently doing that as well. Steve motioned to approve a \$1,500 investment in Phase II of the Great Falls Development Authority's city-wide branding project. Andy seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Insurance: Joan reminded the Board that we've visited with the following agents: Conn Forder with Stockman; Dean Boyle with Intermountain; and Steve Erwin with Erwin Insurance. All of these agents are located within the BID. Our current agent has moved us from Missoula to Kalispell. Steve Erwin called to remind us that our policy will be up for renewal soon so we'll need to make a decision before they send out the renewal to Payne (our current agent). Conn Forder also called and noted that our application with him has expired so we'll need to re-submit the application and the premiums could change. Steve motioned to approve Dean Boyle with Intermountain Insurance as the BID's insurance agent. Doug seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Johnson Hotel: Joan noted that there is nothing to report on the Johnson at this time.

Montana Downtown Conference: Joan informed the Board that Great Falls is hosting the conference this year and the dates are set for October 24th to the 26th. It begins at noon on Wednesday and ends at noon on Friday.

Parking Commission: Joan informed the Board that she was not able to attend the January parking commission meeting. She knows that they are seeking input on nickel versus quarter tokens. The nickel token provides six minutes versus the quarter token providing a half an hour. There are costs involved to change the equipment so they are trying to find out if there is a need or interest. The Board noted that they'd be for the change if the City were to sell the quarter tokens for less than a quarter; otherwise they are not for the change. The consensus was that using quarters is easier than using tokens. Garry commented that he was unable to pay in advance for parking on the surface lot behind his building.

Work Plan: Joan noted that she continues to follow the work plan.

VII. New Business:

BID Board: Joan informed the Board that Hayley has resigned from the Board, effective immediately. She noted that the City will be notified and they will advertise the opening. Joan added that Julie terms out on June 30th as well.

Frontier Airlines: Joan reported that the Chambers low-cost air carrier initiative was successful and Frontier will start flying from Great Falls. They will have four flights a week to Denver from May to September. In order for them to stay in Great Falls we'll need to fill the aircraft.

Downtown Logo Hats & Shirts: Joan showed the hats & shirts to the Board. They are \$20 for a hat & shirt together in large and extra-large. She noted that she's already sold six of them.

VIII. Public Comment: There was no public comment at this time.

IX. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 11:35am.

Stacey Schaefer, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____