

Minutes
Business Improvement District
March 8, 2012

Board Present: Stacey Schaefer, Julie Duffy, Andrew Ferrin, Doug Lorello, Garry Hackett, Steve Alley
Staff Present: Joan Redeen, Bob Milford
Guests Present: Brant Birkeland, Dave Bowen, Kris Harrison, Jolene Bach, Pam Altman, Tom Workman

I. **Call to order:** Julie called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

II. **Guests:** Chief Bowen informed the Board that he is looking at appointing an officer to cover a downtown territory that will be larger than the downtown corridor. He noted that we should move away from calling the officer a 'downtown officer'. He's looking at the boundaries of 9th St to Park Dr. and 8th Ave N to downtown, expanding the focus to all of the lower north; looking at a larger picture. He noted that downtown has shared the special projects officers up to 32 hours a week in the past. He added that he also has Community Policing officers who currently work in the schools and assist the drug force. So there are possibilities for creating an officer who focuses on downtown and the perimeter. He reported that he is trying to use data and community policing concepts to address the issues, using 'problem oriented policing' – letting the data tell them where the problems are and partnering with the people to solve the problems. Joan noted that Chief Bowen had also attended the Safety Committee meeting and the committee noted that this sounded like a good way to move forward. Steve commented that what the Chief was suggesting made sense. Jolene Bach reminded the Board that she is spearheading the group working on the Roberts Playground project. They are moving forward on a complete overhaul of the playground as it has been locked up for over a year. There are now over 70 children living in the building who will benefit from this project. They've met with the property owner and explained the project. The owner has committed to covering the demolition costs, approximately \$6,000-\$7,500 total. He has also agreed to a financial commitment toward the approximate \$80K needed but has not committed to a figure yet. Jolene noted that since the property owner has actually seen the entire scope of the project plus the full costs he is more committed. They've now broken the project into phases with Phase I being demolition. Phase II is the playground equipment and Phase III includes the surrounding areas; the pavers and speed bumps in the alley for safety; basketball for older kids; and artwork on the back of the building. The goal is to have the kids out playing this summer. They are working now on setting up social media venues to allow for contributions to the project. Jolene noted that this is an all-volunteer project. Discussion followed on BID involvement; the BID would be inclined to contribute depending upon what the property owner is committing to. Discussion followed on the façade improvements to the back of the buildings; the Board noted one possibility is that permission be granted from the property owners and the BID can move forward on those improvements. Discussion followed on the possibilities of engaging local graffiti artists, providing them with a canvas for their art. Jolene will provide the phases to the Board and estimate of costs for each phase.

Pam Altman reported to the Board that Set Free received an offer on the Rocky Mountain Building and they've accepted the offer; they are awaiting the buy-sell agreement now.

Brant Birkeland presented the Complete Streets presentation to the Board. Brant reported that it is difficult to travel by any other means than cars; we need to create more opportunities for other modes of transportation without limiting cars. Nationally 50% of all trips are less than 3 miles, 28% are a mile or less and 72% of those mile or less trips are by car. Complete Streets is a program that looks at each street as improvements are planned. It is much more than just bike lanes but one interesting fact pointed out is that there are 25 benefits of a bike lane and only two of those benefits are for the bicyclists. Brant noted that there is a website that provides a walking score and GF's city-wide average is 55 out of 100. For every 1 point increase in that score there is an increase in home values of \$2 to \$3K. There are 314 communities in the US that have complete streets policies in 26 states. The first policy was adopted in Marin County in California in 2000. Bozeman, Helena, and

Missoula have all adopted policies while Kalispell, Butte, and Shelby are working on policies. The City is starting to write the policy now and a public open house is planned for May 23rd at Benefis. The timeline is to present the draft policy on the 23rd and then it will be presented to the Commission approximately a month later.

III. Approval of minutes from 2-9-12 meeting: Julie motioned to approve the minutes from the 2/9/12 meeting. Steve seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

IV. Financials: The Board has not received the February financials yet as the bank statement just arrived. Discussion followed on pending payouts of grants.

V. Grant Programs: CTEP 2009: Noting the timeline for the Complete Streets ordinance the Board will continue to hold off on the 1st Ave S improvements until the ordinance has been approved. The hope is that the 1st Ave S project could be the first project with the adoption of the Complete Streets policy.

Façade Grant Program Criteria: Stacey tabled the Façade Grant Program Criteria until the next meeting due to time constraints.

Our Town Grant: Joan reported that Wendy Thomas submitted the grant application on 2/29.

Notification will be made about approval or denial sometime in July.

Montana Building: Joan informed the Board that a letter has been received from Stockman Bank noting that the Montana Building is complete. The owners have spent over \$900K on the 4th floor. We have received copies of seven Certificates of Occupancy. Julie reported that the 4th unit has sold and will close next week. Normally we receive copies of all receipts. Steve noted that he has been in the building and felt that the letter from Stockman was sufficient. Steve motioned to approve the final payment of \$21,000 for the residential grant on the Montana Building. Doug seconded. Julie abstained. **Motion passed.**

Stockman Bank has formally submitted a façade grant application. They are planning on spending \$527K, of which \$508K is being spent on windows. They have 5.87-25' units on the front of the building on 5th Street N and they have 1.57-25' units on 1st Ave N. They estimate that they will start on June 1st and be done by September. They have provided full plans and photos with the application. Steve motioned to approve a façade grant of \$40K for Stockman Bank. Doug seconded. Julie abstained. **Motion passed.**

VI. Old Business:

Beautification: 1st Ave N Underpass: Joan reported that she had requested elevations from MDT and from the City. The elevations were just delivered so now we can move forward. We were trying to get a handle on the size and scope of the project so artists might be able to put a figure on it. Joan noted that she met with Brian Morger and Julia Becker. Brian has noted that he can't give us an idea of what the project might cost without elevations. Julia was the artist responsible for the gymnastics building mural and she informed Joan that she did that project for \$3K. Her suggestion was that the 1st Ave N underpass would be a \$30K project. In the most recent 100-day Challenge meeting Brant had suggested that the BID Board come up with a figure for the minimum amount of money that the BID would spend on this project. Joan noted that she is also exploring grant possibilities for this project. Doug noted that he will take the elevations and provide Joan with a figure within the next week; his initial estimate is 6,000sf. The Board instructed Joan to create a Call to Artists that will be sent out to the community for an artist to manage the project, opening the opportunity up to the community.

Adopt-a-Tree program: Joan reported that she met with Double G Engraving and they can create a sign for approximately \$30. We are moving forward with the idea of mounting the sign on the period light poles. Discussion followed on tree maintenance and quantity of adoptions and the need for the BID to budget for tree care, which the BID did prior to receiving the TIF funding from the City. Joan noted that we have spent \$47K over the past three years on the trees and have replaced over 60 trees in that time. The Board noted that they are comfortable with Joan going public on the Adopt-a-Tree program.

Downtown Sound System: Joan reported that Good Vibrations installed the three spider antennas in the 600 block by the Rocky Mountain Building, another is by Subway in the 400 block and the last one is on the north side of the 100 block of Central. We've installed three antennas on the 11 speakers we have, the cost was \$160 per antenna. Garry noted that the volume is very low and no music can be heard until you are right under the speaker. Joan reported that US Bank had requested that their speaker be turned down so that volume is 20 decibels lower than any other speaker. Joan noted that there are two speakers not working at this time; Good Vibrations reported that there is an electrical problem with a speaker in the 100 block and in the 600 block a receiver was removed by Chuck Fulcher. The Board instructed Joan to get an electrician or the City to find out what's wrong with the speaker in the 100 block and find out what Chuck did with the receiver from the 600 block and get that back in place and order eight additional spider antennas.

Graffiti Removal: Joan provided the Board with a draft of a release of liability for the graffiti program. Joan reported that she plans to run this draft by Heather Rohlf at the City for her input. Joan will also explore the possibility of the City Attorney reviewing the release for us. Discussion followed on the length of time the release is valid for, it was decided that one-year was sufficient. Doug noted that there is a new company starting up and they will be doing dry ice blasting and can easily remove graffiti with no mess. Joan noted that she'd still like to do a graffiti removal blitz over the MApril dates and if this company is up and running it'd be great to use them for that time. Joan noted that Stacey had said we could borrow their pressure washer to try out our methods; if it proves to be successful we'll need to acquire our own pressure washer. Discussion followed on water sources and the need for water with a pressure washer.

MApril: Joan reported that she mailed out the solicitation to over 68 local non-profits. KFBB did a news bit that ran last night. UGF has already e-mailed in response, but there's been no other response yet. The preference is to do a major spring cleaning tied into the MApril dates April 28th and May 5th. Joan noted that she'd like to do a big splash for graffiti removal at the same time. Stacey inquired if the base had received copies of the solicitation. Joan will discuss the possibilities with Carrie Koppy at NeighborWorks as she utilizes a lot of volunteers from Malmstrom during MApril. Steve inquired about Pre-Release. Joan noted that we've been getting two gentlemen on Tuesdays and Fridays, most weeks, but Pre-Release has noted that they are very short on booters at this time. Joan reminded the board that assistance is going to be needed to make this happen. When we used Foothills two years ago Alison was present the entire time and last year we had our Community Ambassador working with the Boys & Girls Club. BID presence will be needed, in order to insure success.

Pocket Park: This topic was addressed under Guests above.

TSB Project: Joan reported that this summer's TSB Project went live on March 1st. Deadline for submission is Friday, May 4th. We recently completed a Workman's Comp audit and we will likely be getting a refund as the coding for Gail, Eddie and Bob was incorrect. But they are telling us now that we will be having some charges for last summer's TSB Project, to cover the artists. The auditor noted that we either need to add them to payroll so they are covered by our workman's comp policy or they need to be independent contractors and prove that to us so we know they are exempt. He suggested that the artists apply to be independent contractors. Discussion followed on covering the artists and adding them to payroll so they are covered.

BID Board: Joan reported that we currently have one opening, with Hayley's resignation. Kris Harrison is with us this morning as she is exploring the possibility. Mauri Novak is also exploring the possibility but he needs to finish his residential project first and could be applying when we have additional openings July 1st. Julie terms out on July 1st and Doug and Stacey are both up for renewal. Stacey noted that she does not wish to renew. Doug noted that he will renew but if there was someone else who was interested in applying he would allow them to take his spot on the Board. Joan will inquire with the City about the possibility of Doug doing that. If Doug does not renew we will have three vacancies July 1st in addition to our one opening that we have now. Discussion followed on Tom Workman, Stacey noted that he used to be the Board Chair and he was who

initiated the Johnson Hotel project. She added that he is out of town half of the year now. Board members expressed interest in meeting with Tom to get the history of the Johnson Hotel project. **Downtown Action Alliance:** Joan noted that the DAA continues to meet. This month the DAA meets in the morning and the D/T P/S meets that same afternoon. The goal is to have the DAA evolve and become the D/T P/S.

Downtown Partnership: Joan reported that the D/T P/S has been meeting. The TIF boundaries were formally adopted by the City Commission this past Tuesday night. There were many present to speak in favor but there was no opposition. The 100-day Challenge is actively working on the 60-day goal which is promoting downtown during Western Art Week. The deadline for the Thursday, March 15th 'The Art of Downtown' art show was March 1st. There were 28 artists who submitted 145 works of art, which included 13 students. They will be on display at seven downtown venues. The evening will be similar to a First Friday Art Walk. Times Square is hosting a Native American art show while Corkmaster will be hosting a wine tasting that evening. We have 5,000 rack cards that will be picked up tomorrow morning; the card lists 27 retailers and restaurants offering specials. There is a map on the back that shows all of the art venues. The trolley will also run until 8pm. The final goal for the 100-day challenge is the 1st Ave N underpass that was already discussed.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan noted that there was nothing new to report on DGFA.

Downtown Safety: Joan reminded the Board that last month we talked about covering volunteers with our insurance policy. She explored the issue with Dean Boyle, our insurance agent, and he pulled out two key items in our policy that note that volunteers will be covered by our policy and since they are already listed as covered we shouldn't expect any increase in premiums. Joan noted that if the Safety Committee creates this volunteer program we can cover them without additional cost to the BID, she will inform the committee that the Board approved this.

Johnson Hotel: Joan noted that there is nothing new to report on the Johnson. Steve inquired about any vacancies in the Incubator. Joan reported that it is full and she has not had any inquiries interested in signing a rental agreement so the status quo has been maintained.

Montana Downtown Conference: Joan noted that there is nothing new to report on the Montana Downtown Conference.

Parking Commission: Joan noted that there is nothing new to report on the Parking Commission.

Work Plan: Joan reported that it is time to update the Work Plan. A draft will be ready to present to the Board at the April meeting. All board members were given a copy of the work plan, asked to look it over and offer any additions or deletions that they might wish to see. The work plan will be presented to the City in June. Drafts of both the Budget and Work Plan will be provided to the Board at the April meeting, with approval set for May.

VII. **New Business:**

City FY 2012-2013 Calendar: Joan informed the Board that the City has provided us with our dates for presenting our budget & work plan to the Commissioners. We have to turn our budget & work plan into the City by June, presented to the Commission July 17th and set for approval on August 7th. Joan plans on taking care of this, unless a Board member wishes to.

TIF Training: Joan noted that there is a TIF training being held in Butte on Friday, May 18th. The cost is \$30, registration has not been sent out yet. Joan expressed interest in attending, as did Steve.

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

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

Stacey Schaefer, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____