

Minutes
Business Improvement District
April 12, 2012

Board Present: Stacey Schaefer, Steve Alley, Julie Duffy, Andrew Ferrin, Doug Lorello
Board Absent: Garry Hackett
Staff Present: Joan Redeen
Guests Present: Ellen Sievert, Carol Bronson, Jill Jennings, John Kramarich, Tom Leigland, Alison Fried

I. **Call to order:** Julie called the meeting to order at 8:59am.

II. **Guests:** Ellen Sievert reported to the Board on the Preserve America grant the BID previously funded. The grant was \$21,500 with the BID providing \$5K. Phase I is complete with three feasibility studies having been completed and all three projects are moving forward or are going to be moving forward. The Rocky Mountain Building is progressing, with a buy-sell agreement signed. The Baum Trinastich building is in the process and the Arvon building is moving toward having a signed buy-sell agreement. Ellen noted that there is \$7K left in the fund and they will lose those funds if they do not complete additional feasibility studies by July, 2012. There is some additional funding of approximately \$7K from the master plan, economic development funds from another grant. With BID funding involved all of the projects will take place within the BID boundaries. She added that most communities use TIF funding but our TIF is not established yet. Seeking funding from the BID will cover the program in the interim. Julie noted that the \$5K contribution the BID made will provide a huge return. Steve noted that he'd prefer that the program utilize local architect firms. Discussion followed on the program. Ellen requested that the Board provide \$7 to \$10K. Stacey motioned that the BID commit up to a maximum of \$10,000 in additional funding for feasibility studies. Doug seconded. Steve opposed. **Motion passed.**

Carol Bronson reported that she has found an additional source for funding, the Bryne Criminal Innovation Grant. The application is due by June and is used to implement crime reduction. BID's are a proven method of reducing crime as is the Business Watch program. Carol plans to apply for this grant to be put to use in downtown for crime reduction.

Carol noted the Community Leadership Institute group that includes Steve and Garry, is working on creating a Bike Share program downtown. They've been working with the Optimist Club and have acquired 40 bikes. The bikes will be located at the GF Transit, rescue mission, O'Haire and the parking garage. Individuals can check out bikes, free of charge, and return them within 24 hours. They plan to launch the program during bike to work week, May 14th. The CLI Group had discussed the possibilities of the BID or DGFA running the program once it's up and running. Joan expressed concern on how much time the program might take. The Board noted that the CLI Group should get the program up and running and the BID can re-visit the program in the fall. Carol noted that she had two questions for the BID at this time; did the BID want to be a location for bike check-outs and would the BID act as the fiscal agent for the program. NeighborWorks America provided a grant of \$2K for this project and Steve has since collected an additional \$270 in donations. Joan noted that, at Garry's suggestion, she did contact the BID's insurance agent to inquire about the liability if the BID owns the bikes. The agent suggested having each person checking out a bike sign a waiver of indemnity. Joan added that perhaps the program could be run by the Downtown Partnership, once established. Doug motioned to approve the BID acting as the fiscal agent for the program. Andy seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.** The BID will re-visit the ownership issue for the program in the fall, once the program is established. The Board chose to not be a check-out location for bikes at this time.

John Kramarich noted that they held a demonstration of their paint removal equipment that Steve and Joan attended. After a later meeting with Garry, Steve and Joan they submitted a proposal to the BID to remove graffiti within the BID boundaries. He added that they might be able to remove four different locations of graffiti in one hour or some sites might take one hour to get one spot of graffiti done; every job is site specific. Doug commented that he felt the contract looked good. Steve noted

that he had tested the Elephant Snot product and in 20 minutes a large spot of graffiti was easily removed. He noted that the system they are using is not dry ice, it is sand blasting. He expressed concern that the equipment might prove destructive to some sites. John noted that the removal can be done without damage. Joan provided the Board with a listing of 21 locations where graffiti is within the BID as of 4/9/12, provided by Heather Rohlf at the City. Joan noted that the goal had been to launch the graffiti removal program during the MApril events set for April 28th and May 5th. She added that both Bozeman and Billings used the Conservation Corps to launch their programs. Discussion followed on the proposed graffiti removal program. Stacey motioned to kick-off the graffiti removal program on April 28th using Big Sky Dry Ice Blasting at their hourly rate for one day to test the program. Doug seconded. Steve opposed. **Motion passed.** The Board instructed Joan to secure permission slips from all property owners on the list provided by Heather so Big Sky can take care of the graffiti issues on their properties. Big Sky was asked to review the list and see which properties they will not be able to work on and let the BID office know which ones will not be taken care of by them. Those remaining tags will be removed using Elephant Snot or some other means as yet to be determined.

III. Approval of minutes from 3-8-12 meeting: Andy motioned to approve the minutes from the 3/8/12 meeting. Stacey seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

IV. Financials: The Board received the February & March financials via e-mail. There being no further discussion on the financials Stacey motioned to approve the 2/29/12 & 3/31/12 financial statements which include the Balance Sheets, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Andy seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Joan provided the Board a draft of the 2012-2013 budget. She informed the Board that the budget will need to be approved no later than the June board meeting as it is due to the City by June. Joan inquired if the Board wishes to continue funding half of the trolley costs for First Friday Art Walk for the upcoming fiscal year. The Board noted that they do wish to continue funding the trolley for First Friday. A few additional corrections were suggested for the draft budget.

Julie reviewed the financial status and noted that no funds need to be moved at this time due to potential grant payouts.

Grant Programs: Joan noted that the following grant was submitted, and was approved by the Board via e-mail: Strain building, aka 410 Central Ave LLC, an interior grant for four suites to accommodate Geo Nav, a new tenant who is planning to move in on May 1st. Steve motioned to approve an interior grant of \$6,510.30 for 410 Central Ave LLC. Stacey seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Geo Nav Group International will be moving into the Strain building at 410 Central and they have submitted a business incentive grant application for \$2,500. They've signed a one-year lease. Stacey motioned to approve a business incentive grant of \$2,500 payable to 410 Central Ave LLC by May 1st. Steve seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Joan noted that the BID has paid out \$5,481 of the \$10K authorized for the Business Incentive grant program, leaving a balance available of \$4,519 before the Geo Nav grant.

Joan inquired with the Board about Fairway Comfort Systems and their grant applications that were e-mailed to the Board last year. They submitted applications for interior improvements as well as a business incentive grant. They were denied because the property taxes were not paid by the property owner. They would have been approved for a \$5K maximum interior grant and \$1,400 for the business incentive grant. The gentleman who owns Fairway came into the office to inquire whether we could pay out his grants now, as he had been informed that the property taxes were paid. Joan noted that she has checked the status and the property taxes still remain unpaid. The question for the board is whether they will entertain the applications in the future if the property taxes should be brought current. Discussion followed on whether or not to entertain his applications. The Board asked Joan to look up prior meeting minutes on these applications as well as whether or not any grants were funded to the property owner when Metzger's moved into the property.

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

V. Old Business:

Beautification: 1st Ave N Underpass: Joan reported that the BID has an opportunity to approach the TBID for assistance in funding the 1st Ave N underpass project. The grant request will be presented to them on May 17th at 1pm. She added that the Call to Artists, for design, went public and the deadline is May 4th. She informed the Board that Ace Hardware has committed to donating 12 to 16 gallons of paint per year for two years toward this project. Steve noted that for 7,500 square feet 25 gallons should be enough. Joan added that the project is now estimated at 11,200 square feet as we've added completion of the walkway under the bridge. Andy noted that when we start to receive the designs from artists we'll have a better idea of what the costs for the project may be.

Adopt-a-Tree program: Joan provided the Board with a draft of the proposed sign that could be used for the Adopt-a-Tree program. The sign is 8x6 with room for text on it to acknowledge the donor. The Board suggested that the BID logo be added to the sign. Joan noted that the press release is ready. She added that she is working on getting formal approval from the City for installing the signs on the lamp posts.

Downtown Sound System: Joan reported that there appears to have been some vandalism down the north side of Central. Several speakers had the wiring all ripped out and antennas were hanging. Bob has done a temporary fix so the wires are not hanging down. Good Vibrations has been called. They have the additional antennas on order and once they arrive they will install them and fix the new issues with the dangling wiring plus check the entire system out. Joan noted that there are two speakers that are not functioning and she is working with the City on figuring those two out. They may require an electrician.

Flowers: Joan informed the Board that Tilleraas has provided an estimate for new flowers, baskets and hardware. The cost is approximately \$100 per basket. Once the hardware is acquired maintaining the baskets will cost approximately \$45 per year. Discussion followed on quantity of new flowers and where to place them. Joan noted that there are 144 light posts within the BID. It was noted that with the exception of the parking garage block there are no period lamp posts on 1st Ave South. The Board instructed Joan to have Tilleraas get 24 new flower planters, for a total of \$2,400 and place the flowers on 1st Ave North; four planters per block with two on each side of the street. The Board asked Joan to see if Tilleraas can re-locate the two large concrete planters (like our trash enclosures) over to 1st Ave South to the Hoglund's block.

Graffiti Removal: Steve expressed concerns on the agreement with Big Sky. He is concerned about the sites as well, and appropriate use of the equipment on every site. The Board noted that they have given Big Sky one day to test their equipment downtown, at their hourly rate. Steve noted that he will work with our summer Community Ambassador on graffiti removal.

MApril: Joan reported April 28th will be the only day that a downtown clean-up can take place due to Cruisin' the Drag being held on May 5th. She noted that she has received seven responses to the call for non-profits; one of those being the Boys & Girls Club and they wish to do the same thing they did last summer and come downtown and help each week through the summer. The remaining groups were East Middle School (30-12 & 13 year olds with adult supervision), Mountain View Sports Complex (50 adults), Studio Montage (50 adults), UGF (10 college-age), Cascade County four-wheelers (10 adults) and Montana Medical Grower's (10 adults). Joan added that she had informed these groups that it was a first come-first serve basis and we wouldn't be using all of the groups. Discussion followed on the groups that have volunteered and possible donations. The Board instructed Joan to use Boys & Girls Club during the summer months and use the remaining six groups for April 28th. The Board will discuss possible donations, if any, at the May meeting.

Pocket Park: There is no report on the Roberts Pocket Park project at this time.

TSB Project: Joan reminded the board that the deadline for submission is Friday, May 4th.

Community Ambassador: Joan reported that Bob's last day will be sometime between May 15th and June 1st, depending on when we have a new hire in place. He will be available again about

September 15th if we need him. Steve and Stacey suggested that Justin Redeen be offered the position again for the summer and if he is not available Joan was instructed to advertise the position. The Board was in agreement with this and instructed Joan as such.

BID Board: Joan reported that we still have one opening on the Board. Kris Harrison, with US Bank, had expressed interest but the City has not received any applications. Steve has also discussed the opening with Sheila Rice. Mauri Novak with Subway and Rebecca Hughes with Brighten Up have also expressed interest but were waiting until July. Joan continues to explore board members.

Bike Program: The bike program was discussed above under guests.

Downtown Action Alliance: Joan noted that the DAA continues to meet. The goal remains 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 partnership is very near to achieving its formal status as an entity; the Articles of Incorporation should be filed within the next month. The 100-day challenge will officially wrap up on April 19th. The third and final goal was the 1st Ave N underpass project which is moving along. The second goal, promoting downtown during Western Art Week, was successful for a first time event.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan noted Cruisin' the Drag is Saturday, May 5th. DGFA is also holding a quarterly general membership meeting sometime this month.

Downtown Safety: Joan noted that the Safety Committee has set a goal to have a draft safety plan completed by April 19th. The committee meets next week and continues to move forward.

Insurance: Joan reported that the audit of our workman's comp policies was completed; there should be a credit issued.

Johnson Hotel: Joan reported that Sequoia Energy has given their notice. They have already vacated their two units but have paid rent to April 30th. United Way has also reported that they may be moving or need additional space to accommodate a new employee. The Board instructed Joan to let United Way know that they can either have a space in the incubator or they can rent the smaller conference room down the hallway from the tele-conference room, if either of those options would work for them. Joan noted that one of Sequoia's vacancies may also be taken by Joe McDaniel with New York Life, so the former computer room in the incubator may be vacant again.

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

Parking Commission: Joan reported that they will have one opening on the commission on 5/1.

TIF Training: Joan reported that the TIF training is scheduled for Friday, May 18th in Butte.

Work Plan: Joan provided the Board with copies of the current Work Plan and asked that they note any additions or deletions they might like to make. She reminded the Board that the work plan will need to be approved no later than the June board meeting as it is due to the City by June.

VI. New Business:

City SIC Process: Joan informed the Board that the City wishes to review their Safety Inspection Certificate process (aka Business Licensing). They'd like constructive input on any changes that might need to be made to the process.

Chamber: The Chamber has sent two requests for funding to all of their members. They are looking for funds for the Central Montana Defense Alliance so they can continue to fight for Malmstrom. They are also hosting a Montana state-wide Chamber executive's conference in May at the Hilton.

Visitor's Information Center: They are looking for donations of food for Tourism Week. They are hosting a Chamber business after hours on Thursday, May 17th.

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

VIII. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:43am.

Stacey Schaefer, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____