

Minutes
Business Improvement District
August 9, 2012

Board Present: Andrew Ferrin, Garry Hackett, George Wheeler, Kris Harrison, Rebecca Hughes, Sheila Rice
Board Absent: Philip Riedel
Staff Present: Joan Redeen, Ron Watson

I. **Call to order:** Andy called the meeting to order at 9:03am.

II. **Guests:** There were no guests present at the meeting. Ron Watson was introduced to the Board; Ron is our new Downtown Community Ambassador, replacing Justin.

III. **BID Board:**

City Commission Meeting: Joan informed the Board that the FY 12-13 BID Work Plan and Budget was approved by the City Commission on August 7th.

Joan inquired with Sheila and the other new board members if they felt the New Board Member information packet was beneficial. Board members noted that it was helpful. Joan reminded the board that the attendance policy is noted in the packet; board members are able to miss four meetings per fiscal year.

IV. **Approval of minutes from 7-12-12 meeting:** Kris motioned to approve the minutes from the 7/12/12 meeting. George seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

V. **Financials:**

Audit: Joan informed the Board that the Audit will begin the week of September 5th. When the auditor is done he will request a meeting with the Board Treasurer and the Chair, any interested board members are welcome to attend that meeting. Our audit is on the fiscal year that ended 6/30/12 so Stacey Schaefer and Julie Duffy will continue to be involved in the process. Joan added that the meeting will likely take place sometime in October, when the audit is nearing completion.

Bank Signature Cards: All board members present signed the new signature cards for the new accounts at Stockman Bank.

Monthly Financials: The Board received the June financials via e-mail. There being no discussion on the financials Becky motioned to approve the 6/30/12 financial statements which include the Balance Sheets, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Sheila seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Joan reported that half of the residential grant for Mauri Novack was paid out this week, for a total of \$16,765. In addition, the Preserve America grant payout is being paid today for \$6,168.60. The board instructed Joan to transfer \$50K from the money market account into the checking account, in anticipation of paying out the Stockman Bank façade grant.

Joan informed the Board about our assessments and how they work. The City receives tax payments and the BID receives distributions directly from the City. Since property taxes are due to be paid in November and in May larger distributions are received in January and in July. Each month smaller distributions are received as delinquent property taxes are paid.

VI. **Grant Programs:**

Façade Grant Criteria: Discussion was held on the Façade Grant Criteria. George suggested that some consideration be made for the upper levels of buildings downtown when doing façade improvements, providing an incentive for property owners to do something to the upper levels at the same time as ground floor improvements are made. Garry suggested that we create an additional grant program that would cover the upper levels. It was decided to table the discussion until next month.

Discussion followed on grant payouts noted above and budgeting.

VII. **Old Business:**

Beautification: 1st Ave N Underpass: Joan reported that five artists began to implement the selected design three weeks ago on July 17th. As of yesterday the artists are working on the finer details of the design. They have until October 15th to complete the project. Discussion followed on an anti-graffiti protective covering. Joan noted that the BID has not budgeted anything for that but she is working on submitting grant applications to cover those costs. The estimate for the coating is \$5,300 for covering both sides. Joan met with MDT last week and they've indicated that they would like to help fund the coating. Discussion followed on painting the traffic signal boxes on 1st Ave North.

Downtown Sound System: Joan reported that Steve Cloutier, Lighting Contracting, is working on fixing the two speaker issues we've been having. He is also looking at the entire system.

Graffiti Removal: Joan reported that Hotsy WY-Mont completed the graffiti removal within the BID. Joan reminded the Board that they had authorized a maximum of \$3,000 but had noted that they'd increase that if necessary. Hotsy was instructed to remove all graffiti and submitted a bill for \$4,450. Joan informed the Board that over 26 tags were removed, an average of \$170 per tag. Discussion followed on the previously proposed contract of \$1,800 per month from April until October and the fact that ultimately money was saved using Hotsy. The Lobby Bar was the most tagged location and required over five hours of time to remove multiple layers of graffiti. Discussion followed on the graffiti removal program. It was decided to address any issues as they arise.

Pocket Park - Roberts: Joan reported an update from Jolene about the project. They are holding a fundraiser on August 24th at Machinery Row. They are inviting people to sponsor various pieces of playground equipment, all under \$5K each. If they can get the pieces sponsored they are working to have the equipment installed the week of September 17th. Garry inquired about downtown residents being able to use the playground. Joan noted that Jolene had said that she was working with Deb Kottel to figure out the logistics of having it open to the community, it is their goal to have the playground accessible to other downtown residents. Sheila inquired about the BID's involvement in the project. It was noted that the BID is matching \$10K of funds raised. We are also offering a version of our façade grant program for the murals on the back of each building for property owners matching up to a maximum of \$1,250 per building back. Becky noted that Jolene should explore artists in the high schools for the mural component of the project.

Trees: Joan noted that she is still in a holding pattern on the trees on the 1st Ave N parking lot. She did let the parking folks know what weed killer they should and should not be using, per Todd Seymanski with the City. Steve Tilleraas and Todd had both recommended taking a wait & see attitude about the trees on that lot for the time being. Joan provided a copy of a proposal for the 1st Ave N parking lot with landscaping. The proposal included the possibility of creating a bit more green space on the lot allowing for a pocket park and a place for Alive @ 5 to be held. Garry noted that he'd be willing to purchase parking spaces for his building and that would assist the parking commission in funding the proposed changes.

Joan reported that we are learning that 1st Ave North gets a lot more sun than Central Avenue and, as a result, the flowers on 1st Ave N are very different from the flowers on Central. She added that there were problems with the Arctic Cat and the flowers did go without water for over a week. Steve Tilleraas has assured Joan that the flowers should be okay; they are being watered every day now in the hope that they will come back. Joan noted that we've got the new moss baskets on Central and we are learning about them as we go.

Downtown Partnership: Joan reported that the Partnership meets next on August 22nd. Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws should be adopted at that meeting. We should be voting in a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. We have a membership committee working on creating a membership policy. At the last meeting it was decided to officially disband the Downtown Action Alliance.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan reported there is a general membership meeting on August 28th at 5:30pm, location to be announced. It will be a welcome reception for Tad Kimmet, our BRIC officer. There are four Alive @ 5 events left this season.

Downtown Safety Alliance: Joan reported that the next Business Watch meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 11th and the topic is Emergency Preparedness. A sponsor is still needed for the September 11th business watch meeting. Andy reported that Tad has attended the last two Alive @ 5's in full uniform.

Johnson Hotel: Joan reported that the Wi-Fi has been disconnected. Immediately following this meeting the Board will tour the 3rd floor.

Montana Downtown Conference: Joan informed the Board that the Montana Downtown Conference takes place in Great Falls October 24-26, 2012. Early bird registration opens August 15th. Early bird registration is \$150 per person until September 30th; \$175 from October 1st to the 15th; after October 16th it will be \$200. We are charging an additional fee of \$10 per person for the Thursday night dinner, which also allows individuals to bring a guest. The following board members noted that they would like to attend: Andy Ferrin, Becky Hughes, Garry Hackett, George Wheeler, and Sheila Rice. Joan noted that sponsorship letters were mailed out. The Montana Downtown Coalition is the entity responsible for this conference so any funds remaining after the conference will go to the Coalition and be transferred to next year's host. Joan added that we are offering Thursday complimentary to our legislators, to encourage them to attend. She commented that her goal is to have over 100 in attendance. Garry motioned that the BID fund attendance of Joan and any board members interested in attending the Montana Downtown Conference. Becky seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Joan reminded the Board that last month she informed them of Joe Minicozzi's work looking at downtown tax valuations. She noted that Missoula is working on bringing Joe to Missoula the week of October 22nd. We can partner with Missoula, paying the full fees for the study but only half of the travel costs involved. Joan noted that she'd love to have Joe present at the conference but the conference is not able to fund speaker costs. Joan provided the Board with the article Sarasota's Smart Growth Dividend from Planning magazine in December 2010. This article highlights Joe's findings and how they have benefited the community. Joan noted that Joe's study would assist us in advocating with hard facts/numbers with our commissioners to continue our revitalization efforts. Garry noted that he would like to see this study conducted but wants Joe to present his findings and the concept to our Commissioners. Garry motioned to approve funding \$5,000 plus half the travel costs, for a maximum of \$6,000, for Joe Minicozzi to conduct the downtown tax valuation study on Great Falls contingent upon Joe presenting his findings and the concept to the City Commission, preferably at their work session on Tuesday, October 23rd and that Joe keep in mind the BID boundaries but take into consideration the Downtown Master Plan boundaries. Sheila seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion followed on sponsorships and hosting our guests. It was suggested we host a moving cocktail hour in order to enable our guests to see as much of our downtown as possible, similar to the Business after Hours and Customer Appreciation events that take place downtown.

Parking Commission: Joan reported that they still have one opening on the parking commission.

Work Plan: Joan reported that the Work Plan was approved by the City Commission on August 7th, as noted above.

VIII. **New Business:**

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

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 10:49am. Board adjourned to tour the 3rd floor of the Johnson Hotel.

Andy Ferrin, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____