

Minutes
Business Improvement District
September 19, 2012

Board Present: Andrew Ferrin, Garry Hackett, George Wheeler, Rebecca Hughes
Board Absent: Philip Riedel, Sheila Rice, Kris Harrison
Staff Present: Joan Redeen
Guests Present: Alison Fried, Bethany Salmon

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

II. **Guests:** Introductions were made; Bethany is the new Downtown VISTA.

III. **BID Board:**

Board Attendance: Andy reminded the Board of the attendance policy that is set by the City. Attendance is required at two-thirds (2/3) or eight (8) meetings per fiscal year. Four (4) absences are allowed for illness or travel. Discussion followed on board attendance due to last week's lack of a quorum. It was noted that previous boards have changed meeting days and times in the past so that could remain an option. Joan also noted that as well as being a City appointed board the BID is governed by Montana Code.

Discussion followed on establishing a board member phone-in policy for board meetings. Joan reminded the board that the previous City attorney had not allowed it, the current interim city attorney has noted that there is nothing illegal about it and it would be up to the board to create a procedure or policy. Garry motioned to approve that board members may attend board meetings via phone or video conferencing not more than two (2) times per fiscal year and not more than two (2) board members may phone or video in at one time. Board members who attend a board meeting via phone or video will be considered in attendance. George seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

City Commission Meeting: Joan informed the Board that the City Commission approved our assessments at their meeting on September 4th. This was the last hurdle we have to get over each year with the City, first is our budget & work plan approval process and then the Commissioners approve our assessments.

IV. **Approval of minutes from 8-9-12 meeting:** Joan noted that the agenda lists an incorrect date; the minutes set for approval at this meeting are the minutes from the August 9th meeting, which were emailed to all board members with the meeting reminder. Garry motioned to approve the minutes from the 8/9/12 meeting. Becky seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

V. **Financials:**

Audit: Joan informed the Board that the auditor is done. There is additional work that Joan needs to complete and once that is done the auditor will publish the audited report for the board. The auditor did connect with both Julie Duffy and Andy and noted that everything looks good.

Bank Signature Cards: Joan had a signature card from Stockman for all present to sign.

Monthly Financials: July financials were not prepared as the bank reconciliation has not been completed yet.

Joan reported that the First Interstate checking account is still open as there was a direct deposit set up to go in there each month. She is waiting to be sure that the direct deposit has been changed to Stockman before the BID closes that account.

VI. **Grant Programs:**

Façade Grant Criteria: George reported that he is looking at establishing a façade grant procedure for buildings that are two stories or taller based on square footage, still using the same lineal footage for one-story buildings. He added that there would be an additional benefit to promote historic preservation by increasing the maximum grant available for property owners who are doing masonry work. His initial maximum grant numbers currently are \$40K cap for non-masonry work and a \$50K cap for masonry work. He will work on a draft and provide it to the Board at the October meeting.

Alison reported that the Rocky Mountain Building, as of 9/18/12, has changed ownership. Joan noted that the BID should anticipate a façade grant application as well as a residential grant inquiry from them fairly soon.

VII. Old Business:

Beautification: Flowers: Joan provided photos Steve Tilleraas took in Brookings, SD of planters they have in their bulb outs.

Gibson Park: Joan reported that Doug Wicks with the River's Edge Trail has contacted the BID about being involved in creating a new entryway for Gibson Park. He is seeking additional funding. Discussion followed on providing a donation to Recreational Trails that they could use for an entryway to Gibson Park on the corner of Park Dr and 1st Ave North. The Board instructed Joan to get additional information; Joan will invite Doug to attend the next board meeting.

Private Art Project: Joan reported that the Fair Claim law office in the 100 block of 1st Ave North inquired a few weeks back about art possibilities, displaying art outside of their office. As a result of the BID's art efforts a private property owner is now exploring art opportunities. Last Friday a bull sculptured out of horseshoes was installed in front of the law office facing 1st Ave North. Alison inquired if there was any publicity for this private art as a result of our public efforts. Joan noted that KFBB did run a brief story on the installation.

1st Ave N Underpass: Joan reported that the project continues to move along. Due to potential weather constraints the deadline is being moved up, Joan has asked the artists to wrap it up in the next two weeks. Joan added that one of the artists was removed from the project due to not being on the project for over three weeks, so there are now four artists completing it. Discussion followed on an anti-graffiti protective covering. Joan contacted MDT to inquire about the possibilities of funding the anti-graffiti coating. The estimate is \$5,300, and that does not include any labor. Two grant applications have been submitted (one with BNSF and one with the Gannett Foundation/Tribune); if any funds materialize from those grants it will be put toward the anti-graffiti coating.

Boys & Girls Club: Joan reported that the Boys & Girls Club youth contributed 67 youth over a six-week time period providing 100.5 hours of volunteer clean-up time downtown. It was almost identical to last year, they provided over 100 hours with 15 youth each week for six weeks. The BID made a donation of \$1K to the Boys & Girls Club in 2011. Garry motioned to approve a \$1,000 donation to the Boys & Girls Club. Becky seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Downtown Sound System: Joan reported that she spoke to Steve; he is where he was last month. He noted that GFI's are what need to be replaced. Garry will check with Steve on the status.

Graffiti Removal: Joan reported that we have two new tags in the BID, behind the BID office in the alley, on 501 Central Ave and on Amazing Toys. Hotsy WY-Mont has provided a bid of \$450 to remove those tags. Garry motioned to approve removal of the current graffiti tags for a total of \$450 with Hotsy WY-Mont. Becky seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.** Garry noted that he would like the Board to look at each instance of graffiti on a case-by-case basis until we can budget for it in the next fiscal year. Discussion followed on the BID and our graffiti removal program. Joan reported that Bozeman, Billings & Missoula all have graffiti removal programs within their BID's. Joan noted that these other cities have had a larger graffiti problem than we've had in Great Falls. Joan provided copies of our current graffiti removal program to all present. She reported that this program was provided to all of the property owners who had graffiti when we launched our program in late May. Those property owners have all signed release forms so we can remove graffiti as we discover it. Joan reported that she connected with the Great Falls PD. They noted that they link together one individuals 'tags' and nine out of ten times it winds up being a felony; anything over \$1,500 is a felony. After the PD charges an individual the case goes to the County attorney's office. Most are sentenced to remove graffiti and provide restitution, but there is no accountability. Often a trial occurs a year after an individual has been charged, and their tags have to have been removed within 72 hours. Alison noted that there could be a civil charge against the individual as well. Joan will inquire with the County Attorney about the possibility of the BID filing civilly for restitution and establishing something to hold these individuals accountable.

Joan informed the Board that the property owners of the building where Amazing Toys is located are interested in having a mural installed there, to help alleviate the ongoing graffiti issue that they have. They have noted that they'd be willing to fund an artist a small stipend, but the property owners mentioned that they thought the BID would provide funding. Joan noted that we've created this mural program for the Roberts Park; she inquired if this property owner could also take advantage of something similar. George motioned to approve a match of up to \$500 for a mural on the back of the Amazing Toys building, provided this includes the costs to seal the mural as well. Garry seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.** It was suggested that Joan draft a formal art grant program noting that the BID could match a property owners funds up to \$1,250, whether it be a sculpture or a mural on the back of a building. Property owners would be required to seal murals and would be eligible for an art grant once every five years. Joan will draft something and provide it to the Board at the November board meeting.

Pocket Park - Roberts: Joan reported that the fundraiser that was scheduled for August was postponed. They plan to hold it in conjunction with a Rotary Club function. Joan reported that the property owner has made their contribution to the project and those funds are with the BID, in addition to the funds that were raised by DA Davidson. We are currently holding just under \$6K for this project.

Downtown Partnership: Joan reported that the Partnership meets next on September 26th. Meetings will always be held on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 9am at NeighborWorks. The October meeting will coincide with the Montana Downtown Conference. Joan noted that she will not be in attendance at the October meeting. Garry inquired if Joan is absent and a board member attends in her place can they vote on behalf of the BID. Joan will inquire. Next Wednesday's meeting should be an election of a temporary board of directors. The Membership Committee is working on membership guidelines. They are working to make the partnership accessible to everyone. Currently the committee is recommending a student level of \$50 annually, an individual level of \$100 annually on up to corporate members at \$1,000 per year. Joan reported that the Downtown Access & Circulation Study is taking place now. There is a meeting tomorrow morning, Thursday at 9am at the Civic Center. An email invitation was sent out to all of the board. The folks conducting the study are holding a charette currently set for October 30th, in the evening at the Civic Center. Joan also noted that the TIF may not be managed as originally thought. The City had noted, originally, that it should be similar to the BID with approval of an annual budget and work plan. But it likely will be that the partnership will need to go before the Commissioners for approval of all TIF projects individually, rather than on an annual work plan-type basis.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan reported they are doing an Alive @ Lunch event this Thursday at US Bank from 11am to 1pm. DGFA is electing a vice-president; Joe England, Brian Kaufman and Jody Mintsiveris are up for vice-chair. Kevin Williams resigned from the board and Val Smelser, who was the vice-chair, is now the chair. Dancing with the Stars is Thursday, September 27th.

Downtown Safety Alliance: Joan reported that the Downtown VISTA has arrived. Bethany will be focusing on downtown safety, working with the safety alliance and the police department. She'll be working on the emergency preparedness packet as well as the business watch program.

Johnson Hotel: Joan reported that one of the tenants on the 3rd floor has requested having their carpets cleaned. Discussion followed on the terms of the rental agreement. Joan noted the history of the incubator and the previous board had noted that the BID will maintain the status quo and not do anything for the tenants, other than provide them with office space. The Board instructed Joan to look at what the lease says, but continue to maintain the status quo.

Montana Downtown Conference: Joan continues planning of the Montana Downtown Conference that takes place in Great Falls October 24-26, 2012. Board members registered are Andy Ferrin, Garry Hackett, and George Wheeler. Sheila registered through NeighborWorks. Becky completed a registration form and provided it to Joan. Joan noted that she'd like the board members attending the conference to act as moderators in the sessions. A moderator would introduce the speaker; be available for any questions by attendees; and make attendees aware of where the restrooms are, etc.

They would also provide a head count of attendees for each session. Joan reported that she's been working with Pat Halcro at the City in creating a map of downtown Great Falls for attendees. It highlights the four downtown hotels as well as the Wednesday evening happy hour event. Joan informed the Board that the Wednesday evening happy hour event will begin at the Davidson Skywalk, move to Church Harris and then finish up at CTA. Each location will have food and beverage.

Parking Commission: Joan reported that the commission met on Monday. The Access & Circulation Study is moving forward. The City is beginning to do some needed maintenance to the garages. The City is proposing to the Commissioners that they increase the monthly parking fee in the garages, increasing it by \$1 per year for five years. They still have one opening on the commission.

Work Plan: Joan reported that the BID continues to work the Work Plan.

VIII. **New Business:**

Imagine Great Falls: Joan reported that the City is doing a master planning process for the City Growth policy, known as Imagine Great Falls. They are holding meetings over the next several months, with four working groups. They are asking for three hours from individuals for each working group. Joan noted that the City has a survey posted on the City's website and it will be up until December, she encouraged the Board to take the survey.

Personnel: Joan reported that she will be out of the office on Monday, October 8th and possibly Tuesday, October 9th.

IX. **Public Comment:** Alison reported that the Downtown Chicks are meeting every week, they are a branch of Downtown Great Falls Association. Their quarterly social was held last night at the Rainbow. They are organizing ghost tours that will be held beginning on Friday, October 26th. They will be limited in number. The Chicks have done the military appreciation days, welcome baskets for military families, downtown swag bags for multiple conferences.

Garry reported that Mauri has sold his Subway businesses and now the public restrooms have been closed off from the public. It was suggested that public restrooms be installed by the City at the parking lot on 1st Ave N between 6th & 7th Street or the Rocky Mountain Building. The Board instructed Joan to seek estimates for janitorial service for the Subway building, just to have an idea of what it might cost.

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:18am.

Andy Ferrin, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____