

Minutes
Business Improvement District
February 14, 2013

Board Present: Andrew Ferrin, Garry Hackett, George Wheeler, Kris Harrison, Travis Neil, Rebecca Hughes, Sheila Rice
Staff Present: Joan Redeen
Guests Present: Alison Fried, Wendy Thomas, Dan Rearden, Jonathan & Monique Eakman

I. **Call to order:** Andy called the meeting to order at 9:05am.

II. **Guests:** Joan informed the Board that Dan Rearden (Oidhreach Properties, LLC) is the new owner of the Suhr Warehouse building, located at 117 Park Drive South and Jonathan & Monique Eakman are the new owners of Real Deals the business that is moving into the building. They have submitted both a business incentive grant as well as an interior grant. The original grant application was received and forwarded to the board via email on 2/5. Joan noted that a revised grant application was received last night with some additional costs added. The original grant was for insulation only, the revised application includes electrical and a security system. Questions have been raised about the fact that the property owner had a feasibility study conducted on the building and the concern is that they would receive a small amount now for an interior grant where they could potentially receive the maximum funding later. Dan noted that he wishes to submit this grant application as is now and will submit additional grant applications later for different projects. Joan added that based on their revised figures Dan would be eligible a maximum interior grant of \$2,099.39.

Garry motioned to approve the Business Incentive Grant for Real Deals for \$1,000. Sheila seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Sheila motioned to approve an interior grant for Oidhreach Properties, LLC for \$2,099.39. Garry seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Wendy informed the board that she'd come to update them on some changes coming with the parking program. She also updated the Board on the Rocky Mountain Building and CDBG funding available for historic preservation projects. Wendy noted that the partnership involved with the RMB is finalized; all partners know what their roles are; closing on the sale was scheduled for 2/13 but has been postponed with a new date to be scheduled soon. Wendy informed the Board that the City has some CDBG funds in a revolving loan fund for preservation; this fund could be used on projects like the Suhr Warehouse and/or the RMB. Projects must be done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior standards for historic preservation; it's a zero interest loan fund. She added that this fund might be easier to use on some of these projects than using TIF funds.

Wendy updated the board on parking items. A resolution will be presented to the City Commission on 3/5 that addresses fees being charged. The program is supposed to be self-sufficient and it is just at that point now but there are no reserves. One of the proposals going before the Commission is to increase the boot fee. It's been \$25; they are proposing an increase to \$140 as that is their actual cost to boot a vehicle. They are proposing that the daily meter bag rate be increased to \$4 per day – this is what a meter costs for an 8-hour day but contractors would not have to move their vehicle every two hours. She added that the Commission will also be designating a parking official. Discussion followed on the BID and purchasing meter bags. Joan reported that the previous BID Board had explored the option of acquiring meter bags to bag meters on holidays when parking is free. The City had discouraged this as the meters still generate revenue on holidays and they don't want to cut off that revenue so the BID had not been approved to put meter bags out. Wendy reported that she is attending training today on a new program that would use our current meters but would allow consumers to use an app on their phones to pay for parking. This would be implemented on a trial basis. The Board recommended that the trial area be all of Central Ave. Wendy added that she is looking at implementing escalating ticket fees with the first ticket being a courtesy ticket. The escalation and re-set date (6-months or one year) has not been determined yet. She added that currently the parking commission has over \$300K in uncollected tickets so they'll be putting out an

RFP for the City to hire someone to work on collections. She added that the Helena parking commission is working on proposing legislation that would tie vehicle registrations to all unpaid tickets, speeding, parking, etc. Wendy stated that the meter pass program that the Board discussed previously is still in the works and may be unveiled in the future. Joan added that the Parking Commission will have an opening soon.

Wendy reported to the Board that the final draft of the Downtown Access, Circulation and Streetscape plan should be done by 2/22. That study is also looking at parking and the possible privatization of the parking program.

Wendy informed the Board that the Planning office is looking at code; any changes should not affect the BID.

Garry inquired about any proposed plans for the parking lot on the corner of 1st Ave N and 6th Street. Wendy noted that there are no funds to cover the possible improvements but she'd love to see happen. Sheila added that TIF funding could be used to improve that lot.

III. **BID Board:** Joan noted that this item will remain on the agenda should a need arise for the board to discuss anything having to do with the board; attendance, vacancy, etc. There was no discussion about the board at this meeting.

IV. **Approval of minutes from 1-10-13 meeting:** Sheila motioned to approve the minutes from the 1/10/13 meeting as presented. George seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

V. **Financials:**

Monthly Financials: The Board received the December & January financials via e-mail. There being no discussion on the financials Sheila motioned to approve the 12/31/12 & 1/31/13 financial statements which include the Balance Sheet, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Garry seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Signature Cards: Joan noted that the signature cards have now been finalized and will be submitted to Stockman Bank.

The Board discussed bank balances. Joan noted that a transfer could be done if the Board desired. Bank balances have the checking account just over \$64K and the MM just over \$84K. Joan added that there are no grant payouts expected in the next few months. Kris noted that interest is minimal and there is not much point in making a transfer.

VI. **Grant Programs:**

As noted above, the Board approved a business incentive grant of \$1,000 for Real Deals and an interior grant of \$2,099.39 for Oidhreacht Properties.

Joan reported that two grants were paid out; Stockman Bank's façade grant was paid out at \$40K and Church Harris' façade & interior grants were paid \$12,500 on 1/25/13.

Joan reported that she received a façade grant application for the Arvon building located at 114 1st Ave South, via email last night. George quickly reviewed the application. They are eligible for the multi-story façade grant, and would qualify for the maximum grant of \$60K. The Board asked that the grant application be forwarded to them and they can make a determination upon review.

Discussion followed on the plans that Travis & Janet Neil have for Bert & Ernie's with creation of an outdoor dining space. Currently no BID grants would meet their needs. Joan noted that Steve Alley had previously suggested that the BID create some type of a sidewalk grant to assist property owners when they need to do sidewalk work; Steve Alley was also the impetus behind the residential grant being created. Travis discussed the plans for Bert & Ernie's and noted that the City has approved sidewalk dining with two stipulations; a 6-foot easement must be available on the sidewalk for pedestrians and they are not allowed to have hanging plants. Alison added that this was initiated by Carol Bronson and there will be other downtown restaurants that are interested. Garry noted that all of our current grant programs require permanence and would not cover something of a seasonal nature like outdoor dining. Travis will draft a grant program that would provide some BID funding to assist property owners with seasonal outdoor improvements. Garry noted that he'd be interested in creating an outdoor space for the residents who will move into the Margaret building. Discussion

followed on trees for 3rd Street alongside Bert & Ernie's. Travis had expressed interest in having trees planted along 3rd Street. Joan had inquired with the City Forrester and been informed that the City can pull a 'tree planting permit' and then they would pay half of the bill; they could install 5 to 6 trees there. Joan noted that in the time she's been with the BID no property owner has paid to have trees installed and she'd like to see the BID pay the remaining half for the installation of trees; Travis stated that he would be responsible for the removal of concrete. Joan will ask the City to provide a cost estimate on trees.

Art Grant Criteria: Joan provided the board with the updated draft of the proposed Art Grant program that reflects the changes suggested last month (eligible once every five years, sealant, logo/signage). Sheila motioned to approve the new downtown Art Grant as presented. Garry seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Residential Grant Criteria: The board requested that the criteria be emailed to them again. The Board tabled this topic until next month.

VII. Old Business:

Beautification: 1st Ave N Underpass: Joan informed the Board that two artists have created renderings for the north side of the wall. She added that we will need to budget to pay the artist for the proposed selection so that the BID has ownership of the work, if we opt to make a change. The Board asked that the proposed renderings be emailed to them so they can take some time to look them over.

Holiday Décor: Joan reminded Sheila to inquire with DGFA's Board if anyone would be willing to serve on a sub-committee to look at the holiday décor. The committee would include the BID, DGFA and someone from Jonas.

Roberts Park Playground: Joan reported that there was a meeting last week of the committee, but she was not able to attend. An email with an update was received last night that the property owner is contributing additional \$2,500 to the project. He has committed to increasing his insurance to cover non-resident use of the park during the day and he has committed to maintenance. The email noted that some potential private investors are hesitant to contribute should the property owner sell the property in the future and a new owner may not wish to open themselves up to this liability. Sheila suggested that the property owner sign a "Deed Restriction" that would limit the use of the park. Joan will inform Jolene of this possibility. The email also noted that Jolene is prepping a letter to be sent out to potential investors. Joan added that Jolene had previously requested that an Alive @ 5 be held in that area to highlight the project.

Traffic Signal Box 2013: Joan reported MDT was requiring that an MOU be signed by the City as they expressed concerns over maintaining the TSB's when/if the BID no longer exists. The City has agreed to sign an MOU and it will be at the City Commission meeting on Tuesday the 19th. Once this MOU is signed Joan plans to go public with the Call to Artists – so that should be out before the next BID Board meeting. Joan added that the City should come back to the BID to be sure the BID does its part, so the BID may also be asked to sign an MOU with the City.

Downtown Great Falls Association:

Team Trolley: Sheila reported that Team Trolley has been meeting and moving forward. DGFA has committed to make the purchase of the trolley and has committed \$8K toward the purchase; Paris Gibson Square has committed \$3K. Joan added that the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission is very likely going to be an investor and will commit \$3K. Sheila noted that the trolley was thoroughly inspected and is in great shape. She added that they wish to keep the trolley rolling in Great Falls and make it very downtown centered. Sheila noted that investors receive a seat on the Trolley Advisory Board; an interior advertising sign for the 1st year; free use of the trolley for 2-hours; and a 20% discount on the trolley and tours for the 1st year. Discussion followed on the BID matching DGFA's contribution to the purchase. Kris motioned to approve the BID being an investor in the trolley for \$8K, \$4K to be paid in this fiscal year and the balance of \$4K to be paid in 2013-2014 fiscal year. Travis seconded. Garry & Sheila abstained. **Motion passed.**

Downtown Partnership: Sheila reported that the partnership held its work sessions last week to create a work plan for 2013. The work plan will be presented to the Board at the next DDP meeting on 2/27 for formal approval.

Downtown Safety Alliance: Joan reported that most of the BID and DGFA board members are not officially Business Watch members and it would be good if board members show their support of the program by officially completing the membership form. Forms were provided to the board members who are not already business watch members. Joan reported that the first collection for Coins for a Cause was done on 1/24. A total of \$22.23 was deposited in the bank. Becky requested a tub; Joan noted there are currently 15 locations and that all of the tubs are out but the committee is either looking at getting more tubs or moving tubs around that are not generating any funding. Joan suggested that Becky have the cards available to assist in the education process. Becky inquired if there is a tub on each block and if she can direct folks to a tub. Joan will get a list of locations to the Board.

Johnson Hotel: Joan reported that Stay @ Home Home Care has given 30-day notice as of 2/13 and will be vacating their space in the incubator on 3/13.

Parking Commission: Wendy reported on the parking commission above under Guests.

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

VIII. **New Business:**

Fire Within: Joan reported that GFDA announced the winners of the Fire Within awards. This is the 3rd year they've recognized women business owners and to date all of the winners have been downtown; Cari Yturri & Cindy Cieluch; Sandy Thares & Kari Johnson and this year's winners are Alison Fried and Tracy Perry.

History Museum: Joan reported that DGFA is one of the recipients of a Legacy Award from the History Museum. They are holding a dinner on 2/22 to recognize the recipients. All of the recipients are downtown; Ian Davidson, Pacific Steel and Public Drug are also being honored.

Montana Main Street: Joan reported that letters in support of the Montana Main Street program were sent to the six legislators involved in funding the program urging them to approve funding and continue the program.

Urban Art Project: Joan reported that the next UAP reception is being held on Monday 2/25 at 5pm. The reception takes place at the UAP on 1st Ave South with food being served across the street at Bert & Ernie's. Joan noted that Jean Price organizes this program and the BID is the largest contributor and Jean always requests that BID Board members attend so she can recognize the contribution.

IX. **Public Comment:**

No public comment at this time.

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:00am.

Andy Ferrin, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____