

Minutes
Business Improvement District
June 9, 2011

Board Present: Tony Longin, Julie Duffy, Steve Alley, Stacey Schaefer, Hayley Leray, Doug Lorello
Board Absent: Alison Fried
Staff Present: Joan Redeen, Justin Redeen
Guests Present: Garry Hackett, Mark Mathson

- I. **Call to order:** Tony called the meeting to order at 9:02am.
- II. **Guests:** Joan noted last month the Board approved Mark Mathson's bid to upgrade the BID's website. Conversation last month was held about possibly utilizing Facebook rather than having a dedicated website. As a result, Mark Mathson was invited at Doug's request to educate the Board on social media and its use in business today. Mark provided the Board with a screen shot of what the new website might look like. He noted that social media is another aspect of marketing but every avenue of marketing should point back to the website. Facebook doesn't have the ability to post documents (our grant applications, etc.). Joan added that several organizations block Facebook. Mark suggested that the BID eventually have our own Facebook page, as opposed to partnering with DGFA. He noted that our new website will have a blogging component and that's a good way to get updates out quickly. Our new website will have the ability for folks to subscribe by e-mail so they receive notifications when the website is updated. He estimates that our new website will be live in one week. Joan will be trained and management of the site will be moved in-house. Mark noted that we will continue to pay an annual fee for webhosting but that cost is likely to go down to around \$200 per year. If the Board makes major changes to the design of the web we will be billed at \$75 per hour.
- III. **Approval of minutes from 5-12-11 meeting:** Steve motioned to approve the minutes from the 5/12/11 meeting. Stacey seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- IV. **Financials:** The Board has not received the May financials yet; the bank statement has been received but has not been reconciled.
Joan noted that the City will receive the approved budget and it will be presented, along with the Work Plan, to the Commissioners at their work session on July 19th and should be approved at the August 2nd meeting.
- V. **Grant Programs:** Joan noted that the following grants have been submitted, and were approved by the Board via e-mail: Tanglz at 11 5th St N, Interior for \$3,772.50; Tanglz, Business Incentive for \$1,006; Sparkettes at 511 Central Ave, Business Incentive for \$600; and Once Again at 4 6th St S, Business Incentive for \$650. Hayley motioned to approve all grants as previously presented. Steve seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
Discussion followed on making any changes to the Business Incentive grant criteria. The Board instructed Joan to add the following sentence to the grant criteria, "All grant applications will be reviewed and are subject to Board approval based upon the best interest of the property owners within the BID." Stacey motioned to approve the proposed change to the Business Incentive grant criteria. Julie seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
Stacey inquired if our grant criteria are available for individuals to review, in a format other than the website. Joan noted that when any individual inquires she prints out the criteria for them directly from the web. The Board noted that they'd like it to be available on our letterhead. Discussion followed on the BID's letterhead and logo and lack of the words Great Falls on the logo. Hayley will work on drafting some new logo formats and creating a new letterhead.
- VI. **Old Business:**
Beautification: Clean & Safe Team: Joan introduced Justin to the Board. Joan noted that this is Justin's fourth week working and with the weather he has hardly been outside. We are in need of

rainy day ideas. Joan added that we are going to have to pursue some type of vehicle for watering and explained to the Board several options she'd explored between Metzger's and a new ATV, borrowing the radio stations golf cart and storing it for them and a golf cart/club car option from Johnson Distributing. Discussion followed on acquiring a vehicle. Doug will begin to search and will provide options. Doug motioned to approve acquiring a vehicle that can be utilized year-round, for watering flowers in the summer and snow removal in the winter. Tony seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.** Joan informed the Board that Foothills had to bow out of sidewalk cleaning for us this year; they did a fantastic job on our behalf last year. She noted that she began exploring other avenues to see if sidewalk cleaning could be done again this year. In talking with the Boys & Girls Club they noted that they have a club of 15 kids ranging in age from 13 to 18 and would be able to provide some community service every Tuesday for one hour, over six weeks this summer. They will begin on Tuesday, June 21st, 10 of them will be outfitted with brooms. Including Justin, there will be three adults supervising. The Board discussed making a donation to the Boys & Girls Club at the end of the summer, based upon their performance. Joan informed the Board of a new downtown art idea. She noted that the plywood surrounding the Rocky Mountain Building has been tagged with graffiti two times in the past month and Julia Becker with UGF expressed interest in the possibility of turning the plywood into a temporary work of art, also adding that she'd cover any additional graffiti if it should occur in the future. Joan read an e-mail noting Julia's ideas; the project would be done quickly and would be a celebration of life. Steve motioned to approve an expenditure of \$1,000 for an art project covering the plywood surrounding the Rocky Mountain Building. Doug seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.** Discussion followed on turning the 1st Ave North railroad underpass into a work of art as it serves as the entryway to downtown. Julie noted that it was a Boy Scout project many years ago and could use an update. Joan commented that this is something that she'd welcome working on, but not something that she sees happening this summer.

Downtown Speaker System: Joan noted that the speaker committee, comprised of Steve Alley, Garry Hackett, Halle Wilson (DGFA), Joe England (DGFA), Sue and Joan, met and discussed the issues and the possibilities. A second meeting was scheduled with Bing of Guitars of Montana who has been working on repairing the current system. He was supposed to provide estimates for new equipment. The meeting was cancelled as Bing did not have estimates yet. As a result of our first meeting an informal e-mail survey was conducted and over 30+ responses were received, all but two were positive and wanted downtown to maintain a sound system. Garry noted that our system is currently an analog system and today's technology is digital. He added that the speakers were 80% of the costs when the system was installed, and the electronics were 20% of the costs. The electronics are what need to be updated. Joan noted that she doesn't want to ignore Bing and the work he has done but feels that we need to move forward and make decisions about this. Tony suggested that Joan write a letter to Bing giving him two weeks to provide estimates and a bill for the work that he has done to date, up to the \$1,000 the BID approved and if he doesn't supply this within the deadline we'll go elsewhere with our business.

Traffic Signal Box Project: Joan reported that the selection committee had its first meeting and the Call to Artists was made public. The response has been very good so far. The next meeting of the selection committee is Monday, July 11th when they will judge the submissions.

Trees: Joan reported that Tilleraas is finishing the installation of the new trees. Tony noted that he has trees around B&B now. The Board instructed Joan to get an update from the City on the status of the TIF projects that the City approved on 9/1/09.

BID Board: Joan noted that the City has received four applications for the two Board openings and they have requested a recommendation from the current BID Board. Garry Hackett, Veronica Ronnau, John Lawton and Andy Ferrin have all applied. The Board felt that each applicant is qualified to serve and was unable to come up with two recommendations. Joan will inform the City. The decision will be made at the City Commissioners meeting on June 21st.

Downtown Action Alliance: Joan reported that last month's meeting was cancelled as it was the same day as the final Master Plan meeting.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan reported that Alive @ 5 is tonight and it is being held indoors at the Civic Center, due to the weather. Sue had inquired with Joan about walking in the 4th of July parade. Joan noted that she'd like to see a group of folks all dressed in our new Downtown royal blue shirts walking in the parade. Joan inquired if the Board would like a letter sent to DGFA regarding them contributing \$1,000 toward the holiday lights again this year. The Board instructed Joan to send a letter.

Downtown Master Plan: Joan reported that the Community Open House was held on Wednesday, June 1st. The speaker was very dynamic and pointed out several good points during the walking audit held that afternoon. The intersection at Park & 1st Ave N is one of the worst he's ever seen in over 4,000 audits; he noted that an intersection has over six hazards for a pedestrian on each side and this intersection instantly adds a minimum of 18 hazards for a pedestrian trying to get from the Civic Center to Gibson Park; he also mentioned that bicycle lanes have over 22 benefits and only two of those are for the bicyclist, the rest are for the motorist. The City has e-mailed a timeline for the rest of the master plan project to all working group members. Joan noted that Brant sent an e-mail informing several organizations that Recreational Trails and the City were going to be applying for a grant to improve the connection between downtown and the River's Edge Trail. He added that he will need letters of support for the grant application. Tony motioned to approve the BID sending a letter of support for the City and Recreational Trails grant application to improve the connection between the River's Edge Trail and downtown. Julie seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Downtown Safety: Joan informed the Board that the next Business Watch meeting will be held on Tuesday July 12th at 5:30pm and the topic is Cybercrime. The safety committee is still meeting and working on drafting a downtown safety plan.

Great Falls Development Authority: Joan reported that the branding project continues to move forward, working with the company from TN. GFDA will hold their annual meeting on June 22nd if any board member is interested in attending; if no one is able Joan will attend on behalf of the BID.

Johnson Hotel: Joan reported the EDA was in town yesterday for their site visit of the 3rd floor. Steve, Joan and Justin met with them and provided them a tour of the building as well as a visit to Cindy Cieluch to show her success. The EDA mentioned that one thing that shows their funds have helped is showing the tax base both before and after. The City provided the following information; the tax base in 2000 for the entire building was \$284,578 and the tax base in 2010 was \$742,001. This information was provided to the EDA. Steve noted that the signage on the 3rd floor is extremely out-of-date; it still notes that UGF is on the 3rd floor. It was suggested that Justin try to use a razor blade to remove the words. Garry noted that lights are out in the common areas, specifically the 2nd floor. Joan mentioned that this has been a topic in the past and she has brought it up with the Association, to no avail. The association takes the stance that individual owners should be taking care of common area lights.

Parking Commission: Joan attended the May Parking Commission meeting. Joan noted that, as a direct result of our letter regarding the Public Drug building construction, Alison asked Joan to inquire about the Rocky Mountain building and why they still have meters bagged on Central Ave. The response from Wendy was that contractors currently use those spaces, Set Free is not being charged for the bags and the same service was provided to B&B after their fire. The Board instructed Joan to send a letter to the City asking that those bags be removed from the meters on Central Ave as contractors visiting the building can park in the City parking lot behind the building.

Urban Art Project: Joan reported that Jean Price took care of the two issues that the Board mentioned; BID is more prominent on the posters in recognition of their contribution and the new postcards have photos (the last set did not have photos due to the type of artwork that was in place). Stacey motioned to approve a donation of \$2,000 to the Urban Art Project. Steve seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Website: This item was addressed under Item II above with Mark Mathson's input.

Work Plan: Joan presented the final copy of the work plan for fiscal year 2011-2012. This, along with the budget, will be presented to the City Commissioners on July 19th and should be approved at

their August 2nd meeting. Julie motioned to approve the work plan as presented for the fiscal year 2011-2012. Stacey seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

VII. **New Business:**

April 4th Main Street Event: Joan informed the Board that she has received several e-mails from Joe Lawniczak regarding his being paid by property owners for the renderings of their buildings. He was paid by Garry Hackett, and the BID has already reimbursed Garry for half of his expense. He has not been paid by the property owners for his renderings of the Lobby Bar and the Arvon building and their payments were due on June 3rd. Discussion followed on the fact that it was Ellen Sievert with the City who brought Joe to town so therefore responsibility for payment to Joe lies with her.
BID Brochure: Joan noted that, since January, we have gone through 200 of our BID brochures that explain the BID and what we do. The Board instructed Joan to order more, in a larger quantity.
Personnel: Joan informed the Board that she has no firm vacation plans this year. She added that she'll probably take some time off during fair week and over the holidays in December.

VIII. **Public Comment:** Steve noted that a new business is moving next door to Metzger's, Fairway Comfort & Heating Systems. He asked if they'd inquired about grants. Joan noted that she has spoken with them about our Business Incentive, Interior and Façade grants and they have all of the paperwork.
Garry informed the Board that the City's Feasibility Study program should be up and running in the next few weeks. He was informed that the RFQ is due next Tuesday and they will be ready to move forward one week after that.

IX. **Adjournment:** Steve motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:12am. Doug seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____