

Minutes
Business Improvement District
April 13, 2011

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

I. **Call to order:** Alison called the meeting to order at 4:10pm.

II. **Guests:** Garry noted that he was in attendance as he had submitted an application to the City to be on the Board, it is likely that he will join the board meetings for the coming months.
Mauri Novak joined us to present his plans for his building, which will be addressed under item III. Grant Programs.

III. **Grant Programs:** Mauri provided the Board with an estimate of his plans for eight one-bedroom residential units in his building at 426 Central Ave. The initial estimate is \$335,605 not including appliance expenses, with 7,000 square feet being renovated. Based on that the building would qualify for a residential grant of \$4.79 per square foot for a total of \$33,530. This residential grant will be the one residential grant approved for the Fiscal Year 2011-2012. Hayley motioned to approve a residential grant for Mauri Novak up to \$33,530 for the Fiscal Year 2011-2012. Stacey seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Joan provided the Board with copies of the new Business Incentive Grant criteria as well as a draft of the grant application. The terms of this new grant program are: first come, first serve basis up to the maximum funding of \$10,000; open to new & existing businesses located outside of the BID who are moving into the BID. Tony noted that he'd like to see an individual cap placed on it. Garry commented that the maximum rent will probably be \$2,500 if considering the Westgate tenants specifically. Hayley noted that the goal is to get a lot of businesses to move downtown. Alison added that this needs to be heavily promoted in the media. Joan informed the Board that she will be heading to Westgate Mall tomorrow with packets for every tenant to inform them and the media will be meeting Joan there.

Joan inquired with the Board if they'd like an additional letter sent to Todd Stam to get an update on the Montana Building. A letter was sent on 3/2 requesting an update and there has been no response. The Board instructed Joan to send an additional letter with a deadline for providing the information by May 1st.

IV. **Old Business:**

Beautification: Clean & Safe Team: Joan informed the Board that the job was posted with Job Services and there has already been some response. Joan inquired with the City about the use of their equipment and they are looking into it and will let us know.

Traffic Signal Box Project: Joan reported that this project has been turned over to Jenn Reichelt at the City for approval.

BID Board: Joan noted that the City has inquired about the status of our Board members who are due to renew and term out. Steve Alley and Tony Longin's terms on the board expire on June 30, 2011 and Alison Fried is not eligible for reappointment at this time. The Board expressed their wishes that both Steve & Tony continue in their capacity as board members. Steve noted that he wishes to be reappointed. Tony noted that he does not wish to be reappointed at this time. With Tony not being reappointed the Board would have two openings as of July 1, 2011. Tony motioned to approve the reappointment of Steve Alley to the Board for a period of four years, expiring June 30, 2015. Stacey seconded. Steve abstained. **Motion passed.** Discussion followed on board members with Garry Hackett noting his interest in serving on the Board; it was noted that he has already submitted an application to the City.

Joan addressed the issue of attendance at Board meetings. With the new guidelines the City has sent to all members sitting on City related Boards the topic of attendance was addressed. BID Board members are able to miss up to four (4) meetings per fiscal year. Discussion followed on Board meeting days and times. It was decided to change the meetings back to 9am, in order to best accommodate everyone's schedules. Hayley motioned to approve changing the regular Board meeting to the 2nd Thursday of each month at 9am. Stacey seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.** For the remainder of 2011 the Board will meet on May 12th, June 9th, July 14th, August 11th, September 8th, October 13th, November 10th and December 8th. Joan will notify the City of this change.

Downtown Action Alliance: Alison reported that Wendy Thomas from the City is the Project Manager assigned to work with Set Free on the rehabilitation of the Rocky Mountain Building. Wendy reported at the DAA meeting that she meets with SFM every Thursday. The City is actively moving forward on this project now. Joan informed the Board that a letter was sent on 3/7 to Mike Haynes inquiring about the status of the building and no response has been received yet. The Board instructed Joan to send another letter to the City. Alison also informed the Board about the status of the letter the BID sent in regard to the Master Plan and the BID's items of key importance. There was discussion on the letter and the items at the DAA meeting. Alison noted that the conversation was that the one-ways, as currently suggested in the Master Plan, are vague. Joan also noted that Sheila with NeighborWorks had inquired about what the BID meant by 'economic hurdles'. The examples of the sidewalk sandwich board fee and the sidewalk rental/awning fee issue were brought up but the DAA requested additional examples. Tony noted the food cart is another example. Parking is another example. Discussion followed on the subject of the sidewalk rental/awning fee. Tony asked Joan to find the City ordinance that applies to this topic.

Joan noted that April 4th was the technical assistance evening from the Montana Main Street program, with Joe Lawniczak in town to address façade improvements. Joe worked with Garry Hackett, among other property owners. The Rocky Mountain Building was the one rendering done that was included with the presentation. Joan has received a draft of the Rocky Mountain Building's rendering. Joan inquired with the Board on how they wish to handle payment to Joe for the additional renderings he has done for property owners within the BID who qualify for having half of the fee paid. The Board instructed Joan that Joe needs to bill the property owners directly and those property owners then need to submit a copy of their invoice and receipt for payment and the BID will reimburse them half, up to \$500. Joan will inform Joe so he can begin billing.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan informed the Board that DGFA's general membership meeting is at 6pm tonight at the Tribune. They'll be introducing the new board members, voting on the new by-laws, Cari Yturri is presenting her plans for Bennett Motors and there will be a tour of the Tribune.

Marketing Committee: Alison noted that the marketing committee met and discussed the coupon book, recycled grocery bags, flags, banners, etc. DGFA will be sponsoring a night at the ballpark. GF Bench approached DGFA about putting the Downtown logo on various benches throughout the City when there is a vacancy on the bench. All that DGFA has had to pay for in regard to this is the creation of the bench overlay; GF Bench will not be charging them a rental fee for the benches. DGFA authorized creation of five bench overlays. Discussion was also held on moving forward on the next version of the downtown map that Robert Smith created and the BID paid for. Joan will work on getting the file from Robert Smith and forwarding it to Hayley to see if we can work on it.

Downtown Master Plan: Joan noted that the Accessibility working group met and re-worded the one-ways and parking objectives. The objective for one-ways has been changed from "Determine the costs and benefits of converting City-operated one-way roadways into two-ways" to "Reduce or eliminate one-ways downtown". For parking the group proposed adding "Develop and implement a comprehensive parking plan". Stacey inquired if the Working Groups were done meeting. Joan noted that Brant, with the City, has said that the next meeting will likely be a large-group meeting and will be held sometime in May. Joan informed the Board that the Steering Committee meets on Monday, April 18th at 11:30am in the Civic Center and will be covering the proposed Goals,

Objectives and Strategies. She reminded the Board that this meeting is open to anyone who is interested in attending.

Joan informed the Board that she attended the Governor's Conference on Tourism on Tuesday, March 29th in Helena. She attended a seminar on Wayfinding. The presenter has since e-mailed everyone who was in attendance at the conference, offering reduced rates on wayfinding assessments. The Board instructed Joan to forward the information to the City. Joan informed the Board that Great Falls will host the Governor's Conference on Tourism in April 2012.

Downtown Safety: Joan informed the Board that she discussed getting a VISTA for the BID with the state office that handles the program. Currently VISTA's can only work on moving people out of poverty situations. Having a VISTA work on creating a program like Billings' Spare Change for Real Change would be possible, but that program in and of itself would not be a full-time job. The Board instructed Joan to inquire with Sheila about how she has acquired VISTA's in the past.

Great Falls Development Authority: Joan provided the Board with copies of GFDA's annual report. She noted that Brett had inquired if the BID would like to share office space with GFDA as they are currently seeking a new location. The Board noted that the BID office will remain where it is for the time being. Joan was instructed to thank Brett and inform him of the Board's decision. Joan informed the Board that the next meeting for the Branding Project is being held on Thursday, April 21st at 8am in GFDA's offices. Joan will be attending the meeting on behalf of the BID but if anyone else wishes to attend they are welcome to.

Johnson Hotel: Joan noted that she inquired with Randy Tarum regarding the elevator expenses. He informed Joan that there is an annual maintenance contract and the payments are made quarterly, which should explain the expenses Joan was inquiring about. Joan noted that the Gladiators are vacating the Incubator and the Great Falls Americans are going to be moving into their space. We will only have a few days where that unit is vacant.

Montana Downtown Coalition: Joan informed the Board that we have been invited to become a member of the newly forming Montana Downtown Coalition. The idea was created by Greg Krueger in Billings and Chris Naumann in Bozeman of bringing the downtown organizations throughout the state together so that we can coordinate the efforts to get large state-wide corporate sponsors for the annual downtown conference. Joan added that she still hopes that Great Falls can host the downtown conference in 2012. Greg and Chris have been working on a draft of the guidelines of how the group will work and are asking for a contribution of \$250 annually. Stacey motioned to approve Great Falls becoming a member of the Montana Downtown Coalition. Hayley seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Parking Commission: Joan informed the Board that the Parking Commission meeting for April has been changed to Monday, April 25th at 3pm. The Board asked Joan to attend on their behalf as no one else was available to attend. Joan told the Board about an idea that Kelly Parks, a local realtor, made recently about parking and fines. Kelly suggested that if someone spent a said amount of money at downtown businesses (\$100 or \$200, etc.) and happened to receive a parking ticket they should be able to walk into the City offices and present their receipts for that day and have their parking fine waived. Alison noted that if they were a customer in her store she'd pay their fine. Joan informed the Board that there is still one opening on the Commission.

Website: Joan informed the Board about her inquiry to the City about the BID continuing to post minutes on our own website, since we now have to post our minutes on the City's website. Joan read the e-mail from Jenn that informed the BID the following: "it's up to you as to whether or not you want to continue to have your minutes/agendas on your actual website. I don't think it's a problem for you to have them there, since many of your members may actually visit your site before they visit the City's site – especially your current BID members and downtown business owners. You certainly could provide a link to our site that says "current minutes and agendas can be found here" – that way you can stop posting them yourself. But there should be something on your site indicating where folks can go to find current minutes and agendas." The Board discussed the bids received for updating the BID's website. Joan noted that she'd prefer that the work come in-house, so that she can maintain the website and not have additional monthly expenses tied to maintaining it.

That being said she noted that eliminates two bids instantly; MacJiggy and Walker Design. Alison noted that she doesn't feel there is a need to spend money on a website when everything can be done on Facebook. Discussion followed and no decision was made on this item at this time.

Work Plan: Joan noted that she continues to work the work plan.

V. New Business:

Public Drug Construction: Joan provided the Board with a copy of a letter received from Oswood Construction regarding the construction of the Public Drug Building. This letter was sent to all property owners within the immediate area of the construction. Steve noted that he has been very impressed with Oswood Construction and how accommodating they are being throughout this whole process.

Teen Day: Joan informed the Board that the Alliance for Youth has inquired about sponsorship for the 15th Annual Day of Teen Recognition that takes place this Friday, April 15th. The Board noted that this is not an event they will sponsor at this time.

Voices of Hope: Joan informed the Board that Voices of Hope has inquired about sponsorship for the Golf for Hope Charity Golf Tournament. The Board noted that this is not an event they will sponsor at this time.

VI. Public Comment: No public comment.

VII. Adjournment: Hayley motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:08 pm. Stacey seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Alison Fried, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

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