

**Minutes**  
**Business Improvement District**  
**March 3, 2011**

Board Present: Alison Fried, Stacey Schaefer, Steve Alley, Tony Longin  
Board Absent: Doug Lorello, Hayley Leray, Julie Duffy  
Staff Present: Joan Redeen  
Guests Present: Nano McCluskey

- I. **Call to order:** Alison called the meeting to order at 4:06pm.
- II. **Guests:** Nano McCluskey with GFDA showed the branding project PowerPoint presentation. The goal of the project is to create a unified message about Great Falls. There will be many organizations participating in the creation and the key will be that everyone adopts and implements the City brand on the web and in their marketing materials. They hope to have the end results in the next nine months. GFDA's budget is \$35K and they are currently \$1,500 shy of that goal. Stacey motioned to approve a \$1,500 investment in the Great Falls Development Authority's city-wide branding project. Steve seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- III. **Approval of minutes from 2-3-11 meeting:** Stacey motioned to approve the minutes from the 2/3 meeting. Tony seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- IV. **Financials:** The Board received the January financials via e-mail last week. There being no discussion on the financials Stacey motioned to approve the 1/31/11 financial statements which include the Balance Sheets, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Steve seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Grant Status:** Joan reported that we have paid out the Leray interior grant of \$5K. She inquired with the Board if they would like an update letter sent to the owners of the Montana Building, as it has been one year since we've received any news on the status of that project. Joan read a draft of the letter to the Board. The Board instructed Joan to send the letter.
- VI. **Regular Business:**

**Beautification:** Joan reported that she contacted both Missoula and Billings to inquire about their Clean & Safe teams. Missoula informed Joan that their BID spends just over \$50K annually on their Clean & Safe program. They have one ambassador on staff year-round and during the summer months add a second. These folks attend all downtown events with their mobile information kiosk and are visible on the street during the summer months. The BID also contracts with Opportunities Resources for four to six clients who pick up trash, pull weeds, clean out tree grates, etc. They also have one full-time year-round maintenance staff person who cleans their sidewalks, removes graffiti, and plows their alleys and bike paths. Their Downtown Association hires seasonal staff comprised mostly of college students who water their flowers and change out their banners, etc. Joan noted that she hadn't received any detail from Billings yet on their programs but she was made aware of their snow removal program. Billings uses approximately 14% of their annual budget for snow removal. They remind their property owners that they are still responsible for snow removal; they simply create a 4-foot wide right-of-way through the snow when it is more than 2-inches deep. They began their program with a donation of an older piece of equipment from the City; they have since acquired additional equipment including a bobcat and a couple of ATV's. Tony noted that he'd still like to see the BID contract it out. Joan commented that she'd like to see us create a partnership working with RSVP or using a VISTA to establish some type of program. Joan reported that she'd inquired about a VISTA. A summer VISTA would cost \$600 and an annual VISTA would require attendance at a training program in Helena and would cost approximately \$9,500. The Board instructed Joan to work on pursuing a VISTA for this summer and inquire about acquiring an annual VISTA as well. Joan reported the status on the Traffic Signal boxes art idea. She inquired with Jim Reardon with Public Works and the response was very positive. He informed Joan that he sees no reason why we

can't pursue it. He instructed Joan to present something to the City Commission to gain their approval. Joan informed the Board that she received a great deal of information from Missoula about their program. Missoula has 72 boxes city-wide and has completed 22 of them. The program began in 2009 within their BID utilizing BID funds and has since expanded city-wide. They provide a stipend of \$1K per traffic signal box. Joan noted that she has received a copy of Missoula's Call to Artists and was given permission to use it. Tony noted that he'd like to see us complete every box within the BID this summer. The Board determined that the stipend for the smaller boxes that are mounted on light posts should be less than \$1K but they agreed to a maximum stipend of \$1K and will work out the final details once we have formal approval from the City. Joan will get a total number of boxes within the BID boundaries. The Board instructed Joan to pursue approval of this project with both the City and the State (for 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N).

**Downtown Action Alliance:** Alison reported that Set Free Ministries attended the most recent DAA meeting and showed their documentary that highlights what they do for our community. The building is still in the same position as last month, they are waiting on Tabacco Construction to provide them with information and bids on what their options are. Wendy Thomas with the City has been assigned the liaison for the project. Joan reported that Tim Spencer from the Brighten Up Frame Shop was in the office again yesterday inquiring about the status of the building; he commented on how devastating having that property across the street from his business has been. Tony commented that he thinks we should write a letter to the City to urge the project along. He noted that we represent numerous downtown property owners and that we should be sending quarterly inquiries. The Board instructed Joan to write a letter to the City.

Joan reported that the City is officially now an affiliate of the Montana Main Street program and as such we are now entitled to a one-time annual technical assistance. Our technical assistance for this year will take place on Monday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in the NeighborWorks learning center. Joe Lawniczak from the Wisconsin Main Street program will come to Great Falls and discuss high impact, low cost façade improvements. With his visit will be included one site visit with a property owner where he will create a rendering of what the property could look like with these low cost improvements. Alison noted that Ellen with the City had inquired if the BID would be willing to cover the cost of \$1K per site visit for any additional property owners within the BID boundaries who might wish to have Joe visit with them as she has yielded a few inquiries. Discussion followed. Steve motioned that the BID will provide \$500 toward a site visit and rendering done by Joe Lawniczak with the Wisconsin Main Street program for property owners within the BID boundaries provided the property owner fund the additional \$500 and with the stipulation that the \$500 the BID funds will come out of any façade grant funding that property owner might receive in the future. Stacey seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The next DAA meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9am at NeighborWorks.

**Downtown Great Falls Association:** Joan informed the Board that DGFA sent out their ballots to their membership. The BID has received a ballot, with four candidates we are to vote for three. The Board noted that they'd like to see more retailers represented on DGFA's board. Joan reported that the marketing committee met this past week and Kevin is getting ready to come before the Board to request funding for July 1 to Dec 31. She added that First Friday Art Walk is tomorrow evening and DGFA is hosting a Mardi Gras ball at The Breaks.

**Downtown Master Plan:** Joan provided the Board with a draft of the BID's wish list. Tony commented that our wish list should be streamlined to items of key importance. Alison noted that in composing the proposed list she pulled out the IEDC report and went specifically to their list of recommendations. The Board narrowed the wish list down to five key items. The Board instructed Joan to address a cover letter to Brant Birkeland at the City, copying Greg Doyon, the City Commission, Mike Haynes, all chairs of the downtown master plan working groups and the City employees who are facilitating the working groups.

**Downtown Safety:** The next Business Watch meeting is Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm at NeighborWorks. The topic will cover Currency, Checks and Credit Card Fraud. Our speaker is Jolene Bach from Consumer Credit Counseling and Stockman Bank is our sponsor.

**Johnson Hotel:** Joan inquired if anyone has received any notifications of an association meeting. Tony noted that he has not been notified about any meetings. Joan reported that the association has charged \$1,196 three times since July 2010 for elevator expenses. She was aware that there was to be a major elevator repair but was never informed about the final costs or how it was to be billed. The Board instructed her to contact Randy Tarum and inquire about the elevator billing.

**Parking Commission:** Steve reported that the south ramp is no longer manned and as a result is locked and only open to those holding monthly passes. The City is looking into an automated system for that ramp but no determination has been made yet. Alison inquired about the courtesy parking spots that businesses pay for downtown and enforcement of those spots. She has recently had several customers be ticketed for parking there for less than two hours. Tony commented that he was notified that they are patrolling his neighborhood again.

**Website:** Joan provided the Board with five bids for updating the website. The bids range from \$1,500 to \$4,200; three offer the option of in-house maintenance of the website while two would maintain it for us at a cost of either \$75 or \$80 per hour. She noted that she requested these bids three weeks ago and they all arrived in the last 24 hours so she hasn't fully reviewed them. She added that she is impressed with Banik's proposed web design but they were the highest bid.

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

VII. **Other Business:**

**City:** A notice was received on 2/9 from the City that they were going to be holding a training session on 2/23 for members of its various boards and commissions. Stacey attended the training on behalf of the BID Board. The City prepared packets for distribution to all members of the Board and Joan handed those to the Board members present. Stacey noted that we now must submit our meeting agendas and minutes to the City so they can be posted to the City's website on our Board's page. Alison inquired if that would mean that we still need to post them to our own website. Joan will look into this. Stacey noted that we must have guests on our agenda and allow room on the agenda for public comment at the end of each meeting. She added that if an item is not listed on our agenda the Board will not be able to vote on that item until the following meeting when it is placed on the agenda, allowing time for public comment.

**Public Drug Building:** Joan informed the Board that she attended a meeting at the City about the construction that will take place on the new Public Drug Building at the corner of Central and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. They are ready to start construction as soon as the weather cooperates. Once construction starts their estimate is seven to eight months to completion. They will have a portion of Central Ave and 4<sup>th</sup> Street closed. Joan received an e-mail from Wendy Thomas with a summary of the meeting if any board member would like a copy of that. Tony noted that he'd like to see that e-mail.

**Urban Art Project:** Joan provided the new posters and postcards to the Board. She added that she is disappointed in this round of postcards as there are no pictures of the art work, as the past postcards have all had photos.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, April 7, 2011 at 4:00pm.

Alison Fried, Chair

Joan Redeem, Staff

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_