

Minutes
Business Improvement District
February 3, 2011

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

- I. **Call to order:** Alison called the meeting to order at 4:04pm.
- II. **Guests:** No guests were present at the beginning of the meeting; this item was moved to the bottom of the agenda.
- III. **Approval of minutes from 1-6-11 meeting:** Stacey motioned to approve the minutes from the 1/6 meeting. Julie seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- IV. **Financials:** The Board received the December financials via e-mail last week. There being no discussion on the financials Tony motioned to approve the 12/31/10 financial statements which include the Balance Sheets, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Stacey seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
The new signature card for the new CD at Stockman Bank was signed by Tony & Alison, Steve still needs to sign.
- V. **Grant Status:** Joan reported that an interior grant request was received from the Tap House Grill and was e-mailed to the Board. The original estimate provided with the application was \$132,395; their new estimate for repairs as a result of the fire is over \$600K. They are eligible for a maximum interior grant of \$5,000. Tony motioned to approve a \$5,000 interior grant for the Tap House Grill. Alison seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
Joan informed the Board that the interior grant and the façade grant for the Tap House Lounge were paid out today for a total of \$8,554. Their final expenses exceeded \$108,000.
Joan noted that Tony had brought up the issue of City permits and whether or not that was listed specifically in our grant requirements. Tony noted that all grants should be permitted and the BID should receive proof of those permits, whether the applicant submits a copy of the actual permit or submits a receipt reflecting payment of the permit. Stacey pointed out that permits are listed as an expense item on our Construction Cost Statement. She also noted that most projects would require more than one permit, e.g., electrical, plumbing, etc. Tony noted that there should be one overall construction permit and that is what we should see proof of. Tony motioned that our grant requirements be changed to include a copy of the City permit or a copy of the receipt permitting construction. Julie seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- VI. **Regular Business:**
 - Downtown Action Alliance:** Alison reported that there were several guests at the meeting on 1/26. The engineering study on the Rocky Mountain Building is complete and Set Free had been invited so they could give us an update. Set Free reported that the roof work is out to bid with Tabacco Construction. Once they provide Set Free with estimates for keeping the 4th floor and possibly removing the 4th floor Set Free will decide how to move forward. They'd prefer to keep the 4th floor. Set Free is showing a 28-minute documentary at the next DAA meeting. Alison noted that the downtown information packets were also handed out to all present and that Sue with DGFA had provided an update on the downtown marketing plan.
The next DAA meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 23rd at 9am at NeighborWorks.
 - Downtown Great Falls Association:** Joan informed the Board that DGFA will be moving to quarterly membership meetings. They are preparing ballots for three openings on the board and their updated by-laws that will be sent out to their membership. Alison, Halle Wilson, Sue and Joan all

went out last week and distributed the downtown info packets to the majority of the downtown businesses.

Downtown Master Plan: Joan noted the working groups were all working on goals at the January meetings and in February will move to the next level, getting a little more specific with how to achieve those goals by working on objectives. Tony noted that it's time to discuss what the BID really wants to see, e.g., get rid of the one-ways. Alison noted that removal of the one-ways was the number one item the IEDC came up with when they visited. The Board will plan a work session to figure out what specifically the BID would like to see happen downtown.

Downtown Safety: Alison noted the downtown info packets had details about the Business Watch program. The next Business Watch meeting is Tuesday, March 8th at 5:30pm at NeighborWorks. The topic will cover Currency, Checks and Credit Card Fraud. Stockman Bank is our sponsor.

Johnson Hotel: Julie noted that United Way held a reception in the entryway of the Johnson Hotel and the lights were all out. Joan informed the Board that Doug had reported this problem several months back. Joan called Mark Striepe with the association and was informed that we could change the bulbs on our own, if we wished, as the association relies upon individual owners to take care of issues as they see them arise. The association would reimburse for light bulbs if the owner wanted to be reimbursed for the bulbs. Mark also noted that he is an off-site owner so he can't take care of it. Joan noted that when she had this conversation she discussed the issue with Stacey. Stacey informed her that Mike would not take care of bulbs in the entryway free of charge; he handles the third floor for us compliments of Stromberg but will not take care of common areas free of charge. Alison inquired when the association is meeting. Tony noted that he would find out. Joan added that First Friday Art Walk is tomorrow evening and Karin Striepe and Tracy Perry are hosting artists in the entryway from GF High and CMR so the light bulb issue might be resolved by that time.

Parking Commission: Joan informed the Board that she has not received any notifications from the City in regard to the Parking Commission. Tony commented that there is one opening on the Commission. Alison noted that Standard Parking let four employees go as of 12/31 and had to back pay them due to the prevailing wage issue.

Trees/Beautification Efforts: Tony inquired about the status on tree replacement. Joan noted that there are 28 additional trees to be replaced and Steve Tilleraas will take care of it for us as soon as he is able. Joan informed the Board that she also began exploring the signal boxes/art idea. Her initial thoughts are to take historic photos of downtown and put them on the 6 or 7 signal boxes on Central, with the hope that this could be done before this summer. There are many possibilities about how to do this of course, this is just one idea and would be quickly implemented without having to establish art criteria ahead of time. Tony commented that we could put downtown maps or any variety of items on the boxes. Brett commented that the new downtown logo would also be good to put on a signal box. He added that Joan should contact Public Works or MDT to inquire about the possibilities of this project.

Joan informed the Board that she explored the prevailing wage topic with the City and was informed that they will not offer us legal advice due to potential liability. The Board instructed Joan to move forward on creating a job description for a Clean & Safe team. Joan will work with Stacey on creating a job description.

Work Plan: Joan noted that she continues to work the work plan. The continued discussion on the topic of prevailing wages and the Clean & Safe Team were addressed above under Trees/Beautification Efforts.

VII. **Other Business:**

Website: Joan informed the Board that she sent several updates to Walker Design Group for the website. When those updates were posted she noted that the fonts were different and the website looked very odd and unprofessional. Joan inquired with WDG and was informed that our website is about four years old and is out-of-date. WDG informed Joan that it would take approximately six hours at \$75/hr to fix the code (\$450) or we could redesign the entire website for 20-30 hours (\$1500-2250). The Board was under the impression that we paid WDG to maintain the website,

keeping it up-to-date, etc. The Board instructed Joan to inquire with a few other graphic designers for cost estimates to maintain our website and find out recommendations on how often website redesign needs to be done.

National Endowment for the Arts: Joan informed the Board that the TBID informed her about a grant opportunity from the National Endowment for the Arts. She is exploring the possibility with Brant & Ellen at the City, as the City would need to be the one to apply. The general consensus is that this is something that should be pursued.

Montana Main Street Program: Joan updated the Board on an e-mail received (and forwarded to the Board earlier in the week) regarding the current legislature and funding for the Montana Main Street Program. The funding was \$125K and the current request is for \$250K, if the legislators do not approve the funding the program will disappear. Brett commented that Great Falls' own Ed Buttrey voted against the funding in the sub-committee. Joan noted that the Main Street Program provides educational opportunities (technical assistance) throughout the state and their services are very important to several of the smaller communities in Montana. Joan noted that Julie Burk, the Main Street Program Coordinator, has a technical assistance opportunity for Great Falls that would take place in April or May. She has a speaker from Wisconsin who has a presentation that covers preservation and proper restoration techniques as well as effective signage. Discussion followed on the Main Street Program. The Board instructed Joan to not send any e-mails to legislators at this time.

GFDA: Joan provided the Board with information on upcoming dates of GFDA events. Their Invest Great Falls 2011 seminar takes place on March 30th. GFDA sent out an e-mail on 1/31 that listed all February events including their Board meetings, loan committee meetings, etc.

Brett informed the Board that he had joined us to discuss three items: 1. The City is in the process of hiring a new building inspector. Greg Doyon likes to have his new City officials out in the community for the first week or two after they arrive. Brett suggested that the BID host a coffee with all of the property owners so they can meet the new City official when that individual is hired. 2. GFDA is putting together new marketing materials for the Downtown Loan Fund and they would appreciate the BID's help to get the information out about the fund. They've completed one loan to date, on the Montana Building. 3. Brett wanted to discuss the proposed city-wide branding project and request that the BID back the project either financially or simply by providing an individual to sit on the task force, preferably both. They originally estimated the costs to be between \$50K and \$125K and were initially hoping to kick it off with \$75K. At this time they have \$33.5K available in funding and are going to move forward on the project, whether they have additional pledges or not, as they feel it will be very important for the City. They have a grant application for \$25K and will find out about that sometime this month. It would be a coordinated effort to develop a brand promise for Great Falls and would create uniform marketing for the City. He noted that they will bring in a facilitator and utilize local graphic designers once the facilitator has completed their portion of the project. Branding would apply to tourism, attracting workforce, business investment, and change the attitude of citizens to be more positive, to name a few of the benefits. He added that he had a PowerPoint presentation but neglected to bring it. The Board requested that Brett come to our March Board meeting and show his PowerPoint and the Board would make a decision at that time, when more Board members are present.

Brett also added that he is working on bringing a Downtown consultant from Colorado to town to present two workshops; one geared toward retailers and the other about making downtown a destination.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48 pm.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, March 3, 2011 at 4:00pm.

Alison Fried, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____