

JOURNAL OF SPECIAL COMMISSION WORK SESSION
March 20, 2017

City Commission Special Work Session
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212

Mayor Pro Tempore Bob Jones presiding

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Bronson, Tracy Houck, Fred Burow and Bob Jones. Mayor Kelly arrived at 3:42 pm.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Greg Doyon, Planning and Community Development Director Craig Raymond, Planning and Community Deputy Director Tom Micuda, Planning and Community Development CDBG Administrator Maria Porter and Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

**** *Action Minutes of the Great Falls City Commission. Please refer to the audio/video recording of this meeting for additional detail.* ****

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** 3:00 p.m.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ron Gessaman, 1006 36th Avenue NE, commented that excavating has begun by the Holiday Gas Station in Fox Farm and the perception is that the City Commission has already approved the zoning change. Mr. Gessaman expressed safety concerns with regard to the burnt out building behind the Holman building. He further commented that the railroad has a commitment to get rid of the building by March 31st.

City Manager Greg Doyon responded that the burnt out building has been fenced off, and they are waiting results to do proper remediation for it. Manager Doyon further commented that the City would monitor the situation and make sure they comply with the City's order.

With regard to the excavating work being done in Fox Farm, Planning and Community Director Craig Raymond responded that a field permit was obtained through the City and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Manager Doyon pointed out that if a legal permit was obtained, there is nothing that the City could do to stop the excavating.

3. **2016/2017 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN AMENDMENT AND CDBG TIMELINESS PROJECTS**

Planning and Community Development Director Craig Raymond reviewed and discussed the attached PowerPoint presentation regarding the 2016/2017 Annual Action Plan Amendment and CDBG Timeliness Projects.

Manager Doyon inquired if the most recent CDBG applications had been looked at.

Planning and Community Development Director Craig Raymond responded that recent CDBG applications had been looked at, but some applications were construction and project related.

Director Raymond further explained that the Community Development Council (CDC) recommended that those projects not be added to the list.

Manager Doyon reported that there were unspent prior CDBG allocations and the revolving loan fund piece. He further pointed out that CDBG funds are audited annually and that there was a compliance audit through HUD.

Commissioner Burow expressed support with regard to making the Senior Citizen Center eligible for a CDBG grant for the purchase of food for the Center.

Manager Doyon encouraged the Commission to ask questions or make any other considerations at the work session with regard to what is being recommended. Manager Doyon further explained that changes would need to be made at the March 21st Commission meeting.

Commissioner Houck expressed concern with regard to transparency of the CDBG made process. She further expressed concern with regard to other organizations being disqualified for a perfect CDBG application. Commissioner Houck concluded that there were more projects that were not funded, but did have environmental reviews.

With regard to the Park and Recreation allocations, Commissioner Bronson inquired what the cost of the play structure for Kranz Park would be and if it could be completed within the time frame.

Director Raymond responded that no recommendation was made because there was no dollar figure given; however, the equipment could be purchased with the money that is being proposed.

Commissioner Bronson referred to the background material that was provided by Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA) and expressed concern that there was nothing specific in any of GFDA's applications that dealt specifically with Montana Egg expansion. Commissioner Bronson further expressed concern with regard to showing a low to moderate income (LMI) connection.

Director Raymond responded that Montana Egg would have to show that jobs were created through the expansion and made available to LMI individuals. He further reported that the application was submitted along with the other customary applications and that the processing went through the CDC.

Referring to the Montana Egg expansion project, Commissioner Houck received clarification that there was a qualified bid for the equipment.

Commissioner Bronson received clarification that a Conditional Use Permit would be needed for the land purchase with regard to the Grace Home Veterans Center.

Commissioner Bronson further indicated that the Great Falls Senior Citizen Center, Family Connections, Quality Life Concepts and Family Promise should be potentially considered for funding unless they received low rankings from the CDC members.

Planning and Community Development CDBG Administrator Maria Porter responded that the CDC and HUD had additional concerns with regard to Family Promise qualifying for funding.

Director Raymond mentioned that other cities have kept money in a revolving loan fund.

Commissioner Bronson received clarification that there was not enough time to put any portion of the proposed timeliness projects into a revolving loan fund.

Commissioner Burow expressed concern with regard to taking employment studies serious.

Mayor Pro Tempore Jones commented that the Park Master Plan is making progress and that the employment studies are being taken serious.

With regard to the lot located next to the Grace Home Veterans Center, Commissioner Houck received clarification that there is a plan to develop it.

Mayor Pro Tempore Jones summarized that a focus of the Commission will be a \$10,000 allocation to the Senior Citizens Center at the March 21st Commission meeting.

Brett Doney, Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA), 300 Central Avenue, reported that the loan was approved for Montana Egg but that an additional gap has shown up within the last few weeks. Mr. Doney further explained that there was approximately \$35,000 that Montana Egg was eligible for and that other options were being looked into with regard to getting more money.

With regard to the employment study, Mr. Doney reported that the government corrected its data with regard to the 707 job loss and that the amount of jobs lost was much less. Mr. Doney commented that the labor participation rate has not recovered since the recession and that there is a need to create pathways for the LMI to get high wage jobs with benefits. He concluded that the Commission could add any questions that they might have to the employment study survey.

Ron Gessaman, 1006 36th Avenue NE, expressed concern with regard to there not being enough people to fill the jobs that are available in the City.

Director Raymond commented that there are projects with some flexibility with regard to reallocating funds.

Commissioner Bronson requested that an amount be provided for the cost of the equipment at Kranz Park. Mayor Pro Tempore Jones concurred with Commissioner Bronson.

Commissioner Houck opined that more research should take place with regard to the Grace Home purchase.

With regard to the Grace Home purchase, Director Raymond responded that he knows what they are proposing to build at some point and that it would require a Conditional Use Permit.

Commissioner Houck commented that if the Grace Home purchase could not be funded she would support the purchase of the food for the Senior Citizens Center, Family Connections and scholarships.

Referring to the Grace Home purchase, Mayor Pro Tempore Jones commented that it is important to purchase the land because it may not be available later and that it could be years before the funds would be available to build the facility. He further suggested that the Great Falls Senior Citizens Center needs to be looked at.

Commissioner Houck and Mayor Pro Tempore Jones expressed support of any remaining funds being allocated to Family Connections.

Planning and Community Development Deputy Director Tom Micuda reported that the Family Connections Ready, Set, Read program had met all of the eligibility requirements. However, the free reading material network had already been established in the community. Deputy Director Micuda further reported that is the reason that Family Connections did not receive a proposed funding award.

Referring to the corrected data with regard to the employment study, Commissioner Burow reported that in 2015 there were 422 positions lost and in 2016 there were 60 positions lost.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Pro Tempore Jones adjourned the informal special work session of March 20, 2017, at 3:58p.m.