



**Journal of Commission Work Session
2 Park Drive South, Great Falls, MT
Civic Center Gibson Room 212
October 16, 2018**

1. Call to Order - 5:30 p.m.

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Kelly, Bill Bronson, and Owen Robinson. Commissioner Tracy Houck arrived at 5:32 p.m., and Commissioner Mary Sheehy Moe arrived at 5:42 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson; Budget Analyst Kirsten Myre; City Attorney Sara Sexe and Deputy City Attorney Joe Cik; Planning and Community Development Deputy Director Tom Micuda and CDBG Administrator Maria Porter; Fire Chief Steve Hester; and, City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

2. Public Comment.

Shyla Patera, North Central Independent Living Services, 1120 25th Avenue NE, spoke in support of the Continuum of Care (COC) groups' efforts to address housing and homelessness. She would like to see the efforts of addressing homelessness be expanded to include mental health and other hidden disabilities.

Ms. Patera discussed accessibility issues pertaining to building codes. The 2010 Access Board codes highlight community accessibility. With regard to new housing, she reported that she has been working with others on a statewide resolution that will hopefully go before the legislature pertaining to universal design standards.

Ms. Patera also suggested that the City work with hospitals and special needs populations to ensure that buildings are accessible and have proper egress for people with special needs.

3. Continuum of Care - Gary Owen.

Gary Owen, 519 Fox Court, provided a status and progress update of the Continuum of Care (COC) made over the past couple of years. He reported that the local (GF COC) is made up of about 30 organizations, has been in existence for many years, and has struggled to be effective and to be relevant in the issue of homelessness. The GF COC is advisory to the state HUD sponsored Montana Continuum of Care. In 2016, the Mayor's Challenge to End Veterans Homelessness was merged with the efforts of the COC.

The mission of GF COC is to make homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring. A diversion fund was established to assist those at risk of homelessness avoid entering the homeless system in the first place. Since implementing this strategy in January of 2018, GF COC assisted 19 families or individuals to avoid

homelessness at an average cost of less than \$245.

To address the "brief" part of the mission, a coordinated entry system was implemented in 2017, that includes five front door organizations. A case list conference meeting is held every other week to discuss how to assist those on the list to get permanently housed. Since September of 2017, the GF COC has assisted 69 families or individuals become housed through the case conferencing effort.

With regard to the "nonrecurring" part of the mission, several front door organizations and other entities provide case management. Once people are housed, their mission is to ensure that the issues that got them into trouble in the first place are not ignored, such as behavioral health or physical challenges. He reported that of those 69 families or individuals that have been housed, only one of those has been put back on the list.

Mr. Owen reported that a challenge is that the GF COC doesn't have a dedicated staff person, or dedicated funding to the coordination of the work. They are currently looking at grant opportunities and other resources to help with funds to keep this work moving forward.

He also noted that there is a large population of homeless people who do not want to access services or be put into the system. They will be reaching out to those individuals to be put on their lists so that those people can be connected to resources that can help them be successful and safe.

Mr. Owen reported that GF COC is in the process of building a housing inventory and is working with local entities to prioritize the homeless for those units, vouchers, or funding resources they may have.

The State COC recently converted to a new homeless management information system (HMIS). It has been a challenge getting local organizations signed up and to use that system.

With regard to case management, organizations are at capacity. As more individuals are placed into permanent housing, the GF COC doesn't want to see them set up for failure. Additional resources are going to be needed for case management.

The GF COC also conducts an annual point in time survey in conjunction with HUD. In 2016, 206 individuals were identified, and 261 individuals in 2017 in Great Falls and Cascade County.

The Bozeman's HRDC study concluded that the cost of an individual homeless person is over \$28,000 a year. Once that person is housed in permanent, supportive housing, the average cost goes down to \$9,300 per year, resulting in a savings of 73% for that community. Mr. Owen referred to the 261 individuals identified in the point in time survey in Great Falls and Cascade County, and noted that the annual cost is over \$7 million dollars to Great Falls and Cascade County.

On behalf of GF COC member, NeighborWorks Great Falls, Carol Bronson, 733 32nd Avenue NE, discussed the FUSE initiative - Frequent User System Engagement. This initiative expands the scope beyond homelessness. She explained that not only are the homeless at risk, but those frequent users of the hospital system, the healthcare system, and the criminal justice system, cost Great Falls and Cascade County additional money. She reported that NeighborWorks has entered into Memorandums of Understanding with Benefis and the City of Great Falls.

The Montana Healthcare Foundation asked NeighborWorks to get involved with Benefis to work with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CHS) to look for supportive housing. She discussed upcoming meetings in Butte and Boise, and the efforts of those involved to provide additional resources that will, in the long run, save the City money.

Peter Gray, Benefis Health Systems, 124 38th Avenue NE, commented that the homeless problem is much bigger than just healthcare. Benefis is able to collect data to put some numbers to the problem. He reported that on any given day, Benefis is caring for two to three individuals in its system. From a provider perspective, it is frustrating to care for individuals to a point of being able to function on their own, and then they quickly go back to certain ways and are back at Benefis. Benefis is pleased to be able to work with NeighborWorks and the COC, and will do its part as far as organizing its resources around this issue.

Commissioner Houck inquired about the January point of time survey.

Mr. Owen responded that January is a HUD directed date. The survey is done across the country on the exact same day.

Commissioner Houck noted that finding homeless people in Montana looks different in January than any other place. She inquired if homeless students or children were included in the survey count.

Mr. Owen responded that children are included in the 261 individuals count. HUD has very specific definitions for homelessness. If a student spent the night at a friend's house, HUD wouldn't count them as homeless. The School District would have a much higher number of students that are homeless, taking into account students that are couch surfing, or sleeping in a car, etc.

Commissioner Houck also noted another group's discussion about not being able to do anything to increase tourism in downtown Great Falls due to the transient traffic.

Ms. Bronson clarified that there are other agencies working on the transient and panhandling issues downtown.

With regard to the homeless individuals that do not want to be put on the list, Manager Doyon inquired if the goal was to provide those individuals with some sort of resource that they could connect with if they needed it.

Mr. Owen responded that the Grace Home has discovered where most of these

camps are, and go out on a weekly basis to provide basic necessities, such as food, blankets, sleeping bags, and tents. The Grace Home's reluctance in pushing these individuals to be assessed and get on the GF COC by name list, is because it takes time to develop a trust with those individuals.

Mr. Owen nodded affirmatively in response to Manager Doyon's inquiry about whether those individuals have been asked the reasons why they don't want to be on the list and whether that information is being kept as part of the study.

Manager Doyon asked what their engagement was with the Great Falls Housing Authority.

Mr. Owen responded that there isn't a formal MOU with the Housing Authority, but Alicia with the Housing Authority is engaged. According to the point in time survey, Great Falls has the third largest homeless population and receives zero COC funding. Mr. Owen added that they haven't been applying for COC funding. The majority of those dollars are going to Housing Authorities or similar organizations, particularly in Missoula, Billings, and Helena. They are building relationships with all of the stakeholders and there are some challenges.

Ms. Bronson and Mr. Owen added that they would like to see those individuals that are eligible, be prioritized on the list for housing at the Housing Authority and at other resources in town.

Commissioner Moe commented that there were issues with regard to availability at the Housing Authority due to the size/number of bedrooms.

4. Design Review Board - Greg Doyon.

City Manager Greg Doyon requested that the Commission consider suspending the Design Review Board (DRB) for a period of six months. A formal request will come before the Commission for consideration at a future Commission meeting.

Manager Doyon explained the reason for this extraordinary request is due to concerns he has about department processes and, specifically, the current work load of the staff. The Planning and Community Development Department is down three employees that, during a time of growth in the community, has caused the workload of certain employees to be unsustainable.

During discussions with the Planning and Community Development Director regarding ways to alleviate some of the pressure, the DRB came up as an area of coordination that is time intensive of Planning staff. The DRB is advisory in nature. Planning staff can perform applicant's review internally without changing the regulations.

Commissioner Bronson noted that he previously posed questions to Manager Doyon to flesh out the problems in that Department. In addition to the increased workload, he noted that the Department has had difficulty with recruitment, retention, and training staff. He concluded that it's fine to have a discussion about the temporary suspension of the DRB, but the much bigger issue

of the Department getting and retaining qualified applicants isn't going to be easy to resolve.

Manager Doyon also reported that he met with members of the DRB, and they are aware of his proposal to the Commission.

Manager Doyon concluded that the urgent issue right now is to relieve some of the pressure off staff.

Commissioner Robinson expressed his support.

Manager Doyon added that the City Commission adopts the design standards. If there are concerns about the standards not meeting community expectations, then a group discussion needs to be held to determine where to make those changes.

Commissioner Moe commented that she hears a common theme from the community about too many hoops and duplicative kinds of things. She is interested in seeing if this might be a more streamlined approach.

Planning and Community Development Director Craig Raymond explained the process staff goes through once they receive an application that would go before the DRB. In most cases, staff has been able to manage, negotiate and partner with the developer to bring about a more positive result.

Commissioner Bronson explained the history and functions of the Great Falls Planning Advisory Board. That board, or a sub part of it, could be utilized for a design review function in those instances where design review is required.

Commissioner Houck suggested, if staff moves forward with the request, that information be included about process if it doesn't seem to be working and how to get back on track, and if it is working how to keep those members involved. She further requested that information be provided about how much staff time would be saved by suspending the DRB.

It was the consensus of the Commission for staff to move forward with the request.

5. City Code Revisions for Title 15 - Buildings and Construction - Joseph Cik.

Assistant City Attorney Joe Cik reviewed and discussed the attached PowerPoint presentation regarding an ordinance to repeal and replace Title 15 of the Official Code of the City of Great Falls (OCCGF) pertaining to buildings and construction. The City is required to adopt the International Fire Codes and the International Building Codes as adopted by the State, and is restricted to what the State says it needs to enforce.

Substantial changes to Title 15 include clarifying language for building moving permits, and penalties for maintaining unsafe structures, operating without a special business license, and fire code violations. Also included is an enhanced code enforcement option for property screening violations.

Assistant City Attorney Cik reported that future OCCGF changes will include: Title 3, pertaining to revenue and finance; Title 13, pertaining to water service, sewer service, and storm drainage; and Title 17, known as the Land Development Code.

Mayor Kelly inquired at what point in time, as Assistant City Attorney Cik revises Titles of the OCCGF, does the Commission members get involved in the conversation about possibly not wanting to continue with a certain process or suggesting certain changes.

Assistant City Attorney Cik responded that there are certain chapters of Titles 13 and 17 that need to be fixed to become consistent with State law. Those chapter changes will be what goes to the Commission initially. Throughout that process, staff would like Commission interaction and discussion about regulations or streamlining the process. There are other processes the City is required by state law to follow.

Mayor Kelly requested that the Commission be included at the proper time for discussion about these policies that are often questioned, and review whether they are still valid, or if some regulations or processes could be more flexible.

Assistant City Attorney Cik responded that he would send the Commission the current drafts of Titles 13 and 17. The Commission's input would be helpful.

Mayor Kelly commented that the more educated the Commission can be in the process going forward, the better questions the Commission will have, and will reflect upon what the development community wants.

Director Raymond responded that there has been some feedback and pushback from the community. It would be helpful if the Commission told staff what the Commission's expectation and vision is, and whether it is more flexibility if that is a primary concern.

City Attorney Sara Sexe added that the Commission sets the policy that staff is to be administering in their jobs. Staff needs to hear from the Commission if it has significant or substantial changes as to the code revisions. Staff's changes are clarifying to ensure that the practice is consistent with the law.

Commissioner Bronson also noted that Title 17, to some extent, carries out implementation of requirements the City has under state law. Some of the complaints are about the way state law is written, which the Commission has no control over. Those concerns need to be addressed at the legislature to the extent they have validity. He also reminded the Commission that Title 17 was the result of a 2 1/2 year study with extensive commentary and cooperation with the development community and a consultant during the years of 2002 - 2005.

Mayor Kelly commented that he would like to see those items separated out.

Commissioner Houck commented that, if there are things the Commission cannot

change, she would like to hear the comments and thoughts going forward so that if there are things we think as a community we want to change, it could be something the Commission could prioritize for the upcoming legislative session.

Commissioner Moe suggested the Commission concerns be a discussion at a retreat.

Mayor Kelly added that there are mandatory sections to follow, but he wants to know if the other sections are still applicable 15 years later after the prior extensive review of Title 17.

Manager Doyon suggested that the Commission make a list of primary concerns from constituents, staff can do the same, and then the focused list can be reviewed to see what the City can take action on. Deputy City Manager Anderson is working on the development review process and will discuss same at a future work session.

6. Discussion of Potential Upcoming Work Session Topics.

Manager Doyon commented that topics for the November 7th work session includes FY18 4th quarter and FY19 1st quarter budget reviews, and an update from the Park and Recreation Director on his findings with regard to his look around the state of indoor pool facilities and update on the golf program. The November 20th work session will include updates on the Children's Museum Lease and EMS Contract.

Manager Doyon noted that he added the Development Review Process and MS4 storm water update to the master work session topic list. Members of the Commission did not suggest any changes or additions.

Commissioner Moe reiterated what she believed to be the upcoming process with regard to the DRB. The other Commission members agreed that was the general consensus.

Manager Doyon commented that, in the course of the suspension, there will be quick feedback from the community and staff about whether or not it is working. There may be some unintended consequences that could be good or bad.

7. Adjourn.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal work session of October 16, 2018, at 6:50 p.m.

TITLE 15 CODE REVISIONS – BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION

City Commission Work Session
October 16, 2018
Joseph Cik, Assistant City Attorney

PURPOSE

- Numerous proposed changes
 - Repeal and replace
- Work session presentation
 - Commission input and
 - Public comment

TITLE 15 REVISIONS GENERALLY

- Clean up typographical and grammatical errors, and
- Chapter and subsection re-designation for correct numerical order.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

- Clarifying language for building moving permits. (15.1.060)
- Providing penalties for maintaining unsafe structures. (15.2.030)
- Providing penalties for operating without a special business license. (15.6.080) (7.060) (.8.060)

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SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES, CONT.

- Providing specific penalties for Fire Code Violations. (15.9.050) (.060)
- Enhancing Code enforcement options for property screening violations. (15.10.060)

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ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE PROPOSED REVISIONS

- Create consistency within the rest of the Code, and where applicable, the MCA, and the ARM.
- Create clarification in process and application.

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FUTURE REVISIONS

- Future proposed changes will include changes.
 - Title 3 pertaining to revenue and finance
 - Title 13 pertaining to Water Service, Sewer Service, and Storm Drainage
 - Title 17 Land Development Code
- Staff is requesting direction on future changes.

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QUESTIONS?