

JOURNAL OF CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION
April 20, 2021

City Commission Work Session
Civic Center Gibson Room 212

Mayor Kelly presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 PM

Due to the COVID-19 health concerns, the format of the City Commission Work Session was held in a virtual video-conferencing environment.

ROLL CALL/STAFF INTRODUCTIONS: City Commission members participated electronically via Zoom Webinar: Bob Kelly, Tracy Houck, Mary Sheehy Moe, Owen Robinson and Rick Tryon. City Staff participating electronically were: City Attorney Sara Sexe and Planning and Community Development Director Craig Raymond. City Manager Greg Doyon, Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson; Fire Chief Jeremy Jones; Park and Recreation Director Steve Herrig and Interim Police Chief Rob Moccasin were present in the Gibson Room. Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea was present in the Commission Chambers.

- Attend in person. The City will be following the Cascade County Board of Health and the Public Health Officer Orders. Masks will be required and social distancing will be enforced. Public following these directives may view and participate in the meeting from the Gibson Room. Please refrain from attending in person if you are not feeling well.
- Attend the virtual meeting utilizing Zoom Webinar. Attendees must register in advance for the Commission Meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0_rczYPcTQObjPbzBAZB5Q After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar by Zoom.
- Participate by phone. Attendees must register in advance for the Commission Meeting using the link above. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar by phone. If you do not have internet access you may contact the Great Falls Public Library prior to the meeting at 453-9706 and they can assist with registration.
- Provide public comments in writing. Submit comments via mail addressed to City Clerk's Office, PO Box 5021, Great Falls, MT 59403 or by email to: commission@greatfallsmt.net by 12:00 PM the day of the meeting.
- The agenda packet material is available on the City's website: <https://greatfallsmt.net/meetings>. The Public may view and listen to the meeting on cable channel 190, or online at <https://greatfallsmt.net/livestream>.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

1. NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL UPDATES – NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL # 6

Allison Tangen, Neighborhood Council 6 Chair, introduced fellow council member Earl Salley.

Ms. Tangen reported that the northern boundary is 10th Avenue South, the southern boundary is the City limit line, the eastern is 20th Street South, and the western is the Missouri River. The district also includes the incorporated areas of Castle Pines Addition and Riverside Townhomes Addition.

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Neighborhood Council 6 currently meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Gibson Room in the Civic Center since Sunnyside Elementary School is closed to the public due to COVID-19.

Ms. Tangen report on the following:

- Working with the City Attorney's office with regard to addressing nuisance properties.
- Working with the Park and Recreation Department and Library to replace the Little Free Library receptacles that were recently vandalized at Sunnyside Park.
- Working with the Park and Recreation Department with regard to how best to utilize \$3,000 that NC 6 received for the benefit of Sunnyside Park.
- NC 6 will no longer host the Ice cream social event due to poor attendance.
- Verde and Sunnyside Parks are located in the NC 6 boundaries.
- Three to five members of the public attended Council meetings that were held within NC 6 council boundaries prior to COVID-19. Currently, there is almost no public attendance since the meetings are outside of the NC 6 boundaries.
- NC 6 chose not to have a formalized City Sanctioned Facebook page because of the efforts from Sunnyside neighbors. NC 6 partners with Sunnyside neighbors with regard to a Facebook page for posting and receiving announcements from neighbors.
- NC 6 is interested in partnering with a Neighborhood Watch program.
- Efforts are being made with regard to changing the Citizens Complaint Form to allow a NC Chairperson to sign the form instead of a neighbor.

Ms. Tangen expressed appreciation to Library staff for their support with regard to replacing the Little Free Library receptacles at Sunnyside Park; Park and Recreation staff for their efforts with regard to utilizing the \$3,000; and Communication Specialist Lanni Klasner for her input and assistance with regard to keeping Neighborhood Council meetings functional.

2. REVISED TIF PROGRAM ALLOWANCES – FOLLOW UP FROM FEBRUARY 2, 2021 WORK SESSION

Planning and Community Development Director Craig Raymond introduced Kellie Pierce, Director of Operations of the Downtown Great Falls Association and member of the Downtown Development Partnership (DDP), and Business Improvement District (BID) Community Director Joan Redeen.

Director Raymond reviewed and discussed the attached PowerPoint presentation which included Downtown TIF Programs, Code Compliance, Facade Improvement, Environmental Safety, and Administration.

Mayor Kelly commented that the City has an obligation to come up with a system that would utilize the approximate \$2 million in the Downtown BID TIF quickly, efficiently and responsibly. Mayor Kelly requested that Planning and Community Development staff provide the Commission with quarterly updates with regard to the applications for downtown projects.

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Director Raymond explained that bond counsel Erin McCrady reviewed and supports the draft proposed program. He expressed appreciation to Kellie Pierce, Joan Redeen and Brett Doney, Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA), for their efforts with regard to the proposed program.

Commissioner Tryon expressed concern with regard to the proposed program creating efficiencies since additional staff would be needed to process applications. He inquired about projects that would be considered unique and high impact. He supports adding code compliance, façade improvements and environmental safety to the program; however, he is not convinced that allowing staff to approve applications is the best solution. Commissioner Tryon inquired about businesses not in the Downtown District having to utilize its own money to pay for code compliance requirements when downtown businesses utilized taxpayer money.

Director Raymond responded that expanding the program to include more types of projects could potentially require additional staff to process applications; however, there would be less staff time preparing agenda reports, less money spent for notices of public hearing, as well as saving time with completion of projects. Code compliance issues for businesses in the Downtown TIF District are significantly different from businesses not in the Downtown TIF District. The City Commission created and approved the Downtown Urban Renewal Area because downtown was becoming blighted and needed redevelopment. Director Raymond concluded that the Commission would determine what projects would be considered unique and high impact.

Commissioner Houck commented that a prior Tax Evaluation Study identified the Downtown TIF District as a priority that would increase tax revenue. She expressed support with regard to the efficiencies and moving forward with the proposed program.

Commissioner Moe commented that the Code compliance component is an ongoing problem with regard to downtown and aging infrastructure. She expressed support of the proposed program and she added that Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility needs to be considered with regard to the proposed program.

Mayor Kelly received clarification that the Planning and Community Development and Finance Departments had received support from the TIF District and that TIF funds would be utilized for additional staff to administer the program. Mayor Kelly commented that the proposed program allows TIF funds to be put to practical uses and provides funds upfront to the building community. Mayor Kelly expressed support of the proposed program.

Commissioner Tryon inquired about the application process as well as the \$80,000 cap.

Director Raymond explained that a Planning and Community Development Planner would be assigned a project, process the application the way it is currently done, write a recommendation and either himself or the Deputy Director would make the final decision.

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BID Community Director Joan Redeen responded that the cap for Environmental Safety is \$5,000 maximum per parcel, Code Compliance is \$25,000 maximum per parcel and Façade Improvements is \$50,000 maximum per parcel. The total potential maximum if all three programs are utilized is \$80,000 per parcel in a 15 year period. Any amount under that would be a staff decision and over \$80,000 would be a Commission decision. The other cap in the program is staff could only approve up to a maximum of \$500,000 per fiscal year total of all three of the programs. She commented that the proposed program would create efficiencies. She concluded that the Tax Evaluation Study was performed in 2012 and that downtown is the tax base for the City and County as a whole.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that the May 4th work session will consist of affordable housing and Semi-Annual Litigation updates. Topics for the May 18th work session will consist of a Neighborhood Council #9 update and a COVID Relief and America Rescue Funds update. The Annual Budget may require Special Work Sessions.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal work session of April 20, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.



Downtown TIF Programs

Proposed by the
Downtown Development Partnership and
Planning & Community Development Staff

Code Compliance

Façade

Environmental Safety



Code Compliance:
Elevators, Fire
Suppression,
Handicapped
Accessibility





**Façade
Improvement:**
Permanent, exterior
improvements



Northern Lofts



**BIGSKY
SELECT** LPW
ARCHITECTS

Environmental Safety:

Exterior security and blight elimination measures that include cameras & lighting



Administration:

- City staff to administer the program
- Staff to review and award applications up to the program funding caps (similar to CDBG process)
- City Commission to approve any application which exceeds programmatic funding caps based on unique and/or high impact projects



We hope to have these programs in place Summer 2021

