

**From:** [Lisa C. Kunz](#)  
**To:** [Greg Doyon](#); [Charles Anderson](#); [Krista Artis](#); [Bob Kelly](#); [Mary Sheehy Moe](#); [Owen Robinson](#); [Rick Tryon](#); [Tracy Houck](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Comments on Recommendations from the Crime Task Force for 11/2 work session  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 2, 2021 11:44:18 AM

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Comments for consideration during this evening's work session.

Lisa

-----Original Message-----

From: Lisa C. Kunz  
Sent: Tuesday, November 2, 2021 11:43 AM  
To: 'Terry Bjork' <[tlbjork@hotmail.com](mailto:tlbjork@hotmail.com)>  
Subject: RE: Comments on Recommendations from the Crime Task Force for 11/2 work session

Thank you for your comments Terry. Your comments will be shared with the Commission for consideration during tonight's work session.

Best regards,

Lisa Kunz  
City Clerk/Records Manager  
Civic Center Room 204  
406.455.8451

-----Original Message-----

From: Terry Bjork <[tlbjork@hotmail.com](mailto:tlbjork@hotmail.com)>  
Sent: Tuesday, November 2, 2021 11:40 AM  
To: commission <[commission@greatfallsmt.net](mailto:commission@greatfallsmt.net)>  
Subject: Comments on Recommendations from the Crime Task Force for 11/2 work session

Commission Members -

In my opinion, the Task Force recommendations should be either sent back to the Task Force for a re-do, or seriously modified by the Commission and staff, for at least the following reasons.

1) Distortion of Task Force Purpose

Section 1 of Resolution 10395 states, "The general purpose of the Task Force shall be to study, review, evaluate, and make recommendations to the City Commission, City Manager, and general public on strategies to address crime." The Resolution did not limit those strategies. However, at the very beginning of the process on June 7 and again at the end on September 27 Commissioner Tryon made statements that the purpose of the Task Force was to ensure the police and criminal justice system and corrections were adequately resourced, in other words focusing on addressing crime through brute force or only after it had already occurred. In the September 27th meeting he added that local criminal justice should not prioritize underlying causes of crime like poverty, homelessness, mental health, and addiction, or the City provide help for criminals, stating that those responsibilities fall to other organizations and agencies aside from the City, even though Resolution 10395 never limited the scope of the Task Force in this manner.

The proceedings from start to finish were constantly nudged and steered according to these principles, pushing back against possible commitments of City resources for programs aimed at addressing the underlying causes of crime,

including at times statements of personal preference to the effect of, "I don't want such-and-such in Great Falls to make us a magnet for that kind of program". This constant steering of the Task Force in one direction to and away from others made it seem like the task force was little more than window dressing to give the personal views of one or more individuals an official sanction in recommendations.

## 2) Neglected Opportunities

There were presentations made by outside experts and suggestions made by Task Force members that were seemingly ignored in the written recommendations. A few are as follows:

- Early on one expert presenter clearly explained the primary drivers of crime in the Great Falls area, namely the traffic in hard drugs and its relationship to gun trafficking, particularly guns stolen from vehicles and storage lockers. Additionally Montana's lax gun laws were discussed in how they make it difficult to prosecute gun crimes. But the recommendations ignored the gun trafficking half of the crime equation completely, even though such things as public education efforts to secure guns and how that might reduce crime and thus keep taxes down, City statutes regarding storage locker facility security, lobbying efforts at the State level to make it easier to prosecute gun crimes, etc., might have been included.

- One presenter gave an excellent presentation on "environmental design" with examples of how smart design decisions in the local environment could deter crime. But the recommendations make no mention of any commitment of City resources toward this goal, like maybe addressing the woefully inadequate public lighting in some areas, or adding public police surveillance cams, or any of the other environmental design measures. There is only the recommendation that the City communicate some of these principles to private citizens and businesses.

- Sherriff Slaughter made a suggestion that the City work with Senator Daines in his effort to bring the legal marijuana businesses into the mainstream banking system to avoid crime problems that might result from the temptations of targeting all-cash businesses, but this was ignored for whatever reason, unless it might somehow be assumed to be addressed under recommendation V.

## 3) Personal Biases?

There were several recommendations introduced in the original draft that seem like they must reflect personal biases of one or more Task Force members, that had little grounding in the expert testimony that preceded.

- Consequences, section P a "Drug Paraphernalia" - First of all this item isn't about a "consequence" at all, and secondly was seemingly never discussed in the prior proceedings as any sort of crime problem. The item just appeared seemingly out of thin air when draft recommendations were put to paper. What specific crime is a needle drop or exchange program supposed to address? IV drug users are not going to mend their ways simply because there's no legal needle exchange or drop.

- The whole issue of panhandling, even though the original recommendation it did not make it through to the final recommendations, was much discussion about something that isn't even a crime. It seemed as though one or more Task Force members were trying to use the Task Force to address things that didn't meet their personal moral standards.

- Item U under Partnerships and Collaboration about legal marijuana sales - The only testimony about issues associated with legalized marijuana sales that was given during the proceedings came from Chief Newton who said the primary issue he saw might be increased impaired driving incidents, and from a presenter who pointed to a HIDTA report on legalization in Colorado, which also cited increased impaired driving as its primary finding of increased "criminal" activity. Yet when the draft recommendations were initially put to paper the first sentence of this recommendation appeared calling for preventing legal sales within City limits - for whatever good that might do (see: fireworks). Then that recommendation, somehow and without public discussion between Sept 13 and the revised draft of Sept 27, got expanded to add sentence 2 about what this is supposed to accomplish although it was based on no previous expert testimony, as well as items a and b to recommend that the City work to overturn the will of the voters on legal sales and use that is now a part of State law. The expanded recommendation was also not discussed publicly in the Sept 27 meeting, just the original draft's first sentence. This gives the appearance that one

or more Task Force members were using the Task Force as a vehicle to try and overturn the will of Great Falls/Cascade County voters according to their own personal biases or morals, or perhaps those of some unnamed "local organization" aligned against legal marijuana with which the City should presumably partner or collaborate. The City government should not be working to overturn the will of its voters, and if the City is truly that concerned about impaired driving incidents, the Task Force should have recommended measures to better address the huge existing impaired driving problem resulting from alcohol.

#### 4) Public Comments

Written public comments on the draft recommendations were solicited, including a commenting guideline that said if the comment specified an agenda item, it would be discussed during deliberations. No specific public comment was ever discussed, agenda item or not. The only mention of written comments at all were from Commissioner Tryon, who stated at the beginning of the Sept 13 meeting that the public would have plenty of time to comment later on in the process. Why even ask for public comment at this point, then? Then also from Judge Parker, who noted strong public comment opposition to a draft suggestion to provide one way bus tickets out of town, which did indeed finally get eliminated from the recommendations. It seemed like all those public comments were no more than going through the motions for the sake of saying yes we took public comments.

#### 5) Costs

These recommendations specify a large number of additions to the City payroll, and suggest a public safety levy to pay for them. Manager Doyon has said Great Falls is already looking at a tax increase next year due to depleted reserves. Add that tax increase to a public safety levy and Great Falls taxpayers are looking at some serious money. The Task Force focus on adding resources to the criminal justice system as opposed to addressing causes of crime should be reviewed for possibly cheaper approaches.

Thanks for your consideration and continued hard work, Terry Bjork City resident

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