

Great Falls Citizens' Council
Council of Councils Meeting Minutes
January 30, 2013

The meeting was opened by Sandra Guynn, Neighborhood Council #4, at 7:00 p.m.

Delegates present: Lynda Sowell, Neighborhood Council #1; Phyllis Hemstad, Neighborhood Council #2; Sandra Guynn, Neighborhood Council #4; Eric Ray, Neighborhood Council #5; Robin Baker, Neighborhood Council #6; Amber Gardner, Neighborhood Council #7; Karen Grove, Neighborhood Council #8; and Peggy Scheschy, Neighborhood Council #9; Commissioner Bill Bronson; Commissioner Fred Burow.

Guests present: Commissioner Bob Kelly; Mike Dalton, Sunburst, Inc.; Ron Gessaman; Ida Meehan, Planning/Community Development; and others.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Minutes** from the October 30, 2012 meeting were presented. Amber motioned to approve the minutes as presented and Karen seconded. The vote was unanimous to approve.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Introduction from Commissioner Bob Kelly:** Commission Bob Kelly introduced himself to the Council of Council delegates. He talked briefly about his duties as commissioner, specifically those of listening and being available to the citizens of Great Falls. He said he appreciates the work being done by the current City Commission and the Neighborhood Councils.
2. **Sunburst, Inc., Mike Dalton:** Director Mike Dalton explained that Sunburst, Inc. is involved in gardening, education, and philanthropy. Currently the non-profit has signed a 4-year "use permit" with the City of Great Falls on the Community Home Park, an old tree farm located on the SW side of town, to plant and harvest fruits and vegetables that will be donated to the Food Bank. The gardeners will include unemployed parents who will learn how to grow, and cook the harvested crops. Mr. Dalton invited the Council members to Sunburst's meetings and to visit the website: gardensfromgarbage.org.
3. **Upcoming City Commission Issues and Actions:** Commissioner Bronson listed upcoming issues as dealing with upcoming legislative mandates, an upcoming "Meet and Greet" for elected officials to meet citizens, City budget planning for the 2013-2014 fiscal year, and Electric City Power and the settlement discussions. Commissioner Bronson relayed information from Mayor Winters that he would appreciate regular reports from all of the Neighborhood Councils. Commissioner Burow is interested in seeing the Neighborhood Watch grow and expand.
4. **Board and Commission Membership Policies:** Ron Gessaman informed the delegates of the City's current policy of not requiring advertisement of reappointed members of boards and commissions. He is opposed to reappointments without advertising the position. He believes all positions should be advertised, opening the potential for the most qualified candidates.
5. **Zone Change Requests:** Ron Gessaman relayed his concern about the Planning/Community Development Department's practice to require "little guys" to provide specific use information pertinent to their projects but big projects like the Agri Tech Park and Calumet Montana Refining do not have to

disclose a planned use for a zoning request. He feels fairness is at issue. He believes a conflict with MCA 76.2.304 exists (he provided a copy of the code to the delegates). Attendees Corky Grove, 1816 1st Avenue North; Rudy Tankink, 3620 9th Avenue North; and delegates Phyllis Hemstad and Peggy Scheschy made comments. At this point, Commissioner Burow asked the delegates to discuss whether the City needs more low income, tenement type housing and to get back to the Commission with their opinions. His request sparked questions from the delegates as to whether he meant low-income housing or affordable housing. Debbie Briscoe, Fort Shaw, expressed her concern with unintended consequences of planning.

6. **City Growth Policy Update Progress Report:** City Planner Ida Meehan reported the update was nearing completion and distributed results of the survey. She said a closing open house would take place in the spring (March) and everyone would be invited to attend. It would include preliminary recommendations to the Planning Board and City Commission. Judy Tankink, 3620 9th Avenue North; Debbie Briscoe, Fort Shaw; and Corky Grove, 1816 1st Avenue North all made comments on the validity of the survey.
7. **Proposed Business Development Staff Position:** Commissioner Bronson relayed information about a proposed (by City Manager Greg Doyon) City staff position dedicated to coordinating relations between City departments and business developers. He said the upcoming budget would be the determining factor in the creation of such a position. The idea originated from recent differences taking place in the relationship between the Great Falls Development Authority and the City of Great Falls.

OTHER BUSINESS

Individual Council Sharing

1. Lynda Sowell reported her Council had no hotly contested issues. The Council seat vacated by Jesse O'Hara had recently been filled by Mike Flaherty. Problems with animals, i.e. turkeys, bees, and urban deer, had been developing.
2. Phyllis Hemstad reported problems with dike issues, a residential dog kennel, and finding money for developing West Bank Park had been topics of concern.
3. Kathy Gessaman, member of NC3, reported current issues as the expansion of the Refinery and a proposed 12-plex on 36th Ave. NE.
4. Sandra Guynn reported her Council had recently hosted an Open House for input from residents on the Growth Policy. Attendance had been lacking but cooperation with Lewis and Clark School and with four local eateries had been fantastic. She was happy to report the problematic Frates Trailer Park was gone and would soon be replaced with new storage units.
5. Eric Ray reported the members of his Council, by invitation, attended an Open House at the new Cascade Ridge Apartments where representatives of the High Plains Equity Corporation talked about expansion plans and problems with the neighbors. He also reported on the Open House his Council held at Mountainview School for Neighborhood Watch recruitment.
6. Robin Baker reported the Verde Park play structure would be replaced this year with funds from CDBG. Other issues had been SID and storm water drainage discussions with the Upper/Lower River Road residents, ongoing City/County issues, and potential problems for Neighborhood Watch.
7. Amber Gardner reported her Council had recently filled one of the 2 vacant seats with resident George Wheeler. George will be the Council's representative to the Downtown Development Partnership. Her

Council has had the most crime in the city so plans for Neighborhood Watch creation were taking place. Additionally Business Watch was in place to help with problems in the downtown area.

8. Karen Grove reported her Council was pretty quiet but would like to partner with Neighborhood Watch.
9. Peggy Scheschy reported her Council had recently had election of officers, student input, new member Jason Lehman, and had not looked at Neighborhood Watch yet.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Neighborhood Concerns:**

Lola Galloway, Sun Prairie, spoke about 3 issues that directly affected her: 1. She owns the Dairy Queen on 9th Street and 2nd Avenue North. Three years ago 9th Street was torn up and cost her 13% of her business. She was recently informed the street would be torn up again this year. She wants City and State to coordinate repairs and maintenance. 2. She owns an apartment building on 32nd Street and 2nd Avenue North and finds it very hard to deal with tenants who are dangerous or drug dealers. She says the police cannot help. 3. She owns the Dairy Queen in Fox Farm and says it will be closed down soon because of the City's sign ordinance, which conflicts with requirements from the DQ franchise. Commissioner Burow commented he believes the sign code should be looked at again. Sandra Guynn suggested Ms. Galloway attend her Neighborhood Council.

The next Council of Councils meeting will be held Wednesday, May 28, 2013.

A motion and second were made and voting was unanimous to close the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Patty Cadwell
Neighborhood Council Coordinator