

**Great Falls/Cascade County
Historic Preservation Advisory Commission**

**MINUTES from the
January 12, 2011 meeting**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Milford, Jerry Clark, Carol Bronson, Carol Bradley, Ken Robison, Kelly Parks, Joan Redeen, Ken Sievert, Judy Ellinghausen, Jerry McKinney

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ryan Forde, Warren Harding

STAFF PRESENT: Ellen Sievert

HPAC Chairperson Bob Milford called the meeting to order at 12 noon. Minutes from the November 2010 meeting were unanimously approved.

REPORT OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER: Ellen reported that various entities, including the Business Improvement District, the Great Falls Society of Architects and the GF Downtown Association, have offered a total of \$21,500 in matching money for a Preserve America grant that would provide technical assistance programs to area businesses. The city is willing to make comprehensive planner Brant Birkeland and Deputy City Manager Jennifer Reichelt available to help implement any programs funded by the grant. A sum of just \$97,000 is available for all of Montana, but Ellen said she is confident Great Falls will qualify for some of the funding.

Re: the 2010 Christmas ornament sponsored by HPAC, Ellen wasn't certain how many had sold, but said HPAC has netted \$2,700 from the sales.

HPAC discussed the upcoming Preservation Award reception to be held in May. Ellen asked commissioners to email her with any nominations.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Commissioners voted unanimously to reelect the existing slate of officers to new one-year terms: Bob Milford as chairperson; Ryan Forde as vice chair; and Carol Bradley as secretary.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN BUILDING: Ellen said the long-awaited engineering study on the fire-damaged Rocky Mountain Building is now complete. Ken Sievert contributed to the report and commended Thomas Dean & Hoskins for producing what he called a "very well-done" report, "thorough and current." The report in no way suggests that the Rocky Mountain Building is unsalvageable, Ken said. Discussion centered on the possibility of restoring the Theater that once existed in the building. Ellen said Great Falls Symphony officials were excited at the possibilities offered by having a theater that would seat 300 to 400, and Set Free staffer Pam Altman seemed enthusiastic as well when Ellen broached the subject with her. Ellen also said the building has potential for housing a downtown university that could include art studios and classrooms. She said room could be left for a restaurant or retail on the first floor.

Ellen said a representative from a Washington, DC firm that syndicates large restoration projects was in Billings and met with Randy Hafer, who is regarded as an authority on packaging projects in Montana. Randy will share the information with interested parties in Great Falls in the near future.

Ken commented that the city has been unusually generous in giving Set Free time to formulate a plan for the building, and added that the recent departure of city code official Terre Gift has probably bought Set Free a little extra time.

2011 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: A committee consisting of Ellen, Carol Bronson, Jerry McKinney and Bob Milford will meet to discuss HPAC's goals and objectives for 2011. The full commission will discuss and vote on the recommendations in February.

MONTANA MAIN STREET: City officials are still working on the application for Great Falls to join the Montana Main Street program as an associate member. As a result of joining, the city will qualify for a visit from a Main Street official from Wisconsin, who will be able to offer technical assistance to shop owners. The workshop is expected to take place in April or May.

HPAC's next regular meeting is at noon February 9 in the Rainbow Room of the Civic Center.

Respectfully submitted by
Carol Bradley
HPAC secretary