

Minutes Neighborhood Council 3 (NC3)
April 7, 2022, 6:30 p.m.
Riverview Elementary School - Music Room

CALL TO ORDER: at 6:30 p.m. by Kathleen Gessaman, Chair.

Council members present: Sue Dickenson, Kathleen Gessaman, Garri Mauch, Eric Peterson, Sue Steichen.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Minutes from the March meeting** - Garri Mauch made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Sue Steichen seconded the motion. The motion to accept the minutes as written passed unanimously.
- **Calumet Updates** - Calumet Environmental Manager Joe Dauner said there was one serious injury to an employee during the month that resulted in the loss of vision in one eye. He said it had been a very stable month operationally for the company. He said there are an additional 200-500 people on site working on a project lasting to the end of the year. He said they will transition to the renewable feedstock in September and start up an asphalt unit in April. He said they are working on road access for where they load the hydrocarbons and the loading racks where they transfer the material. Joe Dauner said the refinery started operations 100 years ago.
- **NC3 Facebook Page Update** - Eric Peterson said we have added 12 new page likes for the past month to total of 454 likes and added 14 new followers for a total of 505 followers. The audience is currently comprised of 73 percent women and 26 percent men. The most popular viewing time on our page is 7 p.m. We've made 18 posts during the past month with the most popular post of the Little Free Library reaching 690 people. The next most popular post was the April meeting notice and NC3 agenda that reached 489 people.
- **Fundraising for Little Free Library in Skyline Park** - Eric Peterson contacted Great Falls Public Library Director Susie McIntyre to find out the total amount of donations received on the library. She said the total amount of donations was \$200. Eric Peterson asked if it was time to ask Carol Bronson if we could apply the unused amount of grant provided for the Little Shell Tribal Health Clinic welcome ceremony towards the Little Free Library. Carol Bronson requested an email with that information be sent to her. The library is currently working with the Park and Recreation Department to schedule a time to install the Little Free Library.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Neighborhood Traffic Concerns** - Senior Transportation Planner for the city of Great Falls, Andrew Finch, discussed traffic concerns NC3 members had for the area. Kathleen Gessaman asked of the possibilities of adding traffic circles at Smelter Avenue and 6th Street N.W. and Smelter Avenue and 4th Street N.E. Sue Steichen said she had heard complaints on Facebook of traffic on the intersection near Riverview Elementary School increasing once the new apartments on Smelter Avenue are built. Andrew Finch said the basic philosophy on changing lane configurations or changing traffic control with stop signs or roundabouts is they don't like to make changes unless they are necessary and provides a benefit. He said the consultant for the apartment complex investigated the future scenario for the intersection and had some suggestions for changes. One possible change for westbound drivers on Smelter Avenue would be to add a left turn lane with the through lane. He said more traffic lanes may make it more unsafe for pedestrians. Sue Dickenson displayed a map of the area and said there is no signal at the intersection at Albertsons and discussed the number of car accidents at that location. She was also concerned about the exit from the apartment complex being too close to the roundabout. Andrew Finch said this was something to bring up during the upcoming long-range

transportation plan update to be conducted in the next 12 months. A consultant will be hired to look at signal lights, intersections, the capacity of roadways, traffic congestion and do an in-depth analysis of how the transportation network functions. He said he expects there to be changes in traffic with the new apartment complex. He said they felt this was a good location for the apartment complex as they are situated near shopping and within walking distance to schools and as a result will reduce the number of traffic trips out of the complex. He said as far as placing a roundabout at 1st Street N.W. they are limited in the available space to use at that intersection. He said 1st Street N.W. has less right-of-way than a normal street. He said he thinks 6th Street N.W. is a candidate for a retrofit. NC3 resident Phil Wardell asked if the city has approached Montana Department of Transportation on adding a signal light on 3rd Street N.W. since the area has grown and there are now safety issues at the intersection at 16th Avenue N.W. Andrew Finch said he thought that was a good idea. Kathleen Gessaman suggested lowering the speed limit to 35 miles per hour on 3rd Street N.W. Andrew Finch said most of the management of the road is taken care of by MDT but if there is a concern of the neighborhood council it could write a letter to them. Sue Dickenson asked about pedestrian safety as the children walk from the apartment complex to the school. Andrew Finch said there will be a new crossing and a new bus stop shelter placed at the location. He said neighborhood councils are a sounding board for the neighborhood and can reach a broad audience for noticing complaints. Sue Dickenson suggested installing traffic lights that change during certain times of the day to help regulate traffic.

- **Cascade County Attorney's Office Presentation Josh Racki** - Cascade County Attorney Josh Racki provided an update from his office. He said the primary purpose of the office is to prosecute all felony offenses in the county and all misdemeanor offenses outside of the city of Great Falls or originating from a state agency. The secondary mission of the office includes working with police and deputies in active criminal investigations and they also draft all felony search warrants in the county. He said the office includes 17 attorneys and 12 support staff members. The Criminal Division of his office works more than 1500 misdemeanors each year. In 2021 he said there were 901 felony cases filed, 806 search warrants drafted, 264 dependant neglect cases, 68 youth court cases, and 28 mental health commitments. He said the drivers of crime in Great Falls include substance abuse and mental illness. He said the challenges of the office includes manpower, case load issues, and the delay in cases going through the courts. He said they could use more people if he could hire them and would like to have pretrial supervision and misdemeanor probation resources available in Great Falls.
- **Cascade County Sheriff's Office Presentation Jesse Slaughter** - Sheriff Jesse Slaughter said they are working on starting a satellite office downtown to serve citizens in the city. He said there no longer is a state prison located at the facility on Gore Hill and that opened up 130 beds. He said transitioning from a prison to a full-time 430 person pre-trial jail has been a challenge to make work. He said there are three jails in Montana that hold federal contract beds, Missoula, Billings, and Great Falls. These three communities also have federal courts and following any conviction they are transported out-of-state to a federal prison to serve their sentences. He said there is a new Sheriff's Citizen's Academy available for residents to attend. There also is a new Belt resident deputy assigned and they are working on getting a resident deputy assigned to Cascade. There is now an Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) deputy assigned to the office. They have a School Resource Officer (SRO) assigned that also teaches the Constitution in schools and is charge of all juvenile mission persons. There is a Civilian Evidence Technician working at the office that frees five deputies that used to do the job on a rotating basis. The K-9 Unit includes dogs trained in narcotic detection and tracking. He said the office is revitalizing the Reserve Deputy Program and volunteers serve as trained, fully-sworn deputy sheriffs.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **CommUNITY Clean-up** - Carol Bronson of NeighborWorks Great Falls asked if the council had made a decision regarding the CommUNITY Cleanup event. Kathleen Gessaman said the council discussed working in two parks in the NC3 area with the possibility of cleaning Jaycee Park and Valley View Park. Garri Mauch said the cleanup event takes place on May 6-7. Carol Bronson said she would be able to supply bags if needed. Eric Peterson said he would post an event reminder on the NC3 Facebook page.
- **Virtual Meeting Option** - Sue Steichen would like to have an update on how well the Facebook Live streaming event went. Eric Peterson said he would provide a report to the council during the May meeting.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- **Neighborhood Concerns** - NC3 resident Tawny Cale said her house and others in her neighborhood received anti-Semitic and anti-trans flyers. Once she saw the content of the material she drove around her neighborhood collecting the flyers. She thanked NC3 for reaching out to her and the Montana Human Rights Network, the Montana Racial Equity Project, the Great Falls Tribune, and the Great Falls Police Department for their quick responses. She said she is glad to live in a neighborhood where this behavior is not seen as a simple display of freedom of speech, but for the gross display of bigotry and racism. She said she was requesting the council make a formal statement condemning hate speech towards Jewish and trans relatives. City resident Jerry Wiseman said he thinks we all should do what's necessary to identify who those people are and expose them. Sue Dickenson read a prepared statement that stated: "To the members of the city commission of the city of Great Falls, Montana. Neighborhood Council 3 expresses in its vision statement that we believe increasing a sense of community makes a better neighborhood. We believe in treating and interacting with our neighbors in a respectful and positive way. Thereby we condemn the hateful, racist material which was distributed in our neighborhood in March. Freedom of speech, though protected by the constitution, does not include disparaging, hate filled comments about individuals due to their race, religion, gender, or economic position. Furthermore, we take pride in our neighborhood and endeavor to foster an open and inclusive community. These comments are unacceptable and we will stand with those who are being attacked. We will cooperate with law enforcement where it is appropriate. We encourage all our neighbors to condemn hate and bigotry and encourage inclusivity and mutual respect." Eric Peterson said he was impressed with Tawny Cale's reaction to this issue and would like have her recognized with a good neighbor award. Sue Dickenson said she had received information from the Montana Human Rights Network and printed a Hate Incident Rapid Response Guide and had the guides available for residents attending the meeting.

ADJOURN

Eric Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Sue Steichen seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned by Kathleen Gessaman at 8:28 p.m.

The next regular NC3 meeting will be held Thursday, May 5, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Eric Peterson, secretary.