

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL #7
Monday, **February 10, 2025**, 7:00 p.m.
Gibson Room, Great Falls Civic Center

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was brought to order at 7:00 by Chair Trevor Mikkelsen, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

In attendance were Council Members Troy Lane, Trevor Mikkelsen, Sandy Rice, Allison Tangen and Bill Wadman and Liaison Rob Moccasin. Roll call of the Council was completed and a quorum established.

Neighbors present were Charles Goodman from NeighborWorks Great Falls, Ernesto Fuentes, Alaina Mattimiro, Austin Schulte, Brock Cherry, Andrew Finch, Rachel Craw and Eric Boyd.

OLD BUSINESS

The January Minutes were approved.

Committee Reports:

Downtown Development Partnership: Troy reported a new warming center for the unhoused at 511 Central Avenue. A city-sponsored growth policy survey is underway. For those interested in an empty space downtown, there is a QR code in the windows for further information. Coins for a Cause contribution of over \$350 was presented to Grace Haven. The Wayfinding project has been completed with new kiosks in several places around the city. A review of the 2024 business statistics showed consistent growth in the downtown area.

Brownfield Committee: No report

Downtown Safety Alliance: GFPD is still working on the crime mapping system. BNSF/MDT are jointly responsible for snow clearing of the 1st Avenue North underpass. Graffiti cannot be cleaned while the temperatures are so low but as soon as the weather permits BID will work on the cleaning. The Sentinel missile replacement project information is changing, but it looks like the project should be starting within 12 to 15 months.

Council of Councils: Allison has been elected Vice-Chair of the Citizens Council (Council of Councils). GFPD report was the same information presented to NC7. GFFR reported that the lack of a usable training center as well as the immediate need for two more fire stations affects the insurance rating for Great Falls. December and January saw an unfortunate uptick in residential fires, mostly caused by improper disposal of smoking materials. As all GFFR firefighters report for a structural fire, the Malmstrom Fire Department has been utilized as backup. The Quiet Zone for trains was discussed and a panel of stakeholders will be presented at a special Council of Council meeting.

Strategic Planning: No report

City Safety Funding: There was an extensive discussion of ideas to help increase the probability of a GFFR levy and bond passing.

NEW BUSINESS:

Eric Boyd and Austin Schulte presented the results of the traffic study done on the 9th Street North crosswalks at 3rd and 4th Avenues North. Some remedies will be additional signing mid-block to warn drivers of upcoming crosswalks and painting the yield sign poles bright yellow. Eric proposed additional studies be done after the 4th Avenue North refurbish project is completed this spring.

Brock Cherry and members of his staff presented a large map of the NC7 area and solicited ideas and feedback to be included in the growth policy survey. A lively discussion ensued.

OTHER BUSINESS: Charles Goodman, Director of the Baatz Permanent Supportive Housing project, reported that the opening of the Baatz House has been postponed until May-June due to unforeseen structural problems found within the building.

NEIGHBORHOOD PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS: None

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL: Trevor moved that the current officers of the Council be reelected to their positions for the 2025 calendar year. The motion was seconded by Troy and passed unanimously. Sandy noted that all of the Council members are up for reelection next November. Filing opens April 17 and closes June 16.

Next Meeting: Monday March 10, 2025, at the Civic Center

Agenda suggestions: Representative from Calumet to report on current tax abatement requests
NWGF to report on empty housing in the NC7 district

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm on unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted, Sandra Rice, Secretary