

Great Falls Citizens Council Minutes

Tuesday, May 27, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

Civic Center – Gibson Room

Chair Sandra Guynn opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Neighborhood Council representatives in attendance: NC1 Absent; NC2 Tim Croft; NC3 Garri Mauch; NC4 Sandra Guynn; NC5 Tom Kotynski and Howard Plouffe; NC6 Carl Donovan; NC7 Allison Tangen; NC8 Karen Grove; NC9 Absent. **City Commissioners:** Mayor Cory Reeves and Commissioner Joe McKenney.

Old Business: Tim C. moved to accept the minutes as presented. Carl D. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

GFPD update: Chief Newton and Captain Black gave the presentation. Full staff is 92 officers and 23 Dispatch. Currently, there are 18 at Dispatch and 88 officers. There have been three new hires and two laterals. Turnover post Covid has been 8.5 officers annually. Since 2018 there has been an ongoing applicant pool with the pool growing smaller. The second court bailiff is hybrid with other duties. SROs will move to downtown during the summer. Four detectives and a sergeant are working with the Directive Enforcement team. The evidence building construction has started and the front desk is now complete. From May 11-17th there were 730 service calls - 104 per day - with 213 calls requiring a report. YTD average remains the same. The first dispatch hiring blitz brought in one applicant, and the second blitz brought in two interviews, which are still in process. The CrimeMapping software is run by Central Square. CrimeMapping is the public side of the program and remains active and 90% accurate. Crime View Analytics is the PD side of the system, which Captain Black reported will eventually be run by AI. If PD removed Crime View Analytics it would save \$25k, but the department would need to replace it with something else, so the costs savings at this time is not clear. There are billing concerns, which PD is working to resolve. A council member commented that CrimeMapping has value to the public.

Quiet Zone: Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry reported that Billings has three quiet zone crossings, which took approximately six years to complete and cost \$1.3 million. Great Falls has eight crossings in our jurisdiction. There can be public confusion if one crossing is picked for a quiet zone when the others are meeting the standard. The groundwork would create several thousand dollars in staff expenses for the city. In a quiet zone, if a conductor felt things were unsafe, the horn could still be pulled. Quiet zones were not mentioned in our growth policy report so weighing the cost versus public interest would need to be considered. Brock indicated that it would take about twelve hours of staff time to determine the viability of the project. Mayor Reeves said we do not have funding for train risk mitigation, and that courts have not decided where the legal responsibility falls if an accident occurs. A comment was made that the noise from the horns is longer than the federal minimum, and that folks want to live away from trains. Fire Chief Jeremy Jones stated that a quiet zone would not pertain to the railyards, and Jim Wingerter, MDT District Administrator, indicated that MDT would have to be involved in the discussion as well. A past member of Council 7 reported that they contacted BNSF after they heard complaints about decibel levels in the Gibson Park area. After doing a

check, BNSF discovered that its horns were exceeding the federal minimum and adjusted them. Sandra suggested to Council 9 that they do a decibel check and report back to the Council of Councils at its October meeting.

Council Sharing:

NC1: No report

NC2: The Bay View Apartments project is delayed due to the flood plain. Compression brakes are being used more often on the interstate. New trucks do not have brake mufflers, of which MDT is aware. A marijuana cultivation plant is being proposed and is going through the process.

NC3: Eric P. did a presentation at Council 5 on how to broadcast their meetings on Facebook. Summer celebration at Jaycee Park will be on August 23. The council is working with Calumet about access to a portion of the River's Edge Trail that will be affected by increased rail traffic.

NC4: The Meadowview Village project, which is a planned unit development, is moving forward. There will be 163 single residential lots on 27 acres at Central Avenue and 46th Street. Another planned development is The Falls, to be located at 57th Street between 10th and 3rd Avenue South. No formal application has been submitted.

NC5: A dozen neighbors helped clean Charles Russell Park. Rep. Steve Fitzpatrick discussed information regarding the legislative session. An expansion involving Grandview, near 32nd Street, has caused parking concerns.

NC6: A housing development by KIB is going in behind the Peak. There are traffic concerns at 7th Street and 13th Avenue South, and the crosswalk at Benefis Community Care needs to be extended.

NC7: There are concerns over housing for the Sentinel project., which also concerns the City Commission. The Federal government will make the final decision.

NC8: Did two park clean ups during the spring clean-up. Memorial Park has had some vandalism done by youth. Their Ice cream social will be on August 21 at Memorial Park.

NC9- No Report

Neighborhood Concerns: None

Meeting agenda suggestions: Decibel level report from Council 9; Calumet update; Park and Rec Department update on park distribution funding approved May 2018

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison Tangen, Vice-Chair and Sandra Guynn, Chair