

Minutes— March 14, 2012 Westside Neighborhood Council #2

Meeting called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chairwoman Phyllis Hemstad. Pledge of Allegiance recited. Those present: Phyllis Hemstad, Dorothy Schmidt, Kelly Manzer, Robert Mehlhoff, SueAnn Strickland. Quorum established

There was a correction to the previous month's minutes—delete the P from Hemstad on the first line. Additional correction needs to be made. Reference to R-3 zoning should be R-1 zoning throughout. This was noted by Mr. Mike Haynes in his talk.

Old Business—Mike Haynes, City of Great Falls Planning, Community Development, gave a presentation on the R-1 area in Southwest Great Falls concerning developments of the on-going issue of zoning violations in that area. Next week there will be an ad in the paper for a meeting of the Planning Board concerning "bonus space and accessory structures". The section in the code is geared to garages and shops and the City is working on clarifying other uses. Currently proposed for "mother-in-law" living space—no more than 750 sq. feet. It cannot be a second dwelling unit. R-1 zoning in Great Falls is the only district in Great Falls designed with larger lots for suburban dwelling, allowing chickens, etc. The City has had some complaints concerning second dwellings being used as living spaces in these areas (rentals, etc.). It was explained that Mrs. Pupura, one of the properties in question, can keep her tenant in the house until his lease expires in June. It can then no longer be used as a rental/second dwelling. The audience told Mr. Haynes that the property was listed for sale two days ago. He was appreciative of this information, as no covenant or conditions have been placed on this property yet by the City, and prospective buyers need to be made aware of the issue. The staff reported the proposed changes to the code should be ready in a week to ten days. He encouraged everyone to read the staff report before attending the meeting. When asked the question, Mr. Haynes stated that the reason for the changes was because of the Fleming building issue. The current definition of garage is only to park cars, but no "bonus space" for crafts, man caves, etc. A question and discussion period followed. The zone changes will be taken care of first before the neighbor's issues are to be addressed. Susan Woyth asked: "What is the City's status concerning all the violations in building his (Fleming) garage?" The discussion following got rather heated between Mr. Fleming and the Miller Family to the point where Police Chief Bowen had to leave his seat and get between them and request that Mr. Fleming return to his seat, and request of the Council that any further discussion on the matter be terminated. One further general question was allowed. The Planning Board hearing is scheduled for April 10th at 3 p.m. in the Commission Chambers at the Civic Center.

Police Chief Bowen introduced himself, giving his history with the Police Department. He wants to be open and approachable. Bob Mehlhoff asked if the Citizens Advisory Commission would become viable once again, and was assured that it would be, probably still meeting on Thursdays. He will e-mail the standing members concerning details when finalized. A question and answer period followed.

Cascade County District Court Judge Candidates introduced themselves (speaking alphabetically) and gave their respective histories and reasons for seeking the position. Candidates are: Stephen Fagenstrom (age 52), Greg Pinski (age 37), Mike Rausch (age 43), and Joe Sullivan (age 53). Question and answer period followed each presentation.

Kelly Manzer spoke regarding the appalling lack of registered voters in our Council district. We have 5,512 eligible people in our council boundaries, with 1,754 active voters and 1,255 inactive voters. Kelly would be willing to open her clinic for a day as a voter registration area. Bob Mehlhoff said that when he campaigned door to door he always carried voter registrations and tried to get people to register. Most refused stating that they did not want to be called for jury duty. Steve Fagenstrom stated that jury duty prospects are chosen from Driver's Licenses now. We will discuss this issue further at our April meeting.

West Bank Park—Phyllis stated that nothing is happening there, mostly due to inadequate funding to complete any projects.

West Levee Update—Sandy Mares reported there is no movement on the Certification issue, probably because of the upcoming election. Hopefully, by January things will begin to happen once again. The PAL Agreement expires in May 2013 and will take 18 months after that to de-certify. The Corps of Engineers' certification should be the correct way to go.

The Sun Prairie Block Grant is moving ahead on their water project. Bob Mehlhoff explained some of the ramifications concerning the monies held in Block Grants and how it affects each County.

Phyllis Hemstad is on the Peoples' Park and Recreation committee to raise funds for the fireworks display during the 4th of July. The fund is currently short \$6,000.00. They are planning a 2-day Festival on the River to raise money for the Foundation. The State will not let them close the road for this Festival. It was suggested that we have a voter registration table set up there and that the four Judge candidates also set up booths. Phyllis would like to see Bob walk the 4th of July Parade handing out candy and campaigning!!

The 40 mph speed limit is still alive. Bob Mehlhoff will take this once again to Helena but we will still have to take it to the City Commission. One of the neighbors said that the 40mph speed limit sign is posted further down Central Avenue West now. The Jake Brake issue seems to have been solved easily with the placement of a sign on the hill.

SueAnn Strickland reported following up on MaryAnn Komar's issues at last month's meeting. The broken water main issue was as reported. It is cheaper to turn the volume (pressure) down and let it run than it is to pay the overtime to repair it unless it is going to cause damages. The synchronization of the lights on 3rd Street N.W. is already being looked at by the State, as they have received numerous complaints.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

SueAnn Strickland, Acting Secretary