

Minutes Neighborhood Council District 3 (NC3)

Thursday, June 5, 2014

Music Room at Riverview School

7:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Kathleen Gessaman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Those present were: Council members Cyndi Baker, Richard Calsetta, Kathleen (Kathy) Gessaman, Steve Malicott, and Terry Thompson - a quorum; City representative Patty Cadwell, Neighborhood and Youth Council Coordinator; Officer Smail, Community Police Liaison; Dexter Busby representing Calumet Montana Refining and three other members of CCAP (Calumet Citizen Advisory Panel); and about 26 members of the public.

Unfinished Business:

• **Minutes:** Steve M. moved to accept the minutes for the May 1, 2014 NC3 meeting, Terry T. seconded; the motion passed unanimously. The NC3 minutes are posted at:

<http://www.greatfallsmt.net/neighborhoodcouncils>

• **Committee Reports:** Rich C. reported on the May 27th Council of Councils meeting where Greg Doyon, City Manager, gave a Power Point overview of the City budget. Rich attended the June 3rd City Commission meeting and said the River City Casino was given a conditional use permit – 3 people spoke in favor of the project and about 50 people in attendance were opposed to the project because it put the casino/bar only 200 ft from the Corpus Christi Church property. Many at the Commission meeting spoke in opposition including the Pastor, Great Falls Diocese attorney, church members, and neighbors. The Commission voted unanimously in favor of the bar/casino. Minutes of City meetings can be found at <http://www.greatfallsmt.net/meetings>.

• **12th Street NE Update:** Kathy G. read a letter from Dave Dobbs, City Engineer, outlining the improvements planned for connecting 12th St NE to 36th Ave NE but no firm dates were included in the letter.

• **Calumet Refinery Update:** Dexter B. said Calumet has a citizens' advisory panel to provide feedback from the community. Three members of the panel (Jane Weber, Carol Bronson, Fred Anderson) were present to hear from NC3 members about their concerns with the refinery and its expansion. Terry T. brought up an earlier NC3 proposal to have a training session at the Exposition Hall to let the public know what to do in case there was an emergency at the refinery, where to find information about the need to evacuate or shelter in place, and to better prepare the citizens of Great Falls and Black Eagle for such an event. Mayor Winters said he would like to participate in any training session. There was a spirited discussion.

• **Casino Review:** Kathy G. suggested NC3 might want to consider having a Neighborhood Plan that clearly states that no casino/bars should be allowed a conditional use permit to locate closer than 600 ft property border to property border from any school, established day-care, place of worship, or park. Kathy noted the Planning Board report said there was no Neighborhood Plan for NC3 pertaining to casino/bars. The group will consider the idea over the summer break and discuss it in September. Patty agreed to see if Community Development could release project information earlier so the public could get involved earlier.

New Business:

• **Community Policing:** Officer Smail asked if the public had any concerns. Some of the comments: a crosswalk by Jaycee Park and 25th Ave NE had been discussed at an earlier NC3 meeting and now there is more concern about the safety of children on 4th St NE with the River City Casino being build a block and a half away from Jaycee Park (Mayor Winters said he would check with Public Works Friday); concerns about heavy truck traffic on 6th St NW (Officer Smail said he once wrote 30 tickets in a 4 hour period on that street); unsafe driving on 10th Ave NW; heavy truck traffic on Park Drive by Gibson Park and on River Road by Elks Riverside Park (Steve M. asked Patty C. if she could find out who monitors the heavy trucks and the roads they are authorized to travel on and where complaints could be sent – Terry said that info could be posted on the NC3 Facebook page. Officer Smail said the DOT motor carrier services issues tickets for overweight

vehicles, etc. Patty said she would check); more parked campers on the street (Officer Smail said campers have to be moved after 5 days, but it takes over 2 months to go through the City process to require moving a camper.); Rich C. said police volunteers have done a good job ticketing over 200 abandoned vehicles, etc.

Steve M. moved to write a letter to the correct people at the DOT asking them to monitor the heavy trucks traveling down residential streets for violations of the law. Rich C. seconded. Kathy asked for discussion. Steve volunteered to draft the letter for Council's review once Patty C. provides a contact name. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Officer Smail reviewed recent crime statistics for the NC3 area. He noted a new drug has been seen around town that causes the user to become very violent – it is worse than the “bath salts” drug. Officer Smail informed the Council that he is moving on to a new assignment. The group thanked Officer Smail for his time served as Community Police liaison for NC3. Carol B. thanked Officer Smail for serving as the GFPS SRO officer at CMR for the past four years.

• **NeighborWorks Project:** Sheila Rice, Executive Director for NeighborWorks, passed out a map and a handout of a proposed new residential development near Valley View with 80-90 sites for High School and Mutual Self Help Program houses. The proposed development has two parts – a new 66 lot subdivision starting at the west edge of the current Valley View subdivision and extend west towards Stuckey Road and 17 house sites on the west portion of Valley View Park. The Valley View Park property would be exchanged for a new park with play structures, a ball field, benches, tables, and restrooms that would be built on the west end of the new subdivision. The new park would have its own maintenance budget funded by a Special Improvement District (SID) assessed only on the owners of the new lots. Sheila said there would be new access routes when 15th St NW was extended to the NW Bypass and 10 Ave NW jogged down to extend to Stuckey Road – this would help reduce traffic through the neighborhood.

Most people present were very concerned by the proposed parkland exchange. Valley View residents said they have spent over 40 years improving Valley View Park and it has a “French drain” in it to help with the water drainage in the area. Residents said they have equity built up in the park and in their property; property values (and taxes) are impacted by having a nearby park. Other comments: people chose to build their houses at that location because there was a park across the road; reduction of property value since new houses would be in the \$150,000 to 160,000 range vs. \$230,000 to 300,000 in Valley View; increased traffic from having 17 houses across from 10 houses; there will be no buffer area between the new houses and the commercial area on the NW Bypass; the new park area should be developed with a smaller buffer area between the new houses and the commercial/industrial area east of Stuckey Road and leave the existing parkland as it is; the schools in the area are already overloaded – finding space for all the children would be a problem; the land is not suitable for development because of slope and drainage problems, etc.

The Council did not take a position on the proposed development at this meeting but agreed to facilitate another meeting with Valley View residents on the proposed development ASAP.

Next regular NC3 meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 4, 2014.

Petitions and Communications: There were no additional comments.

Steve M. moved to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. Terry T. seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, Kathleen Gessaman, NC3 Acting Secretary. Please note these minutes are not an exact record of what was said.

The NC3 Board would like to thank Riverview School for providing a meeting spot for NC3.