

Special Meeting
Minutes Neighborhood Council District 3 (NC3)
Thursday, July 10, 2014
Corpus Christi Church Basement
(410 22nd Ave NE)
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Kathleen Gessaman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Those present said the Pledge of Allegiance. Attendees signing in were: Council members Cyndi Baker, Richard Calsetta, and Kathleen (Kathy) Gessaman - a quorum (Steve Malicott and Terry Thompson were absent); Patty Rearden, Interim Director of Park and Recreation; Rep. Bob Mehlhoff; Sen. Ed Buttrey; general election candidates, Cleve Loney and Vonnie Brown; and 28 members of the public.

Unfinished Business:

• **Minutes: Cyndi B. moved to accept the minutes of the June 19, 2014 NC3 meeting. Rich C. seconded. The motion passed unanimously.** The NC3 minutes are posted at: <http://www.greatfallsmt.net/neighborhoodcouncils>

• **Valley View Park Resolution:** Kathy G. invited Bruce Gottwig, 1409 10th Ave NW, to present the Valley View Park Resolution. Bruce read the Resolution (attached below) and answered questions. Kathy G. introduced Patty Rearden, Director of Parks and Recreation and noted the Resolution mentioned that residents wanted to work with the City to improve Valley View Park. Patty R. showed some photographs of other city parks that neighborhoods had developed. Patty also passed around an album with clippings and photos of Heron Park as an example of the neighbors and the City working together to install playground equipment and other park improvements. Patty R. noted Leadership Great Falls worked to install playground equipment in Jaycee and Skyline Parks and spearheaded other improvements to the two parks. Patty R. said developed parks are less likely to be sold. Rep. Bob Mehlhoff, 407 9th St NW, said he hopes the Resolution will save the park for the third time and was not in favor of the City taking payment in lieu of parkland in new developments. Patty R. said payment in lieu usually happens when the development is small enough that the allocated land would be too small for a park. Kathy G. noted some developers just built a block at a time to avoid having to put in a park, preferring to pay the fee in lieu of a park. Bruce G. opined that parkland should be saved because you can never get it back once it is sold; Patty R. said the Park Board recently made a similar pronouncement. By a show of hands, the audience demonstrated unanimous support for the Valley View Park Resolution.

Cyndi B. moved that Neighborhood Council 3, concur with the Valley View Park Resolution presented this evening by the residents of Valley View, object to the transfer, sale, exchange, or diversion of any existing park or parkland, and recommend that the City of Great Falls Commission promptly take all necessary actions to protect and preserve all of the developed or undeveloped parks or parkland in our Council area for the continued benefit of the city's residents. Rich C. seconded. Kathy G. asked if there was any discussion. Cyndi thanked everyone for saving Valley View Park and said she was proud of the neighbors for working together to save their park; Kathy and Rich agreed. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Responding to a question about what's next, Rich C. noted he had another commitment on July 15th (when the next City Commission meeting is scheduled), but would present the Valley View Park Resolution and the NC3 action at the August 5, 2014 City Commission meeting. Rich said he would also bring up the Resolution at the next Council of Councils in August. Rich advised people to attend the August 5th City Commission and speak out for the Park at the end of the meeting. He also noted that the meeting would be a good time to bring up concerns about the proposed development. In response to a question, Ron Gessaman, 1006 36th Ave NE, said people had 3 minutes to speak during the Public Comment period near the end of Commission meetings.

Kathy G. suggested Bruce send the Resolution to the City Clerk for publishing in the City Weekly Update. Rich C. asked Patty R. if the Resolution should be sent to the City before the August 5th meeting; she said yes.

Ron G. recommended emailing the Resolution in on July 30th so the Commissioners could get a copy in their packet for the August 5th meeting.

Petitions and Communications: Barry Dardis, 220 29th Ave NE in Henderson Heights, presented his views on Youth Dynamics' purchase of and establishment of a group home in Henderson Heights. Barry applauded Youth Dynamics for trying to help adolescents with mental disorders and agreed that this is very worthy cause (he worked in the chemical dependency field for 32 years), but he has issues with Youth Dynamics locating in Henderson Heights. Some of these issues were: the subdivision covenants registered with the Clerk and Records office only allow single-family residences; none of the neighbors were notified or, if they were, it was a very selective notification; Sara Sexe, City Attorney, said the group home does not require special zoning because it only has eight clients; this has become a civil matter because Youth Dynamics is a non-profit corporation running a treatment housing facility in the neighborhood; legal advice said the covenant is valid; and Peter Dengel, PhD, Executive Director of Youth Dynamics of Billings, knew about the covenant when he bought the property for Youth Dynamics.

Barry asked two counselors from Rocky Mountain Treatment Center (where his wife is the Director) what the neighborhood could expect from group home clients. The clients essentially have a "disease process" - a problem they can't deal with and loving care is not going to solve their problems completely. Barry suggested substituting leukemia for mental/emotional disorder or drug addiction and asked if one would treat leukemia with only attention, kindness, and loving care. The following were some of the possible case scenarios: Oppositional Defiance Disorder (youth refuses to do what they are asked to do), Bipolar Disorder (manic depressant), Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD - negative behavior to gain attention), ADHD (attention deficit disorder), Borderline Personality Disorder (manipulative, cutting themselves, self abuse), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (hyper vigilance, insomnia, and flashback), Homicidal Ideation (fanaticize about killing people), and Sexual Abuse Trauma (some abuse victims go on to abuse others). The counselors told Barry the troubled youth would come from - Pine Hills (Montana Department of Corrections in Miles City), Foster Homes programs, Psychiatry Units, Shodair Hospital, New Day, Inc. (treatment center for seriously emotionally disturbed children), and Juvenile Court. Both counselors said this group home should not be located in a residential neighborhood. Barry said his family was not comfortable having this group home in his neighborhood because these adolescents might interact with other children in the neighborhood and at the park and could introduce them to a whole new dialogue that is extremely abusive.

Barry said no one from the facility has talked to him; he doesn't know if the youth will be receiving treatment like group counseling, etc. Barry said managed care for troubled youth is a big problem in our state and suggested that the Legislators present could help solve problems with insurance and treatment for these children. Barry said many mentally troubled youth end up in jail because no one knows how to treat them.

Barry said the neighbors need Youth Dynamics to answer some questions - like what do they do if one of the clients goes AMA (against medical advice) and just leaves or commits a crime or sexual abuse - will the neighborhood be notified? Several people mentioned observing that the youth were not supervised when outside the group home and questioned how well trained the staff was. Barry responded to audience inquires.

Barry said there have already been consequences - a gentleman down the street lost the sale of his house when the prospective buyer learned there was a group home on the street. Leland Griffin, 204 29th Ave NE, said a prospective buyer of his house came to see him to close on the sale of his home, saw the vehicles parked all along the street, asked what was going on, and, when he learned that a home for troubled teens had moved in down the street, withdrew his offer to buy Mr. Griffin's house. Leland said this was a "taking" - his house has been devalued by the group home. Leland said the group home house sold March 1st and in mid-June he received a post card (that looked like junk mail) from Youth Dynamics saying a group home was opening on July 1, 2014. Youth Dynamics told some of the neighbors at a meeting in late June that the Supreme Court

said what they are doing is legal. Leland was unhappy about being blindsided by Youth Dynamics. Cyndi B. related how she got a great deal on her house because it had been a group home and it was trashed inside.

Barry requested Youth Dynamic director, Peter Dengel, and a staff member be invited to the September NC3 meeting to answer questions. Rich C. said neighbors' concerns could also be voiced at the Aug. 5th City Commission meeting. Rich C. also suggested bringing up the low Valley View water pressure at that meeting.

Cheri C. and Susan G. brought up having an informal ice cream social at Valley View Park before school started. Susan asked for a copy of the meeting sign-in sheets to make contacting neighbors quicker. Kathy G. said she'd email a copy to Susan.

Kathy G. reported Jenn Reichelt asked her to announce a 30 inch broken water main behind the La Quinta Inn was being repaired and requested everyone in the Neighborhood Councils 1, 2, and 3 areas reduce water usage until Saturday afternoon.

Cyndi B. moved to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. Rich C. seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

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

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

NC3 would like to thank Corpus Christi Church for providing a meeting spot for this NC3 Special Meeting.

Resolution Valley View Subdivision Residents July 10, 2014

We residents of Valley View Subdivision request the Neighborhood Council Number Three resolve that they will never support any attempt by the City of Great Falls to sell or swap any designated park or green space being used as park property.

We believe that park property adds to the quality of life for the neighborhood residents and that of a city as a whole.

We believe that the loss of any parkland can never be regained, representing a significant loss to the neighborhood where the park resides.

We believe that a local government should be required to respect neighborhood residents' wishes in the disposition of any neighborhood park or green space designated as parkland.

We believe that any improvements to a neighborhood park or green area designated as parkland should be vetted and approved by the residents of the neighborhood where the parkland resides.

In addition:

We residents of Valley View Subdivision request that Neighborhood Council Number Three support the process to permanently designate Valley View Park in its present entirety as a city park by never in part or as a whole sell or swap the property for any reason, residential, commercial, or otherwise. We request that the City of Great Falls immediately annex the county portion of Valley View Park into the city and designate it as part of the Valley View Park property.

We the residents of Valley View will work with the City of Great Falls Parks and Recreation Department to develop a long-term improvement plan for Valley View Park.