

**Great Falls/Cascade County  
Historic Preservation Advisory Commission**

**MINUTES from the  
June 13, 2013 meeting**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bob Milford, Sandi French, Ken Sievert, Carole Ann Clark, Carol Bradley, Kelly Parks, Ken Robison, Carol Bronson, Ryan Forde, ex-officio members Kristi Scott and Joan Redeen

**STAFF PRESENT:** Ellen Sievert

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Acting City Planning Director Craig Raymond; Kate Hampton from SHPO; city planner Ida Meehan; and Vista employee Bethany Salmon

HPAC Chair Bob Milford called the meeting to order at 12 noon. Ken Robison moved to approve minutes from the April 10, 2013 meeting, Carole Ann Clark seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**HPO REPORT:** Among other things, Ellen spent time administering a grant for the website program for the Downtown Partnership and technical assistance projects involving the Rocky Mountain Building, the Arvon, Block, the Suhr Warehouse and Mill Building. She reviewed the National Register nomination for the Columbus Center and met with a potential investor to discuss possible redevelopment of county property in the West Bank Historic District. She devoted much of her time to planning the Preservation Awards reception.

**PANTAGES THEATER:** Buyer Randy Hafer is scheduled to close June 28 on the Rocky Mountain Building. Ellen spent time with local supporters discussing the possibility of re-establishing a theater in the Rocky Mountain Building. Hafer is hoping to include the theater restoration in his financing package, which would include \$200,000 in new market tax credits. The group forming to promote the theater's revival includes musician Phil Aaberg and his wife Patty. They'd like to install seating that could be pushed back to make way for dinner-theater-type performances. Joan Redeen reported that the Business Improvement District has approved a \$61,250 façade grant for the building. Paris Gibson Square executive director Tracy Houck is willing and will approach her board for approval to provide an umbrella 501 (c) (3) for a theater group.

**MONARCH DEPOT:** Ellen met with state transportation officials in Helena and they are willing to sell the land the depot sits on for \$1,800 and change. They removed the cost of demolishing the building. MDT also still plans to donate \$25,000 to the newly formed non-profit group that will be operating the depot. The contribution qualifies the depot for CTEP money.

**CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOWS:** Committee chair Carol Bradley reported that the Montana Historical Foundation selected HPAC for a \$3,000 grant to survey a sampling of Great Falls' bungalows in the coming year. HPAC had requested \$5,000. A trolley tour of the bungalow neighborhoods was scheduled immediately after the HPAC meeting. Local residents Maggie Nybo and possibly Kathy Van Tighem will be joining the committee.

**HPAC BOARD APPOINTMENTS:** Terms for the three county appointees to the commission—Carol Bronson, Carol Bradley and Kelly Parks – expire in July. Both Carols are termed-out, but Kelly is interested in serving a second term. Ex-officio member Kristi Scott also is interested in applying.

**CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM:** Commissioners discussed at length Great Falls-Cascade County's standing with the state Historic Preservation Office in light of the city's decision to temporarily leave vacant Ellen's position as HPO when she retires June 27. Kate Hampton said

someone needs to fill the position 80 hours a month, and the advisory commission needs to remain in existence in order to qualify for Certified Local Government funding from the state. Interim City Planning Director, Craig Raymond said he is working to contract with Ellen to continue serving in her position on a consulting basis. One hitch is that, starting July 1, the city has to contribute a percentage of Ellen's consultant's pay to the Public Employee Retirement System. Craig said the city's intent is to maintain the status of the program overall. Kate Hampton said SHPO is vitally interested in seeing the HPAC program continue. She was full of praise for the Great Falls-Cascade County program's level of activity; she said our group is the poster child for CLGs across Montana, adding "you're so functional and so pro-active." She said SHPO plans to nominate Ellen for the U.S. secretary of Interior's award for historic preservation, which comes with \$1,000 in cash and a trip to Washington D.C.

In the meantime, Ellen will be clearing out her desk, putting some of her files in long-term storage in the basement of the Civic Center and keeping others on a hard drive or in hard copy form. Some files still remain in the planning office. The ornament fund still contains \$10,506.

Commissioner Kelly Parks moved and Ken Robison seconded a motion to have HPAC write a letter to city and county officials asking that they keep the commission alive.

HPAC's next meeting is at noon July 10 in the Rainbow Room at the Civic Center.

Respectfully submitted by  
Carol Bradley  
HPAC secretary