

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE  
GREAT FALLS PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD/ZONING COMMISSION  
February 10, 2015**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Great Falls Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Scot Davis at 3:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of the Civic Center.

**ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE**

Planning Board Members present:

Scot Davis, Vice Chair  
Anthony Houtz  
Cheryl Patton  
Sophia Sparklin  
Mark Striepe

Planning Board Members absent:

Nate Weisenburger, Chair  
Dana Henkel  
Heidi Pasek

Planning Staff Members present:

Craig Raymond, Director P&CD  
Andrew Finch, Sr. Transportation Planner  
Phyllis Tryon, Sr. Administrative Assistant

Other Staff present:

Patty Rearden, Deputy Director Park and Recreation Department  
Jennifer Reichelt, Deputy City Manager

Mr. Raymond affirmed a quorum of the Board was present.

**MINUTES**

*\*\*Action Minutes of the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission. Please refer to the audio/video recording of this meeting for additional detail.\*\**

Vice Chair Davis asked if there were any comments or corrections to the minutes of the regular meeting held on January 27, 2015. Seeing none, the minutes were approved as submitted.

## **BOARD ACTIONS NOT REQUIRING PUBLIC HEARING**

### **West Bank Park TIF District Funding Application**

Andrew Finch, Senior Transportation Planner, presented information from the staff report for the West Bank Park TIF District Funding application. He entered the staff report into the record.

Mr. Finch said that Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts are used as economic development and revitalization tools in communities. In the West Bank Urban Renewal District, use of TIF funding is a tool to help eliminate blight as well as to promote economic development. TIF funding has been used in the past to help promote economic development in the area, such as the Staybridge Suites development. Mr. Finch explained that as tax increment is accrued within a certain geographic area, that increment is used for reinvestment within that district.

Mr. Finch introduced Patty Rearden, Deputy Director of the Park and Recreation Department, as the application representative on this project.

### **PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION**

Ms. Patty Rearden, Deputy Director of the City Park and Recreation Department, presented an overview of this project. Ms. Rearden said project planning began in 2010 with CTA Architects working on a master plan for West Bank Park. A steering committee was formed which included City staff from the Planning Division, Public Works, and Park and Recreation Departments, as well as members of Neighborhood Councils 2 and 3, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Recreational Trails, Inc. (RTI), and a county commissioner who previously worked many years for the Forest Service. The public process included a town hall meeting, meetings with the Neighborhood Councils 2 and 3 and the Park & Recreation Advisory Board, a two-day Community Design Charette, an online survey, and a presentation at a work session of the City Commission. City Commission adopted the plan on March 15, 2011.

Ms. Rearden said the master plan for this portion of the park was divided into three sections: an active zone, a transitional zone, and a passive zone. The active zone includes a non-motorized boat ramp (already installed), parking lot, restrooms, pavilion, amphitheater, stage, a natural playground, trails and an entrance sign. A 9-hole golf course put in by the Great Falls Folf Association is currently part of the park but was not in the master plan.

Ms. Rearden reviewed various funding sources for this project as follows:  
Restroom – Missouri Madison RiverFund Grant, NW Energy (PPL) Grant, Proposed TIF  
Parking Lot – CTEP Grant, RTI Match, Proposed TIF  
ADA Connection from 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave NW to Trail – Transportation Alternatives Grant (TA), RTI Match  
Replacement of 977 linear feet of 4-foot wide non-compliant deteriorated sidewalk with 9-foot wide shared use trail – TA Grant, RTI Match  
Irrigation and Landscaping – Proposed TIF  
Replace Existing Vault Toilet – CTEP, RTI Match  
Concrete Trail Replacement (includes pump house removal) – Proposed TIF (RTI)

Ms. Rearden reviewed details of the master plan and presented information on design and landscaping planning, as well as a breakdown of the project costs and projected funding. She said there has been some interest in help with funding from the private sector on the pavilion and the natural playground.

This TIF request is \$460,000 of the total estimated project cost of \$839,483. Ms. Rearden reviewed information on the City TIF Fund balance. As of January 2015, there was \$262,610 of unrestricted cash balance, and it is projected that by June 30, 2015, the unrestricted cash balance will be \$702,723.

Ms. Rearden concluded her presentation and offered to answer any questions from the Board. Vice Chair Davis asked how much the vault toilet would need to be raised in light of the 100 year floodplain. Mr. Finch said the intent is to replace the vault toilet with an ADA accessible one, and although the toilet may only need to be raised a couple of feet, there will need to be fill brought in for the extended slope. He said the location would also need to be changed, as it is currently very close to the trail. He said an ADA accessible vault toilet may fall out of the project due to these issues. Ms. Rearden noted that although there will be a full toilet facility included in this project, it will not be open year-round due to water freezing in cold temperatures, whereas the vault toilet is open year-round. Ms. Sparklin asked if the cost of the full restroom facility included water and sewer service installation, and Ms. Rearden said it did.

Ms. Patton congratulated Ms. Rearden and Park and Rec staff, and all City staff, on this project. She said it has been a long time coming, and citizens have been waiting for public improvements in that area to make the park land more usable and to have a higher and better use. She said she is impressed that there are various funding sources brought into this project and not just TIF funding. She said it sounds like this is being funded by cash in the fund and that there will not be any bond or borrowing for this project. Ms. Rearden confirmed that.

Ms. Patton said this is exactly, in her opinion, what tax increment financing is for: to fund public improvements that go along with private development to make the area renewed and revitalized. She said she is anxious to see this project done, that there is good progress in the planning, and that it's great there are other funding sources in addition to the TIF Funding.

Ms. Patton asked when Montana Specialty Mills will be removing their equipment, as she understood the property is sold. Mr. Raymond said they might begin doing so in May or June of this year, but there is a lot that needs to happen between now and then. They are moving to the AgriTech Park.

Vice Chair Davis said he is excited to have irrigation for this project and the park will be wonderful year round. Ms. Rearden said irrigation will be potable water. She said they are hoping to get a lot of the project pieces done this summer, but some will carry over into 2016.

### **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were no questions from the public.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

Mr. Striepe said he concurred with comments made by Ms. Patton and Vice Chair Davis on this project. He asked about restricted cash in the TIF fund, and about competition for these funds.

Mr. Raymond said restricted funds are a bond, and Ms. Reichelt said that bond was for the courthouse project.

MOTION: The Planning Advisory Board recommends to the City Commission that the City authorize the projects and improvements and associated funding from the West Bank Urban Renewal TIF District.

Made by: Ms. Sparklin  
Second: Ms. Patton

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion passed.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

#### Planning Advisory Board Vacancy

- Mitch Stelling resigned

Mr. Raymond said Mr. Stelling had changes at work that made it impossible for him to commit to the Planning Advisory Board meeting schedule. The City is advertising the vacancy.

#### Next Meeting Agenda – Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2015

- Helena Chemical – CUP
- East Great Falls Retail – Minor Subdivision & CUP

#### Project Status:

- Stone Meadows – Phase II Amended Plat – City Commission Feb. 17, 2015

#### Petitions and Applications Received:

- Great Falls Rescue Mission - CUP
- CHS – Annexation and Zoning
- West Ridge Phase VII – Major Subdivision, Annexation & Zoning
- East Industrial Park TIF (AgriTech) Application
- Central Montana Agricultural & Technology Park & International Malt TIF (Great Bear) Application

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Vice Chair Davis adjourned the meeting at 3:29 p.m.

---

CHAIRMAN

---

SECRETARY