

**Mayor's Downtown Advisory Commission Quarterly Meeting Minutes**  
**April 3, 2018**

**Commission Members in Attendance:** Nicole Rowley (County Commissioner), Dave Chrismon (Downtown Ambassador), Eran Fowler Pehan (Housing & Community Development), Margaret Borg (Retired Attorney), Sue Wilkins (Missoula Correctional Services), Ginny Merriam (Mayor's Office), Ethan Smith (Police Department), Alex Beal (Municipal Court), Keithi Worthington (City Attorney), Amy Allison Thompson (Poverello Center), Elizabeth Marshall (Palace Apartments) and Ryan Boyd (Salvation Army)

**Commission Members Absent:** Michael Moore (Downtown Business Owner), Tom Snyder (Downtown Business Owner), Bryan von Lossberg (City Council), Lt. Jake Rosling (Police Department) Theresa Williams (Reaching Home Coordinator), Melinda Mason (Children's Mental Health Bureau) and Dan Cederberg (Downtown Attorney)

**Others in Attendance:** Heidi Bakula (Mayor's Office), John Engen (Mayor)

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of February 6, 2018 were approved as submitted.

1. Public Comment - None

2. Introductions

3. Downtown Update

- Ethan Smith said that there were complaints about the parking lot next to Union Gospel Mission, mainly camping and drug use. He is trying to work with the attorney's office and development services to find a legal way to address the parking lot. Union Gospel Mission installed a port-a-potty and it was causing homeless individuals to gravitate toward the parking lot more frequently.
- Two police officers were recently added to address misdemeanor violations.
- Ginny Merriam explained that they weren't trying to get rid of transients because of their homelessness, they were doing it because of open drug use and impeding the bike pedestrian bridge in the area. The church was also broken into.
- Ethan further explained that they don't want to seize public property by towing their campers away, you have to respect their private property.
- Dave Chrismon stated that the best time of the year was now because of Parks & Recreation and the Downtown Association. He also has not seen as many dogs off leash in the downtown area, but it could still be bad on area trails. He felt that more panhandlers and transients were coming out because of the weather and there have been many abandoned bikes and there was a push to get them identified.
- Alex Beal said that he was seeing more people since the mental health and drug treatment funding had dried up. There was a spike in aggressive transients coming in for court.
- Keithi Worthington added that they would be seeing more people since there was no longer any case management as well. More people were also using meth, heroin and cocaine and there was a spike in petty crimes.
- Ryan Boyd explained that the number of showers and laundry use had doubled at the Salvation Army, but there had been less people more recently because of the nice weather.
- Elizabeth Marshall praised Dave Chrismon for his work downtown. She felt that the nature of business had changed downtown, it's gone from music to billiards. It also had quieted down near the parking garage.

- Amy Allison Thompson said that 205 people had been using the Poverello Center and they were bursting at the seams in February. They are now putting a cap on the number of people that can be housed in the facility, but are trying to do it in a fair way.
- Sue Wilkins said that she was seeing an increase in problems in mental health due to the lack of case workers. There had been a push for them to take people for pre-release that don't qualify and should not be there. The Western Montana Mental Health Center was operating nine hours per week doing case management on a group level.
- Cola Rowley said that people were being released from prison due to overcrowding. There were many who also reoffended once they were released.
- Sue further stated that December 31<sup>st</sup> is the deadline to move people out of jail statewide.
- Cola said that the Partnership Health Center was trying to take in more mental health related individuals.
- Mayor John Engen said that we cannot wait until the next legislative session, he had no problem contacting the governor's office. When resources are taken away the public suffers leaving people untreated. Case managers keep people from becoming homeless.
- Ginny said that information on numbers could be collected from the courts and housing coalitions, etc., to put in the letter to the governor. Ginny also discussed the talk she went to that Michelle Cardinal gave. Michelle is from Portland and she owns a business called R II C Group. The homeless population in her area had turned a four block stretch by her office into a homeless camp. Since they were an ad agency they produced an ad about the problem. The mayor's office got involved and she also became involved with Central City. Her main message was that caring is good for business.

#### 4. Update and Discussion Topic

##### a. Update on Serving Chronically Homeless People, Including a "Low-Threshold" Shelter

Eran Pehan started by explaining that this related to a 24 hour drop-in center and low-income supportive housing. Unfortunately Missoula cannot get a 9% tax credit allocation. She's been talking to developers about what a building could look like. She did get a \$50,000 FUSE grant. FUSE stands for Frequent User Systems Engagement. This grant will help those that use emergency services the most. It will be used to plan a program, and at the end of the process, end up with a map or plan. She thinks the outcome will be a 24 hour shelter combined with housing. Right now through the coordinated entry system they had 16 chronically homeless individuals with housing vouchers but no landlord would rent to them. She also explained that they were looking at bigger housing units. These housing units could be put on 3 – 5 acres outside of the downtown area. Many of these housing units incorporate families, also included are those with a criminal record that cannot find housing. They plan on looking at the data they gather to determine the best model. A stand along facility would not be cost effective.

Eran asked the group for topics for the July meeting. She wondered about impacts of data that is being collected. John thought of inviting Marsha Hogan and others from the governor's office to come and speak to MDAC.

Elizabeth added that MDAC still needed someone from the Urban Indian Center to join. Eran asked the group to use any connections they had to see if someone would come from the Urban Indian Center to join the group.

The July 2018 meeting was moved to Tuesday, July 10, 2018.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Heidi Bakula, Executive Assistant