

**Mayor's Downtown Advisory Commission Quarterly Meeting Minutes  
July 9, 2019**

**Commission Members in Attendance:** Juanita Vero (County Commissioner), Margaret Borg (Retired Attorney), Sue Wilkins (Missoula Correctional Services), Ethan Smith (Police Department), Dan Cederberg (Attorney), Eran Fowler Pehan (Housing & Community Development), Bryan von Lossberg (City Council), Ethan Lerman (Municipal Court Judge), Amy Allison Thompson (Poverello Center), Elizabeth Marshall (Palace Apartments), Theresa Williams (Reaching Home Coordinator), Ginny Merriam (Mayor's Office) and Ryan Boyd (Salvation Army)

**Commission Members Absent:** Dave Chrismon (Downtown Ambassador), Lt. Jake Rosling (Police Officer), Keithi Worthington (City Attorney), Randy Krastel (BID Police Officer), John Engen (Mayor) and Tom Snyder (Downtown Business Owner)

**Others in Attendance:** Heidi Bakula (Mayor's Office), Hannah Higgins (HOT Team), Jake Lapke (PATH), April Seat (Union Gospel Mission) and Matt Hendry (WMMHC)

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of April 2, 2019 were approved as submitted.

1. Public Comment - None
2. Introductions

Ginny Merriam gave a brief overview about MDAC's history.

3. Current Issues Update

- New Collaboration to Provide Permanent Supportive Housing – Eran Pehan

Eran Pehan explained that the City and County of Missoula are now working together, with developer Trinity LLP (a collaboration between Blueline Development, Missoula Housing Authority, and Homeword), who is using the 4% tax credit for local development. Missoula County has provided four acres of property for development next to the detention center on Mullan Road. This donation was to Trinity and they are moving ahead on developing the property. Trinity will be building 202 units of low income housing for people that earn 60%, or below, median income. These will be the first scattered site tax credit units built in the state. They will also be building a 10,000 sq. ft. navigation center for the chronically homeless and there will be healthcare services for the homeless on site. This center will be open 24 hours a day and serve as overflow for winter sheltering. Of these 202 units, 130 will be built on the land donated by Missoula County. Seventy two new units of housing will be built at the old Skyview Mobile Home Park for people earning 50%, or below, the median income. In 2020 they will break ground and by 2021 they will be ready for occupants.

The Navigation Center will be for those who cannot access the Poverello Center or other service providers. The Navigation Center is considered a low threshold environment and the occupants will have their needs met, plus housing, a clinic and a place to be so they are off the street. The police department will be able to bring people to the Navigation Center for services instead of the emergency room.

Theresa Williams added that people with a mental health crisis would probably be taken to a different location.

Eran stated that 30 units would be partially funded by the Missoula Housing Authority through vouchers and tax credit money.

Dan Cederberg wondered about acreage for the additional county offices and jail expansion. Eran said the county had a total of six acres and they were donating four acres. Dan asked Eran if there was a lawsuit over the bond used to pay for the property for the jail. Eran said that it was being researched and would be addressed by public process.

- Missoula Coordinated Outreach Team – Union Gospel Mission, Poverello Center, Western Montana Mental Health Center, Open Aid Alliance and Volunteers of America

Hannah Higgins of the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) from the Poverello Center said that there was an effort to coordinate between the different agencies to look at problem areas, such as the library and the bus transfer center. Citizens have been invited to these meetings to troubleshoot any problems.

Jake Lapke of the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program has been working through the Coordinated Entry System (CES) to coordinate efforts and the PATH program is able to house individuals easier than CES at this point. They have developed an outreach grid with a live data-stream of homeless encampments which also indicates which service providers are providing which services. Hannah added that the outreach grid is private but anyone can add information to it.

Matt Hendry of the Western Montana Mental Health Center (WMMHC) added that the PATH program is under the WMMHC and they are able to take care of folks with more needs and get them aligned with services, plus help them into housing.

April Seat of the Union Gospel Mission (UGM) also explained that by working together they are able to provide services throughout the week and services are not duplicated. They are able to cover more ground this way. They go to the encampments as a team and they started cleaning them up in May, plus there will be another clean-up at the end of July. Residents of the encampments are also helping to clean up the trash and they are gaining their trust through these efforts. UGM also received a grant from Republic Services for a dumpster that can be accessed by the residents. They are also able to approach new people about available services.

Hannah said that HOT used to work with the health department to maintain the trash at the encampment, and there has been lots of negative media surrounding the Reserve Street encampment.

Bryan von Lossberg asked about the number of residents in the encampment. Jake said there were 25 – 30 people there and there was a problem because they didn't currently have any housing vouchers. April added that there were 10 – 12 camps that were shared in the area.

Ginny Merriam explained that the state was taking the attitude that the people were in the encampment because of the CES. April stated that UGC had not received any feedback from the state about the situation. They are making an effort to get the people in the encampment housed so it's not an on-going issue.

Ethan Smith also noted that most of the land is owned by Missoula County and private property owners. Ginny explained that the complaint the mayor's office received the most was that the city is not doing anything to rectify the situation, but now we can tell them that the residents are being served by CES.

April explained that she believed in the Housing First policy. She was an addict and was homeless. If the residents are moved from Reserve Street where are they going to go? She is also working on the trash issue so the health department doesn't have to do much this year.

Jake added that since mental health services have been stripped down it has created obstacles in getting and maintaining housing. It's a struggle with the legislature to get funding for the programs.

April said that people feel the system has failed them, but now they are trusting in the system and know that it will work for them. The Reaching Home program has really helped people get connected with services.

Hannah said a housing retention specialist has been added and that has been very helpful. It's one single person and there is no more confusion in communicating with property owners for rentals.

Eran Pehan added that the three positions that have helped substantially are a Navigator, a Retention Specialist and a Landlord Liaison. Landlords needed one person to contact for housing issues or questions. April added that a Landlord Liaison was huge because at times, five people would be talking to one landlord about the same thing and this freed up more people for outreach. Hannah said that navigators have increased trust in the system when handing people off to another service provider.

Bryan wondered if the police department was still receiving irate phone calls about the Reserve Street camp. Ethan Smith said that they were receiving calls, but after this meeting he has a better understanding of what to tell people. Unfortunately the Reserve Street camp is so visible that the police department is flooded with calls. His biggest issue at this time is dealing with RV's and campers. The city cannot tow them, but he's not sure what to do about them. He needs a fund for mechanical issues when people end up stranded here. April said to call her at 549-HOPE for vehicle repairs. There is pooled funding available from local churches for vehicle repairs.

Dan Cederberg wondered if there was housing available now for those 25 – 30 people living in the Reserve Street camp. April explained that they still needed a Landlord Liaison and they did not have thirty vouchers. There were too many vouchers given away to people on the street, but they would have more vouchers soon.

Eran explained that they were still having problems locating landlords that will rent to homeless people. Elizabeth Marshall added that the other problem was contacting people who are not yet housed since they have no address or phone number.

April offered to take irate phone calls about the Reserve Street encampment.

4. Downtown Update – The commission ran out of time and this item was not discussed.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Heidi Bakula, Executive Assistant