

# **University District Neighborhood Council Leadership Team**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Date: February 2, 2016

Time: 6:30

Location: Lewis and Clark Villages Community Room  
3000 S. Higgins Ave.  
Missoula, MT 59801

Leadership Team Members in Attendance: Dave Chrismon, Katie Sullivan, Jeff Birkby, Julie Stephenson

Others in Attendance: Jane Kelly, Neighborhood Coordinator, Jordan Hess, ASUM Office of Transportation, Tyler Decker, Missoula Parks and Rec Volunteer Coordinator, Katherine Auge, ASUM Off Campus Rental Center, Ken Wall, Nextdoor

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6:30      Welcome

6:31      Approval of Minutes:

- i.      October 2015 LT Meeting Minutes – All approved, passed.
- ii.     November 2015 General Meeting Minutes – Dave Chrismon made a motion to amend to reflect that Chris Boza, a presenter at the meeting, invited attendees to participate in the Tree Committee. This motion to change was approved. Minutes were approved and passed.
- iii.    December 2015 LT Meeting Minutes – All approved, passed.

6:32      Correspondence – None.

6:35      Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items - None

6:37      UM Neighborhood Ambassadors Update – Katherine Auge, UM Off Campus Rental Center provided an update on the following subjects: neighborhood ambassadors, subletting education, late night bus behavior, new bike ambassadors, sidewalk snow shovel education, and the spring student furniture and garage sale.

6:45      Office of Neighborhoods Report – Jane Kelly, Neighborhood Coordinator gave an update on neighborhood projects. She discussed the upcoming Neighborhood Volunteer of the Year Award, the bus tour for April 2016, the possible creation of two new neighborhood councils in Missoula, and availability for more volunteers on Chris Boza's tree committee.

6:53      Community Forum Report – Dave Chrismon gave an update on the following: the “Building Eye” website, the Missoula County property information system, new rules for townhouse development, the latest on the new Stockman Bank in downtown Missoula, and the need for more election judges.

7:00      UM Transportation Update and Volunteer Opportunities – Jordan Hess, Director, ASUM Office of Transportation, provided an update on the transportation study. We reviewed the current results of the transportation study and discussed the recommended actions.

7:25      Jeannette Rankin Park Update and Volunteer Opportunities – Tyler Decker, Volunteer Coordinator, Missoula Parks and Recreation provided an update on the changes being made to J. Rankin Park. We discussed how the LT can get the neighborhood involved and increase volunteer opportunities this spring.

7:50      Work on Annual Calendar – Dave Chrismon: Postponed until the next meeting.

7:55      Planning for Next Leadership Team and General Meetings - The LT would like to include Tyler Decker and Jordan Hess in the next General Meeting. The next LT meeting will be in March 2016, and the next General Meeting will be in May 2016.

8:00      Adjournment

Submitted by: Katie Sullivan

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## What is important to the University Neighbors?

1. Parking problems – 17 Votes
2. Gilkey Center (UM Building) – 10 Votes
3. Mandatory safety and health inspections for all rental units – 7 Votes
4. Need neighborhood grocery – 7 Votes
5. Calming circle landscaping – 7 Votes
6. Tree removal, replacement and more planting – 5 Votes
7. More biking and walking access to and from the neighborhood – 5 Votes
8. City purchase of municipal water system – 4 Votes
9. Sidewalk snow removal – 4 Votes
10. UM and Neighborhood relations – 4 Votes
11. Noise issues – 4 Votes
12. Traffic calming – 4 Votes
13. Urban deer – 4 Votes
14. Support of Neighborhood Businesses – 4 Votes
15. Sidewalk maintenance – 4 Votes
16. Trash and furniture in yards, alleys – 4 Votes
17. Need Occupancy Standards – 4 Votes



Feb. 2, 2016

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### **UM Orders Zero-Emission, Electric Buses for UDASH Fleet**

**MISSOULA** – The Associated Students of the University of Montana recently announced its decision to “go electric” with the purchase of zero-emission, battery-electric buses. With approval by the Montana University System Board of Regents, the student-led transit agency will be the first in the U.S. to bring fast-charging electric buses to a University fleet.

Proterra is the only company that offers the fast-charging electric bus, and ASUM is its first university client to make a purchase. ASUM Transportation ordered two 40-foot Catalyst Fast Charge buses and a charging station for its campus routes. The buses are expected to arrive and enter into service in summer 2016.

“We take great pride in our decision to go electric,” said Jordan Hess, ASUM Office of Transportation director. “This innovative service aligns with student advocacy and reduces our carbon footprint. The buses will be purchased with student fee money and in the long run will offer the University substantial cost savings.”

Founded in 1999 by a student referendum, ASUM Transportation has seen its ridership grow to nearly 15,000 people per week. Last year alone it provided more than 400,000 complimentary rides to students, staff, faculty and visitors. Hess said ASUM’s purchase of zero-emission, battery-electric buses is a testament to its environmental stewardship and will help UM meet its goal of carbon neutrality.

According to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, the Proterra buses will immediately improve local air quality when they enter service, reducing emission by 1,392 tons

during their 12-year lifespan. DEQ also estimates that nearly 123,500 gallons of diesel fuel will not be burned as a result of the transition to the new technology.

ASUM aims to finance the buses through the state of Montana's INTERCAP Loan Program. ASUM received a Diesel Emissions Reduction Act grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which is administered by the DEQ. The \$163,191 grant aims to improve public health by reducing emissions and particulate matter.

"DEQ's diesel emissions reduction program has worked with ASUM in the past," said DEG Program Manager Brian Spangler. "This electric fleet initiative is by far the most aggressive transportation program we have seen in Montana."

"Bringing more zero-emission buses to university campuses around the U.S. will be an integral part of Proterra's next stage of growth, and we couldn't be happier to announce UM as our first university customer," said Ryan Popple, CEO of Proterra. "Millennials are driving less and seeking out transit more. With this increase in demand, our mission is to guarantee that younger riders have clean, quiet, emission-free public transportation."

For more information about ASUM Transportation visit <http://udash.org>.

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**This release is online at:**

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**Parks & Recreation**

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## **Jeannette Rankin Peace Park Design / Restoration Narrative**

### **SITE CONTEXT –**

Jeannette Rankin Park (JRP) is a Montana Department of Transportation Right of Way (ROW) located immediately south of Madison Street Bridge surrounded by 5<sup>th</sup> Street / Madison Street / Arthur Street. JRP started out as a 1.3 acre triangular parcel that was left over from the construction of Madison Street Bridge in 1960; appropriately named 'Madison Street Park'. In 1972, the park was named 'Memorial Park' and in 1980 it was renamed Jeannette Rankin Park to honor a Montana native who was the first woman to serve in US congress. Unfortunately, Jeannette Rankin Park has suffered extensive damage to its landscape from a 2012 street enhancement project to enhance traffic flow and pedestrian safety. This project has provided an opportunity to rethink the park itself – What it actually is or might yet become as both an idea and physical reality.

### **CURRENT CONDITION –**

JRP currently operates as a: Public Park/Memorial to Jeannette Rankin, a natural threshold to the University of Montana, and an entrance to the University Neighborhood. Unfortunately, the street enhancement project further increased maintenance problems for JRP by constructing steep slopes on the eastern park edge which cannot be mowed by City equipment. The once vibrant memorial fountain has fallen into disrepair due to vandalism, decay and high operating cost leaving a small and yet important plaque honoring Jeannette Rankin's accomplishments. A fountain that was once surround by a continuous circle of lush evergreens that created a cool summer escape, no longer meets the intended goals of honoring Jeannette Rankin. The north half of the irrigation system has failed and much of the park is dominated by weeds. The existing turf is of poor quality as well. However, positive park impacts have occurred due to the street enhancement project. There is a new well on site, improved street lights and a strong community awareness to restore the park with partial funding & partnerships in place.

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## GOALS + OBJECTIVES –

Restore JRP as a Memorial to Jeannette Rankin and create a more defined UM Gateway with an emphasis on xericscape design practices, sometimes referred to as 'drought tolerant' landscapes. Aurora Water Conservation, leaders in the practice of xeriscapes in Aurora, Colorado municipalities defines xeriscapes as '*A sustainable and drought-tolerant landscape that uses native or climate adapted low-water plants and specific techniques to maximize water efficiency*'. JRP as a xeriscape is both an idea and achievable physical reality. The anticipated level of service for phase I is level 4 transitioning to level 6 with the full build out of the master plan.

The Design Team believes that this type of landscape typology will be successful, beautiful and a financial benefit to the management costs of JRP. With the Missoula Water Wise Garden and The Payne Family Native American Center on the University of Montana Campus as 'drought tolerant' landscapes. JRP provides a unique and highly visible opportunity to implement City Goals of sustainability and 'drought tolerant' landscapes in public parks.

Missoula Parks & Recreation in cooperation with a committee of interested individuals from the UM and the Neighborhood Committee has developed a comprehensive master plan divided into three phases for Jeannette Rankin Park. The purpose of our presentation to the Park Board is to gain adoption of all three phases (comprehensive master plan), pending Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) concurrence on phases II and III. The project has gained approval from MDT for phase I. Park construction will be led by professional park staff, in partnership with potential volunteers and local organizations.

### **Phase I:**

Jeannette Rankin Memorial & Park Restoration, Phase I, is creating the foundation for a beautiful, seasonally changing, organic 1.3 acre 'drought tolerant' landscape through the use of regionally appropriate and native plants that perform well with little or no irrigation, as well as turf reduction. Phase I will also set the stage for JRP to operate as a welcoming threshold to the University Campus & Neighborhood while focusing on the celebration of Jeannette Rankin.

To achieve year round plant interest in color and texture, the plant palette will utilize native and "regionally appropriate" plants, meaning, plants that may not be native to the area but are known to perform well under the site's microclimate conditions. Because the natural environment constantly changes, no two visits will be alike to this 1.3 acre urban oasis.

The current memorial/fountain will be removed and replaced with a 2,150 sq. ft. 'drought tolerant' sculpture garden that honors the late Jeannette Rankin. The memorial site, as currently designed is 19' in diameter, constructed from twenty-four inch tall boulders with a recycled black kiln ground treatment or equal dependent upon availability. Quotes from Jeannette Rankin could be sandblasted into the stone as funding resources are available.

A future Jeannette Rankin themed sculpture is planned to be sited within the 19' memorial circle. Sculptures would need to honor the theme of Jeannette Rankin's vision to empower people to build a socially just, non-violent and sustainable community in an abstract or concrete manner. An arbiter panel (TBD), conceptually led by the Jeannette Rankin Peace Center would have final approval on an appropriate sculpture. The public art component is a great opportunity to further enhance a relationship with the University of Montana Art / Sculpture Program to display pieces on a rotating schedule or commission a design competition for a permanent piece.

A more interesting site approach and east / west circulation path was a high priority to the Liaison Neighborhood Design Committee. A 325' Peace Path sited east/west wraps the sculpture garden to the north providing unique views and an opportunity to relax or gain intellectual and personal growth. Primary garden access is along the 170' Water Wise Garden Path sited north / south framing the memorial sculpture with an evergreen tree and two deciduous trees with the North Hills in the background. All paths will be ADA accessible and treated with compacted decomposed granite.

Visitors are provided two benches within the center of the sculpture garden; one with ADA accommodations and two ADA accessible benches along 5<sup>th</sup> Street under the existing shade trees. The existing Jeannette Rankin Memorial Plaque will be restored and relocated at the southern entrance to the sculpture garden. Depending on available funding, a xeriscape sign will be located adjacent to the water wise path to provide public education to the benefits and methods of transforming a water-loving landscape into a water-saving landscape.

#### **XERICSCAPE IMPLEMENTATION –**

Renovating portions of JRP into a 'drought tolerant' landscape will require:

- Removal of existing turf grass (27,000 sq. ft.) north of the east / west path –Turf will be replaced with a 'drought tolerant' dryland seed mix that will reduce mowing and irrigation cost. Turf south of the east / west path will remain (19,600 sf. ft.)
- Soil conditioning – This will include the removal of rocks from the soil, tilling to make the soil friable (loose), and addition of soil conditioners and nutrients, such as compost to create a soil environment that will support low-water-use plant species.
- The existing irrigation system will be utilized in the dryland grass meadow to establish vegetation and provide supplemental watering as needed. A new subterranean drip irrigation system will be installed in the planting beds. An efficient irrigation system will be necessary to get the plant material established in the first two years.
- Once plants have a deep and healthy root system, irrigation to the 'drought tolerant' portions of the park will be turned-off except during seasonally extreme weather in order to prevent plant dieback.

- Plants and grasses were suggested that are both native to the area and “regionally appropriate”, meaning, plants that may not be native to the area but are known to perform well under the site’s microclimate conditions. Advantages of using recommended plants, is a landscape that celebrates the local environment & microclimate through character, color and texture. Plant species that are sustainable, ‘drought tolerant’ and that prioritize natives when possible will provide an opportunity for education and annual adoption by volunteers.

**Phase II:**

A Welcoming Knoll on the west side of the park adjacent to Arthur Avenue enhances JRP as a gateway to the University of Montana and Neighborhood. Located atop the knoll is an architecturally appropriate way finding / gateway sign enhanced by a diverse ‘drought tolerant’ plant pallet bringing year round interest of color and texture to a confluence of students, parents and other guests visiting the University and community.

**Phase III:**

The goal of Phase III is to transform the boulevard adjacent to 5<sup>th</sup> street from Kentucky Bluegrass Turf into a low water use planting plan of native grasses and “regionally appropriate” shade tolerant plant species. Paths through the landscape every 60’ will provide pedestrian access from the curb to side walk.

In conclusion, the master plan and design detail as noted provides the community an opportunity to better understand and celebrate sustainability, ‘drought tolerant’ vegetation and Jeannette Rankin as a memorial and public park.

