

Mayor's Downtown Advisory Commission Minutes
June 6, 2017

Commission Members in Attendance: Ginny Merriam (Mayor's Office), Eran Fowler Pehan (Housing & Community Development), Melinda Mason (Children's Mental Health Bureau), Jon Wilkins (City Council), Dan Cederberg (Downtown Attorney), Bryan von Lossberg (City Council), Nicole Rowley (County Commissioner), Kathleen Jenks (Municipal Court Judge), Keithi Worthington (City Attorney), Sue Wilkins (Missoula Correctional Services), Dave Chrismon (Downtown Ambassador) and Loreen Hamilton (Salvation Army)

Commission Members Absent: Lt. Jake Rosling (Police Department), Amy Allison Thompson (Poverello Center), Theresa Williams (Reaching Home Coordinator), Margaret Borg (Retired Attorney), Michael Moore, and Elizabeth Marshall (Palace Apartments)

Others in Attendance: Heidi Bakula (Mayor's Office), Richard Stepper (Police Department), Robert Giblin (Downtown Missoula Partnership)

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of May 2, 2017 will be approved at a later date.

1. Public Comment - None

2. Downtown Update

- Dave Chrismon thought that downtown issues had been better with transients. His experience with downtown police officers had been good. Business owners were more comfortable calling 911. Business owners did mention that 911 was not always responsive, some had been placed on hold but there are many reasons why.
- Rick Stepper reminded everyone that if business owners left messages on individual police officers' phones, there is typically no response, they need to call 911. Also with 911 calls are prioritized so they may not seem as responsive but the best way to track incidents and get officers to problem areas is to call 911.
- Loreen Hamilton saw a larger volume of youth with the warmer weather. There have been more troubling boisterous visitors that had to be asked to leave and to not come back. This usually occurs seasonally.
- Keithi Worthington is getting caught up after being on maternity leave. The legislature was still making things difficult, now people being cited for disorderly conduct can no longer be jailed. This was possibly due to overcrowding. There has been a resurgence of meth use and she was seeing more citizen based high dollar theft.
- Kathleen Jenks discussed the loss of jailing people overnight for disorderly conduct. The legislature did away with the 30 day mandatory jail sentence which is good. She has not seen as many of the regular transients that come through the court this spring. Many were in jail.
- Ginny Merriam talked about the problem of human excrement being in various public places and doorways. The Downtown Partnership has a power washer but there is a charge for usage per Dave Chrismon.
- Eran Pehan said excrement in public places may be a larger discussion when the doorway is recessed. It's private and an easy place to take advantage of. Ginny wondered if the business owner with a recessed door should be visited by the crime prevention officer. Rick Stepper said that it would be a good idea.
- Jon Wilkins said that the MAPP program in Billings just hired a new Resource Outreach Coordinator and they are now bringing back the program. Sue Wilkins said that the program had not been running for 6 months.

- Eran Pehan explained that she was still waiting to hear about the SAMHSA grant that she applied for. This grant would enable them to serve 20 people per year in outreach. She is 90% sure that the city will get the grant. Several parties partnering in the grant include St. Patrick's Hospital, the Missoula Indian Health Center and the Poverello Center. She is hopeful that they can serve 75 people over the course of four years. This would include at risk people and those not being served in the current system. Part of the funding from this grant will cover medical detox.
- Bryan von Lossberg discussed the Higgins Plaza and is wondering if others had noticed anything troublesome in that area. He is currently working with the west-side neighborhood on the mobile home parks in that area.
- Dan Cederberg thought that the downtown was better as far as transient issues.

3. Progressive National Approaches – Nothing new to report at this time.

4. New Business – None.

5. Working Group Updates

- Crisis/drop-in/warming center
 - Eran stated that on June 1st the Coordinated Entry System was launched. This coordinated system includes the Poverello Center, the YWCA, 211 and the Salvation Army. When one enters the system a vulnerability assessment is done which will identify the right agency to send a person to. This system links people to the services they need. HUD will serve the most vulnerable and at risk first. There is now a new diversion tactic asking people what they need in order to stay in their current household to decrease those needing housing. The YWCA and Poverello Center serve most of the people and they have been able to support and divert 12 households. If helped 50% of the people never enter the system.
 - Bryan von Lossberg explained that the trip to Catholic Charities had not happened yet because of bad weather but they are still trying to make the trip.
- Alcohol retail sales reduction – Nothing new to report.
- Education and public advocacy
 - The message is still “don't give to panhandlers” but currently there is no funding to pursue this. There have been good suggestions from the police department and the program needs to be refreshed each year. The commission needs to find free ways to communicate with the public.
- Evaluation of the commission's progress
 - Dan Cederberg explained that the student project was completed and summarized and there is no silver bullet. An index will have to be created for the commission.

6. Discussion of additional members in key areas – Nothing new to report.

Bryan von Lossberg proposed that the commission skip it's meeting in July and convene again in August.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heidi Bakula

Executive Assistant