

October 2008 General Meeting Minutes

A general meeting was held in the Community Room of Southgate Mall October 8, 2008. The chairman called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM

Those present:

- Hans Christiansen
- Ed Stevenson
- Marolane Stevenson
- Raquel Arovea
- John Cuplin
- Rachel Sutherland
- Wayne Gravatt
- Helen Kolokotronos
- Sharon Price
- Lyn Hellegaard
- Donna Gaukler
- Ryan Sutherland
- Antonio Guglielmo
- Connie Skousen
- Carole Ulrigg
- LaNette Diaz
- Lisa Donnelly

Mr. Baldassin introduced Ms. Donna Gaukler of the Parks Dept. to lead a discussion on Bellevue Park. She began with some general information about the park. Bellevue Park is a city park and part of the Urban Master Plan - as of today, there is no funding to improve or develop the park. If there are concerns about the current state of the park, please call the Parks Dept. Once funding is in place, there will be a design process. As of today, there is no preconceived design for the park. The design process will be limited by safety codes and funding. The neighbors of the park will be invited to participate in the park design process. Funding sources include SID (Special Improvement District - this is not recommended), Mill Levies, Bond Issues, Impact Fees (new development fee - there is very limited, if any, development happening in our neighborhood which greatly limits this source), City General Fund - there really isn't any money available in the general fund for park development.

Questions? Comments?

- Mrs. Ulrigg asked why there were surveyors in the park a few months ago?
 - Answer: Not sure - perhaps there was some utility work being done.
- Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson commented that we are in dire straits in the U.S. economically and we need to prioritize our spending towards people. This park has been scheduled for development since 1973. It is fine the way it is. Could it just be mowed a little more often? It seems this issue comes up so frequently.
- Councilwoman Lyn H. - The Brooks corridor is scheduled for some 2000 in-fill housing units and she would imagine that some park land would come with that. Is there any information on how this infill will impact the park development for the rest of the neighborhood?
 - Answer: It could speed up Bellevue development depending on its proximity to the new units.
- Someone asked about the leash laws in the park since it is not going to be developed?

- Answer: If a neighborhood would like a park or a portion of the park be changed from "leash control" to "voice control" they would need to get a petition for those who live around the park and then contact Ms. Gaukler to move the process forward.
- Mrs. Skousen asked if part of the park could be designated as "voice control" - it seems that less is better these days.
- Mrs. Ulrigg asked that if this becomes a designated "voice control" area can anyone in Missoula bring their dogs there?
 - Answer: There is a difference between "dog parks" "voice control" and "animal training" areas. Each of these have their own regulations. It will be a public space and any citizen is welcome to use public space.
- Mr. Christiansen made the point that the Southgate Triangle NC has a committee that is studying Bellevue Park - why don't we talk as a committee about what you want in that park?

Bob Reed from Missoula County gave a presentation on the new Emergency Operations Center. It's a wonderful time to be asking the public for money! The presentation is not meant to "sell" us on the idea, but to merely give us the overview of what the plan is. The building will go up at the current vacant lot at the corner of Mullan and Broadway.

The new building will house the emergency 911 center, the sheriff's offices, and a secure warehouse to store evidence and emergency vehicles. The current building is too small and they are bursting at the seams. This building has been in the works since the late 80's.

Originally the building was designed to house both the city police and the county sheriff's dept, but it wasn't feasible for the city dept. to leave the downtown. On the 911 side they have reached the physical limit - they have 6 dispatchers and the workload has grown immensely. About 70% of the 911 business is for city police and fire dept. The sheriff's office currently has about 5000 sq. ft and what they really need (and is projected in the new space) is about 15,000 sq. ft.

When they projected ahead for the size of the building they took in to account Missoula's population growth and so it is sized so that they shouldn't need to add to the building for the next 25-30 years. There is an emergency operations and training center located in the building. This is a place where commanders and government elected officials work to manage large scale incidents (like the Hell's Angels this summer which was managed out of rented space at the Rocky Mtn Elk Foundation for about \$10,000-\$15,000 dollars for less than a week). This was a plan that was enacted over several months - a luxury that most emergencies don't afford those who have to respond. At the same time, these events don't happen more than once or twice per year. Since you can't have large areas of space sitting vacant, it would double as a training facility. The availability of good, reliable training space makes more frequent and better training more possible (thus providing better service to our community).

The cost of the building is about \$23.5 million - this has risen substantially since it was first priced 2 years ago - the cost of construction is going up so fast that they have decided to put this before the voters now. The amount on the ballot initiative will be for \$16 million. There is some other funding sources that will offset some of this.

Questions/Concerns?

- Mrs. Stevenson - Why are the city/county not in the same building? Shouldn't they be working together?
 - Answer: There are valid points to be made in either direction on this. There aren't any real good reasons to keep these departments together. Of course it would be optimal. It is not necessary and won't have a negative effect on their operations.
- Mr. Baldassin - What is the alternative plan if the measure does not pass?
 - Answer: We'll continue to do the best we can with what we have. We're trying to avoid the "gloom & doom" or "alarmist" approaches, but the situation is not good right now. The good news is that they aren't out asking for money because some crisis happened. The growth factors are only going to continue and the cost is only going to increase the longer we wait.
- Mrs. Stevenson - How many people are employed?
 - Answer: Not sure about the demographics in the sheriffs office b/c Mr. Reid doesn't work there. 25 employees currently in the 911 center.
- Mrs. Ulrigg - Why does 911 need a new building? Couldn't this be smaller and have 911 move into a vacant space in town?
 - Answer: We looked at that option, but the cost to remodel is significantly more than building new. A 911 center is a very expensive proposition to get up and running. The price tag on this building includes technology and the current 911 technology has seen its lifecycle.

If you'd like to witness the space issues first hand - there are 2 standing tours for the public - 12pm noon on Tuesdays and 5:30 PM on Thursdays - go to the Pine Street entrance of the courthouse by the bus depot.

The installation of the Park Pet - we need to talk to David Shaw about costs for installation and we'll need to apply for a special grant to pay for the installation.

We'd also like to name the pet - Mrs. Ulrigg made a motion to have LaNette Diaz put an ad in the Missoulian and to have something on the website to solicit names for the pet.

Elections - Treasurer and Community Forum Representative. Carole Ulrigg is our current treasurer - Mr. Sutherland made a motion to re-elect Mrs. Ulrigg and Mr. Baldassin seconded - all were in favor. Mr. Christiansen will agree to serve as Community Forum Rep for at least one more year - he likes doing it. Mr. Baldassin made the motion to re-elect Mr. Christiansen and Mr. Gravatt seconded. All voted in favor. Mr. Christiansen mentioned that he would like to see someone serve as the alternate. If there is anyone in the neighborhood who is interested in getting more involved - this is a great way to do it. Come serve as the CFR Alternate.

We read and approved the minutes from the previous meeting

We heard and approved the treasurer's report. Mrs. Ulrigg made a motion and all were in favor of paying the cost for the mailing for this general meeting. Mr. Baldassin made a motion that Mrs.

Ulrigg be reimbursed for costs associated with the ice cream social that she was not reimbursed for.

Current Balance of the General Fund: \$800

Current Balance of the Mailing Supplement: \$475.77

Wayne Gravatt - acknowledged by the chairman to give some public comment. He's concerned about the future for our city given the current financial situation. We're going to have some real problems if we don't change how we do business. As the city grows and you are required to do a service with budget restraints - there is a tremendous disconnect between tax payers and city staff. It is very difficult to continue providing a service without increasing budgets. What, if any, long term tax increases are the citizens willing to pay to continue receiving services. What service are essential services and what services are expendable to the public.

Lyn Hellegaard mentioned that the budget process is a major problem. They are given a budget from the mayor and expected to approve it and not really given much input on it.

Mr. Sutherland made a motion to adjourn and Mrs. Ulrigg seconded. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.