

Moose Can Gully (MCG) and South 39th Joint Neighborhood Council Leadership Team (LT)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 16, 2022 5:30 PM Virtual Zoom

MCG Neighborhood Council LT Present: Carol Garlington, Betsy Weber, Janet Van Dyke

MCG LT Absent: None

South 39th Street Neighborhood Council LT Present: Paul Kilzer, Ruth Burke

South 39th LT Absent: Jeff Stevens, Dave Bell, David Touchette

Invited City Council Members Present: Gwen Jones, City Council President, Mike Nugent (Ward 4)

Invited City Council Members Absent: Stacie Anderson, John Contos (Ward 5), Amber Sherrill (Ward 4)

City Staff Present: Kalina Wickham, Neighborhood Specialist, Kelly Elam, Neighborhood Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 PM by Paul Kilzer.

2. January 19, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Ruth moved to approve these minutes as written, second by Paul. Unanimous approval.

3. Presentation: Missoula Compost Organic Waste Collection–Sean Doty

Sean described services provided by Missoula Compost for environmentally friendly food and yard waste collection. Collection containers are available in four sizes up to 32 gallons. Containers accommodate larger branches than home composters and reduce odor. Bear–proof containers are available. For more information, see <https://www.missoulacompost.com>

4. Urban Deer

A 2/8/2022 email by members of our leadership teams was sent to Wards 4 & 5 City Council members and to Gwen Jones, City Council President inviting them to our February 16 meeting and summarizing our past efforts to address the urban deer issue:

In the fall of 2019, we worked with Missoula Office of Neighborhoods staff and Mr. Bryan von Lossberg (who was then Ward 1 Council Member and City Council President), and we reached out to others with shared interests as we prepared and submitted the following Missoula NPF grant request: <https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/52533/Deer-Study>

In November 2019, our application for NPF grant funding of a proposed Missoula urban deer study was removed from competition with the promise that it would be [funded by the City](#) through another source.

To summarize our earlier efforts, we included the December 9, 2019 email that Paul and Ruth sent to Mr. von Lossberg.

On January 28, 2020, Paul and Ruth met with Mr. von Lossberg, Dr. Millspaugh, and UM students at UM. Mr. von Lossberg's views are summarized in the [February 18, 2020 KPAX news report by Dennis Bragg](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic intervened, and we have received no subsequent communications on the proposed urban deer study or any other City of Missoula effort to address the worsening urban deer issue.

In 2021, University of Montana graduate student, Taylor Mudford, emailed our two leadership teams to ask for our help with his master's project on strategies for community involvement in addressing urban deer in Missoula. Mr. Mudford's master's project had no connection to the prior

contact between Missoula City Council Chair Bryan von Lossberg and UM Professor Josh Millsbaugh. Paul and Ruth met with Mr. Mudford and shared our views on the urban deer issue. On 10/15/2021, Mr. Mudford sent an email that included a memorandum summarizing his master's thesis findings, which concluded that community-based deer management (CBDM) is feasible in Missoula but is not yet possible because of 1. the lack of a shared vision on urban deer within Missoula, 2. lack of scientific data, and 3. complicated political conditions in Missoula. In his memorandum, Mr. Mudford's recommendations include collection of data on urban deer (population study; economic impact assessment) and dissemination of the data, with a goal of developing a CBDM plan. Mr. Mudford's full master's thesis is available online at ScholarWorks - University of Montana: Community-Based Deer Management: A Case Study in Missoula, MT <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/11800/>

Our 2/8/2022 email noted that, over the years, Missoula City officials and City staff have offered various reasons why the City cannot address the urban deer issue (e.g., nothing can be done without a study; Missoula urban deer studies have already been done, so we don't need another study; paying for a (deer) study isn't in the Mayor's proposed budget; this issue is too divisive to address; there are equal numbers of people on both sides of this issue; because Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks [FWP] has authority over urban deer, the City can do nothing; the cost of addressing the urban deer issue would be prohibitively expensive; Missoula's whitetail urban deer are a uniquely difficult challenge in contrast to mule deer; homeowners should plant vegetation that the deer won't eat...). In fact, Missoula has authority over its urban deer population and could collaborate with UM scientists and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks to study the urban deer issue as an initial step in community-based deer management.

At this 2/16/2022 meeting, Paul and Ruth tried to convey the importance of studying the urban deer issue, citing the number of Missoula Neighborhoods that list urban deer as a priority, deer-caused damage to gardens and landscape plants, heavy deposits of deer droppings in our yards, past reports of collisions between deer and humans in Missoula, frequent collisions between motor vehicles and deer, injured deer in our neighborhoods, hazing of deer by frustrated residents, dead deer in our streets and yards, inadequate winter forage for urban deer, instances of dogs being attacked by deer, a deer killed and partially eaten by a mountain lion along Whitaker Drive, and a concern that Missoula urban deer may be vulnerable to Chronic Wasting Disease as was reported in Libby in 2019.

Ms. Jones and Mr. Nugent joined in our discussion, and a number of the above-listed reasons for inaction were again offered. Ms. Jones added that the increasing population of bears in the Grant Creek and Rattlesnake Neighborhoods is a greater priority. No remedy was offered for homeowners who are defeated in their efforts to grow vegetables, flowers, or landscape plants. No advice was given for homeowners who find dead deer in their yards and have to deal with their disposal. No willingness was offered to study the number of motor vehicle collisions with deer in Missoula and associated costs. No commitment was made to follow-through on the promise to fund our 2019 NPF grant application to study urban deer. Paul mentioned Montana FWP Region 2 Supervisor Randy Arnold's 10/2019 email regarding an urban deer study - a Human Dimensions element seeking a "heat map" Paul invited City Council members to view photographs of deer issues he has collected and/or to view examples of deer impacts in our neighborhoods.

Ms. Jones said that she and Mr. Nugent will discuss this issue.

5. **Bylaws Revisions draft**

Numerous issues were identified with the new bylaws draft: neighborhood border descriptions, coordinator role, term limits, language discrepancies with Municipal Code and City Charter. It was suggested that the bylaws draft, circulated for Neighborhood Council revision and approval, should be reviewed by the City Attorney to assure that reasonable standards are met, including compliance with the Municipal Code and City Charter.

Ruth will put the draft bylaws into Google Doc format for LT members to suggest changes. When complete, suggestions will be forwarded to Kalina and Kelly.

6. **Community Forum Report - Carol**

See Community Forum report provided by Carol [here](#). No further discussion was requested.

7. **Missoula Neighborhoods Report**

- Kelly announced that a strategic assessment was recently completed. She and Kalina will be reviewing portions of the findings in upcoming meetings.
- Neighborhood Project Funds Grant applications are due March 18, 2022.
- Neighborhood Cleanup Day will be April 30

Janet inquired about the new "Missoula Neighborhoods" name and logo. Kalina replied that it reflects a rebranding project within the City.

8. **Public Comment on Non agenda Items**

Kelly reported that there are yard signs available "Drive like your kids live here" at the office.

9. **Adjourn 7:00pm** Moved by Ruth, second by Carol.

Minutes by Betsy Weber, MCG LT, secretary