

Mayor's Downtown Advisory Committee
May 4, 2010 – 1:30- 3 pm
Jack Reidy Conference Room, 140 W. Pine St.

Attendees: Ginny Merriam, Jason Wiener, Rob Scheben, Mel Mason, Nick Roberts, Rod Austin, Julie Weaver, Susan Hay Patrick, Barbara Berens, Susan Bomstad and Katie Banks (911 call center), Margaret Borg, Brenda Desmond, Kim Murray, Larry DeGarmo, Leanne Vreeland, Keithi Worthington.

Intro and welcome: Ginny Merriam welcomed the group and asked for introductions. The meeting began at 1:33 pm.

Public Comment: None

Review of minutes: In the April minutes, Jason Wiener's name is misspelled, as well as Moseley.

Committee Reports:

Image & Outreach Committee:

Real Change Campaign Brainstorming: The idea of the campaign is that if people stop giving money to transients, then the transients will stop asking for money. Discussion ensued questioning if the Real Change campaign needs a tagline. If so, could it be: Real Change for a _____ Missoula? "Safe" and "healthy" were discussed in committee. New ideas that were generated included "better," "friendlier" and "compassionate." Discussion continued that this tagline doesn't describe what we are trying to do and that something like, "Help everyone, not just one" might be better. Spider McKnight from Salt Studio thinks we need to give people something to give other than just saying no. Chief Muir suggested a wooden token good for a meal at the Poverello Center or a cup of coffee at The Oxford. Discussion ensued about whether the wooden token would be a positive exchange or would result in further problems. The committee also feels that there are too many messages out there and rejected the idea. We need to keep it positive and about whom the money helps.

Make the Call Campaign: The need for this campaign stems from the Mayor's Office hearing that there are behaviors in Downtown that make people uncomfortable and/or are illegal. There are community perceptions that you can't call 911 for something that small. The logistics of this campaign are challenging, however. What do we tell people to call for? The answer to this is that a crime is being committed or people are concerned for their own safety, as described by Police Chief Mark Muir. Discussion ensued on how to characterize this in a public information campaign. Ideas discussed included radio PSAs explaining when you should call, one-on-one education at UM, cards by the Real Change cards, and other opportunities. Further discussion took

place on educating about what IS aggressive panhandling. It is legal to panhandle, but not legal to scare people or to threaten them and/or commit a crime in the process. We may need to use PSAs to educate on the panhandling ordinance, describing what is legal and what is not. We also need to set realistic expectations for people who are calling. Discussion ensued on how PSAs are great for the general public, but we need to do more for Downtown workers who are afraid of retribution and therefore will not make the calls as they are afraid their cars will get keyed, tires slashed, windows broken, etc. Rob stated that people can request extra patrols via 911, and the Police Department will authorize Rob's time to talk to retailers as well. In summary, we will be running two parallel campaigns: one for general public/consumer and one for business owners/workers in Downtown. These campaigns will address three things: fear of crime/retribution, empowerment of knowing what is a crime and what isn't, and eliminating the false perception that the police have bigger fish to fry. In regards to training for business owners, 911 staff are available and Mel offered to do training on evaluation of fear/environment and what to do in those situations. We also need to communicate that even if an officer doesn't come to the location, the report gets logged to build data to get a better picture of what is happening Downtown. The call is important for awareness, statistical purposes and staffing. If this committee needs to reach the 911 staff, we can call 258-4468.

Crime and Prevention Committee:

Data Gathering: addressed above

Make the Call Campaign: address above.