

MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

CONDENSED BOARD MEETING MINUTES

July 16, 2008

FINAL

A meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency was held at MRA Conference Room, 140 W. Pine, Missoula, MT 59802 at 12:00 pm. Those in attendance were as follows:

- Board:** Hal Fraser, Nancy Moe, Rosalie Cates
- Staff:** Ellen Buchanan, Chris Behan, Kari Nelson, Jilayne Lee, Lesley Pugh
- Public:** Jennifer Anthony, Silver Park Timber Frame Project; Kirk Duce, Hip Strip Property Owner's Association; Ken Duce, HSPOA; Rob Fleming, HSPOA; Jim Kuehn, HSPOA; Shirley Juhl, HSPOA; Teresa Cox, A Carousel for Missoula

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 25, 2008 Regular Board Meeting Minutes were approved as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jennifer Anthony from the Silver Park Timber Frame project spoke to the Board about her fundraising to date. She said the Timber Frame Guild Workshop will be held Sept. 22-26 as long as the foundations and trail are in. Anthony said \$30,000 has been raised of cash and another \$10,000 has been raised through in-kind donations. She said there's \$25,000 left to raise and they are working hard on that. She said the Riverfront Neighborhood Council is having a dinner party on Sept. 25 at the Civic Stadium and invited the MRA Board to attend.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Director's Report

Old Sawmill District

Buchanan said meetings have resumed for the Old Sawmill District. She said approvals from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) on the soils appear to be moving forward expeditiously. However, the Order of Consent for the groundwater is not moving so quickly. Nelson said MRA received the 75% drawings for review from Abbotswood Design Group and will be delivering them to the Parks Dept. for its review.

Downtown Master Plan

Buchanan said consultants from Carl Walker Parking will be here August 6-8. There will be a public meeting on August 7th and a focused meeting on August 7th. They will want to meet with the MRA, MDA and BID boards.

West Broadway Corridor Vision Plan

Buchanan said the West Broadway Plan will go to public hearing on July 28th. She said the City Council wants to get input from the public that can be useful to the Greater Downtown Master Plan. She said the Council could choose to go ahead and adopt the Broadway Plan and modify it as appropriate with the Downtown Master Plan recommendation.

Riverfront Triangle Urban Renewal District

Buchanan said there will be a public hearing on July 21st for this item.

First Interstate Bank & Downtown Parking

Buchanan said work continues on downtown parking. She said the challenge is getting to talk to Macy's Corporate in San Francisco. Staff met with Anne Guest from the Parking Commission and First Interstate representatives. They are trying to figure out how to get Macy's to commit or not commit. If Macy's doesn't commit there is nowhere to put the parking that will benefit Macy's as much as the proposed location.

Affordable Housing Policies

Buchanan said she's met with Mayor Engen about the City's timing for making affordable housing policies. Unless the Board directs otherwise, Buchanan said MRA will slow down on this process and let the City catch up and decide what policies they want.

Historic Preservation Commission

Buchanan said MRA has a vacant position that serves on the Historic Preservation Commission. Dorothy Ogg used to occupy this position. Buchanan said there has been some interest in filling that position. (*see Non-Action Items*)

ACTION ITEMS

"Hip Strip" Study of Blight – Request for Approval and Recommendation to City Council

Buchanan said property and business owners in the Hip Strip have formed the Hip Strip Commercial Property Owners Association. Buchanan said she's met with them a few times to explore the possibility of creating an urban renewal district south of the river along the Hip Strip. Buchanan said she also met with their two City Council representatives, Stacy Rye and Bob Jaffe, and the recommendation from them was for the property owners to get together and request that a study of blight be done and that MRA look at the possibility of creating a new district. Buchanan said Staff recommendation is that the Board recommends to the City Council that they authorize MRA to conduct a study to determine if there are adequate findings of blight to create an urban renewal district.

Buchanan said blight isn't necessarily apparent when you look at buildings in that area, but there is deterioration and a lot of it is behind the walls. She said one of the big issues there is how to deal with parking. Ken Duce from the Hip Strip Property Owners Association said with the new Greater Downtown Master Plan coming and the rezoning that will hopefully take place, several of the property owners know they want to make improvements to the neighborhood and their buildings. Duce talked about parking and said The Babs houses 14 apartments and has five parking spaces. Also, he said the Historic Penwell Hotel houses seven commercial spaces and 35 apartments and has absolutely no parking. Duce said

parking is even more untenable when the restaurants are open. He said the Association sees some major changes over the next few years to try and get ahead of that.

Fraser asked what the proposed boundaries would be assuming the recommendation is approved to go to Council and the Council approves the MRA Staff to do a study. Buchanan replied they would start with the outlined boundary of the Association that's attached to her memo and analyze what's going on around the edges to make amendments. Fraser said he could see some expansion that could be generally helpful to a district. Discussion ensued.

Moe referred to the list of names attached to the letter to Rye and Jaffe and asked if it was a list of all Association members or all business owners or property owners. Duce replied it's a list of all property owners and Association members. He said some own more than one parcel but are only listed once. Duce said the Association's bylaws stated that to officially vote they had to collect dues. He said getting dues and signatures isn't easy, but said roughly 85% of people that own property showed up to a meeting and seemed to show support but don't always get to the next meeting or don't get their dues in or didn't get to sign the letter. Moe said the fact that one-third of the people didn't sign the list isn't indicative that they don't agree with what's being proposed. Duce replied he thought that was true.

Moe asked what the definition of "urban character" means as it's used under the photographs. Duce replied he was trying to point out the street corners and said they don't fit an urban street theme with buildings coming right up to the sidewalk. He said the whole street scene would work much better for pedestrians if the corners had buildings up to the sidewalk. Duce said he hopes Crandall Arambula will have recommendations in the Greater Downtown Master Plan for the Hip Strip in terms of what kind of shapes and volumes they should be looking at.

MOTION

MOE: I MOVE THAT THE BOARD FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL ASKING FOR APPROVAL FOR A REQUEST TO STUDY BLIGHT IN THE APPROXIMATE AREA OF THE HIP STRIP COMMERCIAL PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION BOUNDARIES WITH THE GOAL OF DECIDING WHETHER TO CREATE A HIP STRIP URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT. Cates seconded the motion. 3 ayes, 0 nays. Motion passed unanimously. Kemmis and Englund absent.

Cates said the huge income diversity that lives there is one thing that makes the Hip Strip as vibrant as it is. She said she's in favor of doing the study and said a goal should be to not displace those that live there now. Rob Flemming from the Association said they hope to make better living accommodations and keep the income demographics that exist.

Change tape 1 s1/s2

Trails End & Trails West Bars located at 1112 & 1120 W. Broadway – URD II TIF Request for Demolition

Behan said he spoke with Mike Grunow, owner of Trails End and Trails West bars, in early May about finding a way to demolish the structures. He said they talked about Grunow finding a developer to work with and trying to provide an incentive for some of the things that are included in the West Broadway Corridor Vision Plan to be done on the site. Behan

said at that time, Grunow felt it was worth it for him to put together a formal application to the Board. Behan said any improvements Grunow would need to make to the buildings would have ended up costing him a lot of money; therefore his request is for TIF assistance with demolition of the buildings. Behan said the land is for sale and one of the problems Grunow has had with finding prospective purchasers is the cost of tearing down the buildings. Behan said as his recommendation eludes, the best position for MRA would be with a new owner. He suggested that MRA make a loose pledge to work with any prospective purchasers on demolition and upgraded sidewalks to give them an incentive to build something nicer. Behan said the Staff recommendation is for denial with the statement that MRA would like to help a potential developer.

Fraser said MRA doesn't have any positive guidance as to why it would tear down a building and decrease taxes until something new comes along. Behan said other projects have been stand alone demolition, but they were very different circumstances. Moe asked about the comment made by Mayor Engen at the last meeting regarding the Broadway St. right-of-way. She asked for clarification as to what he was talking about. Buchanan said those buildings are at one of the points where there's not 100 ft. of right-of-way that the City is trying to achieve all along Broadway. Therefore, she said MRA will try to rectify the right-of-way issue with anything it does with a property owner.

Fraser said whatever the Board decides to do, it should indicate that the MRA regular programs are available if a developer wants to apply for assistance.

MOTION

CATES: I MOVE THAT WE DENY THIS REQUEST FOR TAX INCREMENT ASSISTANCE AT 1112 AND 1120 WEST BROADWAY AND DIRECT STAFF TO PROVIDE A LETTER TO MR. GRUNOW EXPRESSING OUR ENTHUSIASM FOR THE SITE AND WORKING WITH ANY BUYER THAT COMES FORWARD. Moe seconded the motion. 3 ayes, 0 nays. Motion passed unanimously. Kemmis and Englund absent.

Fraser asked if a denial on this address will create any problems in the future to do something positive. Behan said by the bylaws it would have to be a different project so the project would have to change in some way, which is what MRA is asking to happen anyway.

Caras Park Gateway Project – Request for Approval

Theresa Cox, Executive Director for A Carousel for Missoula, added to her letter dated July 9, 2008 and said that when she submits the grant she would like to show that they have some money towards the \$40,000 needed. She said she'd like to keep the money from MRA totally for the intent it was meant for and won't use the reserve funds if she doesn't have to. Buchanan said this project is something that came out of the Downtown Streets Project that was done a few years ago and will also come out of the Downtown Master Plan. Moe said she hopes the sculptures give direction to not only the Carousel but also the other amenities and attractions in Caras Park.

MOTION

MOE: I MOVE THIS MRA BOARD ALLOW A CAROUSEL FOR MISSOULA FOUNDATION TO USE \$5,000 OF ITS REMAINING MAINTENANCE FUND AS A

MATCH FOR THE TIIP GRANT FOR WHICH IT'S APPLYING. Cates seconded the motion. 3 ayes, 0 nays. Motion passed unanimously. Kemmis and Englund absent.

NON-ACTION ITEMS

Historic Preservation Commission Seat

Fraser said he'd like to have some input as to who represents MRA on the HPC Board. Cates asked if the person who's on the HPC Board needs to show up at MRA Board meetings as well. Buchanan replied if they're representing MRA's interests on the HPC they would need to know enough about what MRA is doing to be able to do that. Cates suggested adding them to the MRA agenda once in a while to give updates. Discussion ensued. It was decided that Moe and Fraser will consult with Buchanan and look over the applications.

STAFF REPORTS

OTHER ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lesley Pugh
Secretary II