

## **Mayor's Downtown Advisory Commission Minutes – March 1, 2011**

**Commission Members in Attendance:** Rod Austin (Downtown BID), Margaret Borg (Attorney), Barbara Berens (County Auditor), Eran Fowler (Poverello Center – in Ellie Hill's absence), Ginny Merriam (City of Missoula), Susan Hay Patrick (United Way), David Pierce (Salvation Army), Nick Roberts (Food Bank), Rob Scheben (Police Department), Dave Strohmaier (City Council), Jason Wiener (City Council), Keithi Worthington (City Attorney)

**Commission Members Absent:** Brenda Desmond (District Court), Leslie Halligan (County Attorney), Ellie Hill (Poverello Center), Julie Hilley (Owner MKLaren), Laurie Johnson (Downtown BID), Melinda Mason (WMMHC), Peggy Seel (OPG), Leanne Vreeland (Ht. Patrick Hospital), Keenan Whitt (homeWORD), Vacant (Missoula Downtown Association)

**Others in Attendance:** Michele Landquist (County Commissioner), Michelle Pierce (Salvation Army)

**Review of Minutes:** The January 2011 minutes were approved. The February 2011 minutes were approved with the following change: "Ms. Landquist said the County is looking at distributing money from the Poor Fund differently".

### **Discussion of New Directions and Projects**

The Mayor would like the ten-year plan to move out of MDAC and become its own working group that will be chaired by Jason Wiener and Susan Hay Patrick. MDAC will return to its original, goal which is to work on quality of life issues in downtown Missoula.

#### *Missoula City-County Homelessness Initiative*

The Homelessness and Housing Instability Report public meeting on February 22 went really well. It took a lot of hard work to get it together, and it was really well attended, around 75 – 100 people. There was a seven-member panel that went above and beyond what they were asked to do. It has been repeated on MCAT many times, and will continue to be shown. Mayor Engen is excited about the new energy for doing something about homelessness.

Susan thanked Ginny and Cindy Wulfekuhle for their work in putting the meeting together. Several people spoke at the meeting about their different experiences. Many were directly affected by homelessness. Business people gave their perspective. There is millions of dollars spent each year on charity care and people are very interested in helping solve the problem. This is a community problem and there was a strong commitment to address it from those who attended.

#### *Update on Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness*

There needs to be a broad and diverse group of organizations needed to work on the ten-year plan. The Mayor said appointing a small working group to convene with stakeholders and draft the plan is the best thing for the plan. This group will be chaired by Jason and Susan. They have the names of several organizations and they are asking the commission to help brainstorm who should be at the meetings to discuss the plan. Please let them know if you have any suggestions. The Tavern Association and the Department of Corrections were suggested.

This can be done in six months. It is a short term with a specific goal and will be based on the specific template provided by Paul Carlson, the Federal Interagency Councilor on Homelessness. There is more that needs to be done to decide where the process is, such as current programs from several

organizations. It is a good start, but more specific data is necessary. Mr. Carlson said focusing on the chronic homeless is what makes the program work. Money should be redirected toward housing and services.

It was asked who will write the actual ten-year plan. The committee is hopeful to have the money to be able to have a consultant do it. Maxine Jacobson might be interested.

Committee members are interested in having a second survey of homeless people done during a different season. It should be done to get a true picture and is good to be conducted at two extremes, such as winter and summer. The data is only accurate to the time it is collected as the population is changing constantly. This would be a baseline for more than one time of year and would be beneficial. Caution should be used when discussing money. The last survey cost \$16,000, but the methodology is already in place, so it should cost less.

The chronically homeless need to be included in the ten-year plan. Homelessness is never going to go away altogether because some people want to be without a home. There also needs to be rules and expectations they have to follow. Missoula is a generous and caring place. Establishing how much money is being spent on social services, medical, etc is very important in this plan.

When working on the ten-year plan, it is important not to lose sight of one of the first priorities: identifying a new location for the Poverello Center.

### **Committee Directions**

The list of committee members was passed around. Members were asked to evaluate where their services would be most valuable and either add or take their names off committees. The list will be emailed to members who were not in attendance and once responses are received, the updated list will be emailed to commission members.

#### *Crime and Prevention – Rob Scheben and Keithi Worthington*

This committee will be working on the ordinances and consequences. One part of that is to strengthen the sleep and lie portion of the ordinances as it is not healthy to sleep and lie on concrete.

They will also be working on crime and punishment. One way to address this is with street outreach and a community service program. Margaret met with Sue Wilkins of Missoula Corrections Services to discuss a program. Rob found a federal grant through the Board of Crime Control that fits the downtown purpose of smart policing. This grant is up to \$300,000 and could be used for salaries for police officers, a court liaison, etc. There is no match required. It is due toward the end of April. It was suggested he work with the Office of Planning and Grants as they might have data needed for the grant. It is a fairly large application, so time is of the essence. Last year 36 communities applied for the funding, most larger than Missoula, and six were chosen.

The Parking Commission will match the BID funding for a downtown police officer this summer, so there will be \$40,000 available. Rod has met with Dale Bickell and will be meeting with the Mayor and Chief of Police to discuss the program.

The Mayor has discussed having a specific place where camping would be legal. It might cause downtown to be a little less unsightly. No specifics have been discussed at this time.

*Real Change Promotion – Ginny Merriam*

This committee is very small now and needs to have more members.

The season to promote the Real Change program is approaching. The traditional means of promoting it was radio psa's and bus ads. Kim Murray was instrumental in helping with this in the past, and has offered to help this year even though she is no longer on the committee. Getting the materials ready for the program is very time intensive. What should the messages say? Should the Make the Call campaign be used again?

It has been discussed that the money should be diverted from the traditional distribution list the last couple of years and use it to help fund outreach teams. There has been interest from the BID Board and the Poverello Center has applied for funding for these outreach teams.

*Infrastructure Committee – Ginny Merriam*

This committee is going to be renamed the Livable Environment Committee and there is no chair at this time. They will work on quality of life details and will work on public facilities.

One aspect is funding for public restrooms. They will revisit the Portland Loo, which is a prototype restroom. When they were contacted before, they were just beginning the building phase. There are ways to make them secure and are relatively inexpensive. Portland was willing to share their information on their program.

**Miscellaneous Business and Discussion**

Paul Meyer and Patty Kent from the Western Montana Mental Health Clinic met with the Mayor to discuss the proposed recovery center at the Old Fort Missoula Hospital. There will be 38 inpatient beds and ten new units of supportive housing. They plan to serve 500 people a year and create ten new jobs. They are confident they will meet their funding goals of \$810,000.

The Salvation Army has purchased the old NAPA store next door. There are some short-and long-term goals that cannot be discussed at this time. One idea is to use it as a warming room that would be open 24 hours a day. The inebriated would be allowed to use it as long as they were calm and functional and got along with others.

The Poverello Center has not had to initiate the overflow housing with other organizations so far. Their numbers have gone over by one or two a couple of times, but not enough to have to use the overflow. They are serving 98 people on average a day. It appears that more people are camping because the Pov serves more meals than that.

Respectfully submitted,

*Melani Coyle*

Melani Coyle  
Administrative Support