

Mayor's Downtown Advisory Commission
Minutes
October 2, 2012

Commission Members in Attendance: Rod Austin (Downtown BID), Margaret Borg (Retired Attorney), Dan Cederberg (Attorney), Michele Landquist (County Commissioner), Ginny Merriam (City of Missoula), Eran Fowler Pehan (Poverello Center), Alex Taft (City Council), Keithi Worthington (City Attorney), Susan Hay Patrick (United Way), Keenan Whitt (Homeward), Jason Wiener (City Council), Barbara Berens (County Auditor)

Commission Members Absent: Brenda Desmond (District Court), David Pierce (Salvation Army), Rob Scheben (Police Department), Leanne Vreeland (St. Patrick's Hospital), Melissa Gordon (OPG), Laurie Johnson (Downtown BID), Melinda Mason (WMMHC)

Others in Attendance:

Public Comment: No public comment

Approval of Minutes: Rod Austin moved to approve the minutes of June 5, 2012, Dan Cederberg seconded.

Committee Updates:

Crime and Prevention – Keithi Worthington and Rob Scheben

The subcommittee met to discuss and brainstorm the issue of graffiti in Missoula. What is the current penalty or ordinance being applied?

- Most common offense is criminal mischief, but there had to be damage to property.
- Rape Nation stickers could be removed, so that did not apply.
- Possibly look at a city graffiti ordinance like Billings has. Could include defacement of property.
- The Rape Nation offender was caught, but what should the city charge him with? Ended up using criminal mischief and conspiracy to commit criminal mischief. The stickers were a major issue since they took so much time to remove. Removal of stickers from older brick buildings caused damage that property owners have to pay for and it is expensive.
- Graffiti incidences have declined 30% over the last 6 years.

Ordinance:

- Fines could be assessed to defray costs to property owners for damage, or could be used for an anti-graffiti fund.
- Could require community service.

- Could recruit more volunteers, buy a van, and that van could be filled with all tools needed to remove graffiti. A committee could oversee the volunteers. Poverello Center may be able to donate a van.
- The Business Improvement District (BID) had tried in the past to promote a graffiti ordinance but met with resistance.
- The BID can be hired to remove graffiti, however it was expensive. If the graffiti is not removed quickly more seems to appear.
- Ordinance could give city greater ability to punish offenders. Offenders could be forced to remove their own graffiti and stiff penalties could be assessed for an anti-graffiti fund. Updated ordinance could be broader and make it easier to prosecute.
- The current ordinance could be tweaked and any changes would have to go through an ordinance adoption process with public comment and council approval. The ordinance could be a better deterrent, improve conviction rate, community service could be required, and restitution could be paid.
- Problem now is that if they catch one person in a tagging crew they cannot charge that one person with 100 tags. Accountability for another's behavior was difficult to prosecute.

Consensus was to look at the van idea, develop language for a broader ordinance – justification could be that the criminal mischief ordinance does not address the current graffiti problem. Should also get the ordinance in place before the graffiti season starts. Community service and fines were a good idea.

Real Change Promotion – Ginny Merriam

- From Memorial Day to Labor Day a \$10,000 match was made because of the donations collected from the cafes around town. Last year \$2,400 was collected from the cafes.
- The number of calls to the Business Improvement District (BID) to remove people has been cut in half compared to last year.
- The cafes are not making as much money as they have in the past and maybe the group could encourage donation through another program. Bigger grocery stores, convenience stores, or gas stations.
- Could look at collecting more during the holiday season instead of the panhandling season.

Built Environment – Margaret Borg

The subcommittee is still searching for a place to locate public restrooms in the downtown area. Margaret asked for ideas to pursue from the group. The following items were discussed:

- More water fountains downtown
- Smoker's houses needed to be anchored
- More trash cans in strategic locations, especially in front of bars
- More recycling receptacles

- Better bike/ped facilities along Higgins Street Bridge (MDT will be working on this in the future, to include better ADA access, and possibly a better bicycle crossing)
- Street trees require pruning, the Parks Department has no money to maintain the trees once installed
- More flower baskets could be added downtown (could look at volunteers adopting a basket in order to pay for maintenance)
- Expand bicycle parking (Ginny suggested coordinating with the Bike/Ped Coordinator in Public Works) The Business Improvement District and the city could split the cost and the request could be added to the FY14 budget

Human Services – Jason Wiener and Susan Hay Patrick

Susan and Jason were adding the finishing touches to the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. Soon they would set up meetings with various officials. The working groups would finish up and the press release would be done, then the public meeting would be held at the end of October. Then they would work toward adoption of the document.

Miscellaneous business and discussion

Respectfully Submitted,
Heidi Bakula

Date of Next Meeting
Jack Reidy Conference Room
December 4, 2012