

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ABBREVIATED MINUTES
August 8, 2013
4:00 – 6:00 pm

Present:	Adam Liljeblad	Bert Lindler	Absent:
	Ethel MacDonald	Matt Barnes	Dan Spencer
	Gary Knudsen	Tim Aldrich	
	Anna Noson	Jenny Tollefson	
	Gabe Millar	Beth Hahn, Park Brd Rep	
	Mary Manning		

Also Present: Jackie Corday, Open Space Program, Jean Zosel and Josh Slotnick from GCH

Fieldtrip to the PEAS Farm in the Rattlesnake Valley

The PEAS farm is located on the west side of the Rattlesnake Valley off Duncan Drive. The land is owned by Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS) and is leased to the City of Missoula (13 acres total), who in turn leases 10 acres to Garden City Harvest (GCH) for the farm and 3 acres is currently being used as a soccer field.

The site visit began with GCH Executive Director Jean Zosel informing members about the numerous programs that occur at the farm, including over 4,000 visits from Missoula area school children each year, a youth development program of 8-10 kids/year who are mainly referred from the youth drug court. Most workers at the farm are working just for University of MT EVST credits. There is a CSA shares program too like the River Rd Farm. Over 45,000 lbs of veggies are grown each year, 15,000 of which are donated to the Food Bank and another 10,000 lbs makes it way to low income families.

Bert asked how does GCH respond to the issues that this is just another Rattlesnake Valley open space project where a large majority of bond funds have already been expended. Josh reiterated that kids from all over Missoula get to visit the farm, low-income people from all over Missoula benefit from the food raised here, and the farm is open to anyone who wants to stop by and visit. Beth asked what permanence would the purchase offer verses the current lease from the school. Josh explained that the 10 year lease from MCPS to the City expired in 2010 and it was extended for another 10 years but with a provision that gives MCPS the authority to give a 90 day termination notice for any cause. Thus, the lack of permanency means they do not move forward with certain improvements on their wish list, such as building a place for education, better irrigation systems, and improving and/or adding on to existing structures.

Adam asked about the funding sources for the purchase. Jean explained that GCH has the goal of raising \$350,000 for their portion of the contribution. Jackie mentioned the appraisal price of \$100,000 per acre, which means the farm is worth \$1,000,000 and the soccer field \$300,000. The soccer field portion of the land would have to be legally separated from the 10 acre farm in order to not mix the two projects' funding. The soccer field purchase needs to be separate and cannot use 2006 Open Space Bond funds. She has met with James McCubbin and Nancy Heil about how to separate the two projects. There is an on-going fundraising effort for the soccer field.

Gabe suggested it would be beneficial to make the public feel more invited to visit the farm by posting a sign welcoming visitors during the day. Josh liked the idea and agreed that could help build more support for the farm. Bert asked if local farmers feel the PEAS farm competes with them? Josh said no as they don't set up a booth at Farmer's Market or expand upon their CSA numbers. Beth asked about bear problems. Josh said he worked with Jamie Jonkel to address the issue by building an 8' tall fence with hot wires.

Members were also interested in the existing water rights. Josh said they have a use agreement with neighbor Dave Harmond to use his 45gpm well, there is one 15-18 gpm well on the 10 acres, and another 45gpm well on the 3 acre site. Purchase of the land would likely lead to adding another well.
We adjourned at about 6:00pm.

