

Mayor's Downtown Advisory Commission

Minutes

May 6, 2014

Commission Members in Attendance: Ginny Merriam (City of Missoula), Keithi Worthington (Deputy City Attorney), Sue Wilkins (Missoula Correctional Services), Rob Scheben (Police Department), Laurie Johnson (BID), Travis Mateer (Poverello Center), Michael Moore (Reaching Home: Missoula's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness), Eran Fowler Pehan (Poverello Center), Bryan Von Lossberg (City Council), Dan Cederberg (Downtown Attorney), Paige Livingston (One Eleven), Melinda Mason (WMMHC), Michele Landquist (County Commissioner), Melissa Gordon (Grants), Jenny Montgomery (Montgomery Distillery), Melanie Brock (Missoula Economic Partnership), Jason Wiener (City Council), and Susan Hay Patrick (United Way)

Commission Members Absent: Margaret Borg (Retired Attorney), Caitlin Copple (City Council), Barbara Wickel (Missoula Interfaith Collaborative), and Jon Wilkins (City Council)

Others in Attendance: Heidi Bakula, Tim France (Warden's Market), Todd Frank (Trailhead), Linda McCarthy (Missoula Downtown), Ellen Buchanan (MRA), and Brent Dobak (Downtown Ambassador)

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of February 4, 2014 were approved as submitted

Special Presentations:

- Continuing aggressive panhandling and disruptive behavior - discussion with Tim France and Ellen Buchanan
 - Tim showed the commission a video he had taken on his phone showing two homeless individuals punching each other, while drunk, on a city sidewalk next to Higgins Plaza near the alley.
 - Officer Andy Roy had responded twice before the video was taken. Typically when he asks them to move along they go for a stroll and circle back to the same location.
 - Recently the same three homeless individuals were on the sidewalk passed out and received three aggressive panhandling tickets. Officer Roy could not do anything about them sitting on the sidewalk so he could not force them to move along.
 - A suggestion was made to bring individuals before a judge whenever they are cited. They would most likely not be jailed but it would break up the group.
 - Eran Pehan of the Poverello Center said that a woman was assaulted at a bank recently by one of the men in the video. He was not arrested. Keithi Worthington reminded everyone that if a person decides not to file charges the perpetrator cannot be arrested.
 - Ellen Buchanan asked what the city was going to do since it has invested \$30 million dollars in revitalizing the downtown. Without ordinances the public's rights are not protected.
 - Several commission members agreed that a wet center in Missoula would be the best option. People that do not commit serious crimes and end up in jail do not get any help and it would be an opportunity to serve everyone in need. The city will not see any success until there is a wet center and some available housing. Venue will also be critical to best serve these individuals.
 - Ginny Merriam suggested creating a working group to explore a wet housing center since the need is critical to success. Michael Moore suggested that if the committee thinks wet housing should be the focus that is what the Reaching Home working group will focus on.
 - Linda McCarthy added that citizens of Missoula need to be convinced that this is less than a downtown problem and more of a community problem.

- Another thought is to come up with a transitional plan out of wet housing so people can graduate to other housing.
- From Eran Fowler Pehan's perspective many homeless under the influence want to be somewhere other than the street. They would stay at the Poverello center if they were allowed to.
- Tim France offered to work with businesses downtown who sell alcohol to come up with guidelines about who they should and should not be selling alcohol to. It made more sense for local businesses to spearhead this rather than the police.

Committee Updates:

➤ Crime and Prevention – Keithi Worthington and Rob Scheben

Community Service Program; additional Homeless Outreach Team paid staff

- The subcommittee met about expanding the graffiti program in hopes of acquiring a van to hold equipment, have a dedicated phone number, and respond to graffiti more frequently than one day per week.
- The subcommittee will be meeting with municipal court about the positives and negatives about the community service program.
- Also discussed was to find paint that is brick color, wet housing, and finding funding for the hot team/outreach teams to work with the homeless population. The Poverello Center provides \$30,000 per year which does not cover the hot team's costs.

➤ Real Change Promotion – Ginny Merriam

Workshop results and season plans

- The two main messages out of the workshop were to support the hot team and to discourage panhandling.
- The BID Board will provide a match of \$5,000 to the Real Change program.
- Positive advertising in bars on bathroom doors discouraging panhandling and educating the general public.
- Place stories in the Independent and Missoulian about positive experiences with the hot team.

➤ Built Environment – Margaret Borg

Art Park Plaza update

- The community design charrette for the MAAM Art Park Plaza will take place on Wednesday, May 7th at 5:30 pm at the art museum where the architect will be presenting the design.

➤ Human Services – Jason Wiener and Susan Hay Patrick

- Nothing to report at this time.

Respectfully Submitted,
Heidi J. Bakula
Executive Assistant

Date of Next Meeting
Jack Reidy Conference Room
June 3, 2014