

**Community Forum Meeting
Meeting Minutes
June 25, 2009
7:00 p.m. City Council Chambers
Moderator, Jeff Stevens**

Captain John Mullan – Kathie Snodgrass (Rep)
Emma Dickinson – Absent
FarViews/Pattee Canyon – Absent
Franklin to the Fort – Jon Salmonson (Rep)
Grant Creek – absent
Heart of Missoula – Bill Flannery (Rep)
Lewis & Clark – Greg Gullickson (Rep)
Lower Rattlesnake – Absent
Miller Creek – Absent
Moose Can Gully – Lyle Guerts (Rep)
Northside – Absent
Riverfront – Absent
Rose Park – Absent
South 39th – Jeff Stevens (Rep)
Southgate Triangle – Hans Christiansen (Rep)
University District – Absent
Upper Rattlesnake – Don Sims (Alt)
Westside – Absent
City Council Liaison – Jon Wilkins
Acting Neighborhood Liaison – Marty Rehbein, City Clerk

Others Present

Donna Gaukler; Steve King

Quorum

Quorum is **not** present.

Adoption of Agenda (items from consent agenda can be moved to committee reports by any CF rep as deemed necessary at this time).

Approval of CF Minutes

Did not approve meeting minutes of May 28, 2009.

Public Comment (non-agenda items from audience)

Hans Christiansen expressed his concern over the closure signs and the fencing around the Silver Park Trail shelters due to graffiti. Jeff Stevens commented that area near the California Street bridge is heaviest graffiti area in town, not surprised it carried over to the structures. Kathy Snodgrass said the forest service has tested a series of non-toxic graffiti removal product that work on wood and signs and would be happy to pass that information along. Marty Rehbein indicated that the parking lot and the trail connection to California Street projects went out to bid recently. More comments on graffiti in Missoula in general were made.

Consent Agenda

***Consent Agenda**

(Items on the consent agenda were recommended by a Community Forum committee or Community Forum Leadership Team. We save time at Community Forum meetings by voting on these items as a package. The moderator will read the list aloud, so citizens watching on MCAT will know what is on the consent agenda.)

1. Approve \$200 request for Neighborhood Project Small Grant Funds from the Southgate Triangle Neighborhood for park pet art piece installation/workday. The Neighborhood Project Grants committee recommends approval.
2. Pending w/ NPF--\$146 Southside Neighborhood Association Traffic Circle improvements
3. Pending w/ NPF-- \$100 FtoF Garden of Eaton

Neighborhood Liaison Report – Marty Rehbein, City Clerk

1. Neighborhood Liaison Recruitment –interviewed 6 applicants, narrowed down to 2 no offer extended yet.
2. Presentation ideas for next month- County Rural Initiatives Community Council information; how the City plans for Emergencies suggestion made, Steve King who happens to be present, spoke to a recent training attended and the fact that the City is part of a Community Emergency Management Program administered by the County.
3. Budget Recap
4. Moderator for July Kathy Snodgrass volunteered.

Presentations

Infrastructure presentation by Public Works and Parks

Public Works Director - Steve King

Steve stated that public works has a vested interest in maintaining the services that people expect; challenge is we have no dedicated funds for maintenance (streets) as other cities do that generate a significant amount of revenue. He talked about the details of maintenance districts. There is high interest in additional revenue to do enhanced mill and overlay method of street maintenance. Sidewalks are another high interest; there is a big need and void in the community. Examples of good curb and gutter areas and those lacking were shown. It is a real burden to the taxpayer to pay for maintenance, like putting in a sidewalk. State law dictates what 'districts' can provide. A street maintenance district would not include sidewalks, but if a district was created, dedicated monies could be freed up that could pay for sidewalks.

The low average of what households pay now toward the 2.5 million street maintenance budget is \$30 a year. There are 16,000 single (residential) parcels and 4,000 commercial/multi-family parcels that contribute about \$600,000 to that budget. The department is able to do routine maintenance but is falling behind on mill and overlay, the surface maintenance and that process doesn't work on really old roads, they need to be reconstructed or overlaid and that is expensive. The burden of putting in sidewalks is significant in cost to the taxpayer and he would recommend funding sidewalk subsidies for those with hardship in having corner lots and on main streets where the sidewalk requires more than 5 foot width.

The threshold for paying into maintenance districts was indicated at \$50 by the citizen survey. This could create another \$1 million to be split for streets and sidewalks. With the pool of money available not getting bigger, and the costs associated with streets skyrocketing, need to look at the necessity to increase the budget.

Some questions were asked that Steve couldn't answer at this time. Mainly, how much will an increase of 'x' dollars provide what services to citizens . Would be helpful to have some sort of tangible example, like how

much does it cost per block of road. This dialogue is good, it will allow us to help shape the presentation to council being directed by citizens' questions replied Steve.

Discussion and explanation around how Missoula's general fund compares to Billings and Bozeman's in that there are many dynamics involved. Every community has different levels of bond indebtedness, property tax and maintenance districts are the main sources of budget determination. Marty spoke to how mill levies are assessed, caps on budgets, and freezes on property taxes through past state legislatures and that you can't compare apples to apples in looking at other cities general funds budgets; there are numerous variables to consider.

Mr. Wilkins suggested that the maintenance district presentation is a good thing to have at NC meetings and get citizen input on the survey afterwards. Discussion and comment made on the comprehensive inventory of sidewalks and streets in the City. Comment made that it would be good to keep right of ways clear of fences, bushes, other obstacles. Steve said there has been effort to reduce encroaching fences over the years. Steve shared that the 'shovel ready project' stimulus money received will be used for a significant city-wide program to install corner ramps which is a very expensive sidewalk component in ADA compliance.

Parks & Recreation Director - Donna Gaukler

Donna talked about the greatest infrastructure needs, showed what a preferred condition would be compared to current condition when improving infrastructure. Most park systems are wood structures that are well past their lifetime and desire they be replaced with new structures that will handle many more kids than the old style while offering a 'more fun' dynamic.

Turf and Irrigation: Topsoil is very important to build good turf and is expensive. Many parks have minimal topsoil and it takes a lot of irrigation to maintain what's there and is not an efficient use; have learned that good turf requires more depth of topsoil to begin with. Parks is the city's biggest user of water and irrigation is expensive. It costs about \$3000 - \$4500 a year to maintain an acre of park; it depends on amenities, quality of turf, and the kinds of activities that happen there. This cost for water and energy is high, in part due to no city owned utility and wells cannot be drilled and utilized for irrigation.

Current situation: backlog of infrastructure needs; most park amenities were post WWII or built in late 60's. Deferred maintenance estimate is \$20 million to replace existing infrastructure restrooms, courts, parking lots, picnic shelters, and irrigation systems. The estimate to fix playfair park turf is \$2 million. In looking at the lists of improvements that citizens identified as important: Ft. Missoula Regional Park, trails and indoor facilities. There are completely undeveloped park lands in neighborhoods due to terrain, lack of irrigation, etc. and we have not been able to build simple parks there.

In looking at facilities, the department needs to spend more money up front with smarter design with goal of reducing long term maintenance costs and upping the excitement and fitness value of the use of the facilities. Significant need for a multi-use indoor facility; large number of citizens turned away annually from indoor sports and fitness activities through the winter. We do a great job of offering outdoor facilities year-round, but we have no public gym.

The urban forest is a huge value to our economy. In neighborhoods with boulevard sidewalks with tree canopies the desire to live there is higher and so is the price. The pruning cycle currently is about 42 years; for tree health it should be done every 7 years. That would require an additional \$350,000 to our current \$334,000 budget which includes everything; planting removals stump grinding, watering, educational program, landscape review, subdivision review and pruning.

Questions and discussion:

In regards to urban forests, the established old maples in certain neighborhoods: they were planted 60-70 years ago and the species tends to have a 70-80 year life-cycle; working on modeling to slowly replace those trees with a mixed species for health and longevity and with similar architecture.

What kind of difference would maintenance districts make: if we put the amount of money necessary into the tree pruning and put the balance into a couple playgrounds a year, it would make a difference. It might take a combo of a maintenance district and a general obligation bond to take care of some of the structural things. Most states pay with sales or tourism taxes for park infrastructure, our state legislature won't allow that to happen. Currently funds come from a variety of areas. Transportation funds trails. The federal land and water conservation fund is largest single funding for all parks; national, state and local and is derived from offshore oil. It was lost it in the 80's and is very slowly coming back but has a huge draw on it; it is very limited by the time trickles down to local parks. Thankfully, lots of services clubs and citizens in Missoula donate time and money. Like the Tonkin Trail Project that Mr. Stevens worked on, parks is staff short and needs the help of citizens like this to secure project funds and take the time to organize. Compared with cities of similar demographics, we have the fewest staff and smallest budget per capita, both in population and acres maintained.

Committee Report Bus Tour Report (Hans Christiansen)

The bus tour of the northern neighborhoods was held last Saturday. It was a great tour and had good weather. Would like to see a full bus next time and have future conversations for leadership teams to get the word out and get people on the tour. Next one will be in September.

Ongoing Business

Neighborhood Council Updates

- **Heart of Missoula**—had a leadership team meeting and are planning to have a meeting in September (will not schedule around bus tour time).
- **Cpt. John Mullan**—LT met the 18th. We will be sponsoring an aid table for the marathon. In a holding pattern in regards to Pleasant View Park.
- **Southgate Triangle**—had a LT meeting and planning a work day for the park pet art project. Continuing to work on park projects in the neighborhood.
- **Moose Can Gully**—nothing new to report.
- **Lewis & Clark**—nothing new to report.
- **South 39th St.**—continue to make progress on the Tonkin Trail Project, surveyor staked out the route of the trail and fence, about to sign contract for fencing installation, getting trail construction bids, struggling to stay within the budget.
- **Upper Rattlesnake**—had a meeting last week and discussed sewer project.
- **Franklin to Fort**—will be having a summer social the 28th with a tree planting in Franklin Park. Come check out the new sidewalks; 14th St. is done and the east side of Johnson St. is almost complete.

City Council Liasion Report—Jon Wilkins

Working on the budget currently, all departments found ways to cut budgets, maintaining but it is tight. Zoning rewrite came back from Planning Board and it is in discussion with Council. Your input of how it affects your neighborhood is important at PAZ meetings which normally start at 10am...look at schedule to be sure. The discussion of ADU's is happening; restricted out of single-family zoning areas and made them

right in multi-family zoning areas. The committee is working on developing agendas for the weekly meetings to let people know.

Marty read from an update email with the issues PAZ is planning on discussing in committee.

Final Business

*Monthly report to City Council – Request to report on non-agenda items

(The monthly report to City Council will be made by the moderator of the meeting. The report made will address all items on the Community Forum agenda for the month. A request for reporting on non-agenda items will occur at Community Forum to ensure pertinent non-agenda are reported as well).

Marty Rehbein indicated that due to no quorum being present, and it being the end of the fiscal year, she will call a special meeting to address the consent agenda items.

Then next CF meeting moderator will be **Ms. Snodgrass**.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Ross

Christine Ross
Secretary, Office of Neighborhoods

*Copies of any handouts and referenced documents at this meeting are on file in the City Clerk's Office