

Mayor's Downtown Advisory Commission Minutes
August 2, 2016

Commission Members in Attendance: Ginny Merriam (City of Missoula), Eran Fowler Pehan (City of Missoula), Dan Cederberg (Downtown Attorney), Melinda Mason (Children's Mental Health Bureau), Jon Wilkins (City Council), Judge Kathleen Jenks (Municipal Court Judge), Rob Scheben (Citizen), Bryan von Lossberg (City Council) and Keithi Worthington (City Attorney)

Commission Members Absent: Loreen Hamilton (Salvation Army), Sue Wilkins (Missoula Correctional Services), Lt. Jake Rosling (Police Department), Michael Moore (Reaching Home: Missoula's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness), Nicole Rowley (County Commissioner), Elizabeth Marshall (Palace Apartments), Laurie Johnson (Downtown Ambassador) and Margaret Borg (Retired Attorney)

Others in Attendance: Mike Brady (sitting in for Jake Rosling), Linda McCarthy (Missoula Downtown) and Heidi Bakula (Mayor's Office)

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of February 2, 2016, March 1, 2016, April 5, 2016, May 3, 2016 and June 17, 2016 will be reviewed at a later date.

1. New Business

- Discuss recent complaints about public safety downtown

The group discussed David Bell's complaint about problems with transients in the Florence Hotel. He has had problems with theft and with people trying to stay inside the hotel at night. Also, there have been problems in the Millennium Building parking lot in the early morning. The group discussed the importance of education of the retailers in the downtown corridor as far as calling 911 or the HOT Team.

Chief Mike Brady spoke to the group about the problem with hiring an additional sworn police officer, which mainly centered around funding that position. Police officers have put in 200 hours of overtime in the downtown area and it seems to be having a positive outcome with retailers in the area. Officers have assignments at night to patrol the parking garages and different areas that are troublesome.

Dan Cederberg discussed the budget item before council which was to hire two sworn and two non-sworn police officers and he is asking MDAC to endorse that plan. Chief Brady added that he didn't think there was council support to hire those officers although the request was included in the budget.

Dan added that from what he hears the downtown seems to be doing better. The parking commission has not had great luck on security but Missoula Downtown has deployed their ambassadors to walk through parking areas.

Linda McCarthy from Missoula Downtown (MDA) said that MDA and the Business Improvement District (BID) for downtown businesses and that would be a mechanism for education and to get the word to local businesses on how to respond to issues with transients.

Bryan von Lossberg stated that he wants to take the picture he received of the transient sleeping in the entrance to Strongwater and use it for the newsletter for education purposes. Linda said that she would also have someone reach out to Strongwater about the situation and would come up with some language. Eran Fowler Pehan recommended starting this type of campaign in the spring or the end of summer.

- Debrief on the Jail Diversion presentation

Currently the Jail Diversion Plan is still in its comment period and has not gone back to council yet.

Comments about the plan are as follows:

Judge Kathleen Jenks stated that one goal of the plan is to keep those who commit non-violent offenses out of jail. Most of the people committing non-violent offenses are the people that MDAC deals with. This will make things much worse than they already are downtown.

Chief Mike Brady explained that he is concerned about dispatch protocols, crisis intervention teams, not enforcing a judge's warrant, and detention staff having the ability to turn people away in a mental health crisis situation.

Eran Fowler Pehan felt that it was premature to submit comments at this time since changes are currently being made to the plan. Cynthia Wolken has the draft and the county is asking that the city eventually adopt the plan.

Keithi Worthington felt the proposals in the plan were great but there is no funding available to implement them.

Bryan von Lossberg was not convinced that MDAC should wait to comment.

Eran added that she would contact Emily Bentley for a draft to circulate to MDAC and then the group can come back and discuss it in September.

2. Discussion and reporting on work groups

There were no new items to report.

3. Comments from Board Members

Michael Moore will be leaving MDAC and MDAC needs a new chair for the Crisis/drop-in/warming center working group.

Respectfully Submitted
Heidi J. Bakula
Executive Assistant

Next Meeting will be September 6, 2016