

Grant Creek Neighborhood Council
7 to 9 p.m. May 17, 2017
Grant Creek Inn

Bear Buffer Zone—Missoula Animal Control supervisor Jeff Darrah and Jamie Jonkel of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks discussed the city's bear buffer zone ordinance and the need to keep attractants away from bears. City residents in these zones are required to keep trash inside until 5 a.m. the morning of pickup. County residents would be well advised to do so as well, but they're not subject to the city's bear buffer zone ordinance. State law does prevent feeding bears, so Jamie Jonkel becomes involved if a bear gets into trash or other attractants (such as bird feeders or pet food left out) in the county.

Jeff Darrah and Jamie Jonkel recommended that Grant Creek residents:

- Use the web site missoulabears.org to make reports and learn of bear activity in our area
- Use Missoula's site, <https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/list.aspx> Notify Me, to get alerts on a range of community issues, including bear information.

Don Jenni moved and John Langstaff seconded a motion that the Grant Creek Neighborhood Council's leadership team formally request Republic Services to pick up trash in Grant Creek no earlier than 7:30 a.m. to make it easier for residents to comply with the bear buffer zone prohibition against putting trash out before 5 a.m. on the day of pickup (Thursday in Grant Creek). The voice vote approving the motion was unanimous.

Fire Readiness: Jordan Koppen, from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, introduced officials from the city fire department, Missoula rural fire department, the Lolo National Forest, and Missoula County Office of Emergency Management Coordinator Nick Holloway. Evacuation was on the minds of many in the audience, given last summer's fire in Grant Creek. The Missoula County Sheriff's Department is in charge of evacuations, relying on the guidance of fire managers in determining what areas might need to be evacuated and when.

Holloway recommended that residents plan for evacuation even before the fire season begins.

One way residents can help themselves and Missoula County is to register with Smart911 (<https://www.smart911.com/>), a national program that makes sure that dispatchers have access to whatever information residents are willing to share, such as how many persons and pets live in the home and whether any residents have special needs. If you choose to share your email, home phone, and cell phone with Smart911, you can be alerted by any or all of those means during an emergency.

Jordan Koppen discussed the importance of reducing fire hazards around a home long before smoke is in the air. Most homes that were burned during last summer's Roaring Lion Fire near Hamilton weren't burned by becoming too hot and bursting into flame as we might imagine

given the fire's ferocity. Rather, embers landed in flammable vegetation or firewood near the home or in a gutter filled with pine needles. Those small fires, started at the home itself burned the house down. In one case, embers ignited at a home, burning it down even though the Roaring Lion Fire itself never reached the home.

Brian Walter talked about the organized effort he led to reduce fuels in Grant Creek some years ago. Brian moved that the Grant Creek Neighborhood Council formally request that fire officials work with Grant Creek homeowners and large landowners to systematically reduce fire hazards throughout the drainage. The motion was seconded and approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Q & A with City Council members Jordan Hess and Ruth Ann Swaney: General discussion included winter maintenance of the Grant Creek Trail (this item is proposed in next year's city budget), reducing fire hazard on national forest lands in the area (Jordan Hess is agreeable and will look into it), concern that some of the few parking spaces serving open space trails at the Orange Street interchange are being occupied all day or longer by persons who aren't hiking (use is being monitored, and a policy for use will be developed once the study is complete; the policy may include guidance on the length of stay). The group welcomed new council member Ruth Ann Swaney.

Southbound Lanes at the Reserve Street/I-90 Interchange--Bert provided a brief progress report on the project to increase the number of southbound lanes at the Reserve Street/I-90 interchange. The Montana Department of Transportation has completed survey work at the interchange, allowing project design to begin. The project is projected to cost about \$500,000 (the city has \$200,000 set aside for its share). When the project is complete, the median strip will have been narrowed and the sidewalk on the west side of the interchange will have been moved farther west. There will be two southbound lanes, a bike lane, and a right-turn lane rather than the single southbound lane there now. Shane Stack at the Montana Department of Transportation thinks that the improvements will do more to shorten waits at the light than might be apparent. Not only will the southbound traffic clear the light more quickly, but the time that's saved can be distributed throughout the interchange, meaning the wait between green lights should be shorter.

Public comment on non-agenda items - none

The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m. even though other agenda items had not been completed.