

Mayor's Downtown Advisory Commission Quarterly Meeting Minutes
April 2, 2019

Commission Members in Attendance: Nicole Rowley (County Commissioner), Margaret Borg (Retired Attorney), Sue Wilkins (Missoula Correctional Services), Ethan Smith (Police Department), Dan Cederberg (Attorney), Dave Chrismon (Downtown Ambassador), Eran Fowler Pehan (Housing & Community Development), Keithi Worthington (City Attorney), Bryan von Lossberg (City Council), Lt. Jake Rosling (Police Department), Randy Krastel (BID Police Officer) and Ethan Lerman (Municipal Court Judge)

Commission Members Absent: Tom Snyder (Downtown Business Owner), Amy Allison Thompson (Poverello Center), Elizabeth Marshall (Palace Apartments), Theresa Williams (Reaching Home Coordinator), Ginny Merriam (Mayor's Office), John Engen (Mayor) and Ryan Boyd (Salvation Army)

Others in Attendance: Heidi Bakula (Mayor's Office)

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of October 25, 2018 were approved as submitted.

1. Public Comment - None

2. Introductions

New commission member Ethan Lerman introduced himself, He is the new assistant judge in municipal court and decided to join MDAC.

3. Current Issues Update

- Debrief of Winter Warming Efforts – Eran Pehan

Eran Pehan explained that the Poverello Center capped its capacity of overnight sleepers to 175 per night this winter, which meant there were 25 – 30 homeless people with nowhere to stay. Before the Poverello Center capped its capacity, they were housing 200 – 210 per night. The Salvation Army stepped up to provide services for those who could not stay at the Poverello Center. They opened the day after Christmas 2018 and closed at the end of March 2019. The Salvation Army served up to 70 people per night. They were not as strict as the Poverello Center and allowed pets and husbands and wives to stay together. Operationally it was very hard on the Salvation Army staff since they managed a more difficult clientele. There was property damage, people with mental health issues, needles in the bathrooms and items stored outside under bushes. The Good Food Store did have problems but they worked with the Salvation Army.

Plans are already in the works to discuss warming efforts for winter 2019. The Salvation Army decided not to participate this winter since they had issues managing the daytime hours. The transfer center was used as a temporary warming facility winter 2018. Eran explained that they are now looking locally for a place to house people 24 hours per day and that plan will be taken to the council and the commissioners in the future.

Bryan von Lossberg asked Eran if the cap was exceeded at either location this winter. Eran answered that the Salvation Army did not set a cap, but the two facilities combined housed 225 – 300 people total. Bryan also thought it would be difficult to find a solution prior to this budget season.

Ethan Smith said that the police were called to the Salvation Army every night and staff was overwhelmed. Ethan recommended that whomever housed people this next winter should have training.

Bryan asked if the Salvation Army gave a hard no or if they might be willing to house a few people. Eran thought that was a good question and it was possible that they would be open to that. They were doubling or tripling their staff this winter when they typically only had four people working.

Bryan saw the value of a central facility but wondered if several organizations could work together. Churches could be an option. Transportation was an issue though; each facility would have to find a way to transport people to their facilities.

Randy Krastel thought that at the recent Poverello Center meeting the problem was more about timeframe rather than temperature. Everyone needed to plan to make it work this next winter. He also brought up the issue of housing those in recovery with those who are using drugs or are intoxicated.

Eran stated that those without addictions or mental issues should be easier to house right away. The goal is to have a meeting to discuss the winter warming shelter for winter 2019 the second or third week of April.

4. Downtown Update

- Bryan von Lossberg discussed the recent gift to the city from Terry Payne. He gave the city the old library building and property.
- Randy Krastel said that the warmer weather was bringing people out. He and the community resource officers are making an effort to get the parks cleaned up of trash so they are clean and ready to go when transients visit them, setting a good example. Several people have been very alarmed about the issues out on N. Reserve under the bridge. People living under the bridge have been building structures out of wood. Several people have also asked him about the YouTube video called "Seattle is Dying," it's about addiction and homelessness.
- Eran Pehan explained that Theresa Williams, the Reaching Home Coordinator, has been using the Coordinated Entry System trying to reach out to people who have housing vouchers. The problem has been locating or contacting them. Most of those living outside have vouchers waiting for them. The Outreach Teams have also been trying to locate people with vouchers.
- Keithi Worthington said that the attorney's office could also coordinate with the police department to help locate people eligible for vouchers.
- Randy added that several people he knows of have been housed and he has not received calls on these individuals since January. Currently 30 – 40 people were living under the Reserve Street Bridge. Many people are building structures that are visible from the roadway.
- Ethan Smith added that several agencies come together twice per year to clean out the Reserve Street camp. Cleanup efforts by volunteers have also been organized. Food Not Bombs has been helping the people living under the bridge. People who have proclaimed themselves as liberals have been complaining to him that Missoula is turning into a homeless mecca.
- Jake Rosling said that the campers on Expressway are becoming a problem since the area has now been annexed into the city.
- Sue Wilkins added that several area prisons are releasing terrible people with nowhere to go into the community.
- Jake added that Reserve Street is housing several people with county warrants and camps are also being burned.
- Sue wondered if the goal was to get rid of pre-release centers due to recent actions at the legislature. There were empty beds in the treatment facilities, which used to be unheard of.

- Dave Chrismon noticed that the downtown is cleaned up and several downtown regulars have been housed. The police's response time has been great in the last six months. Parks and Recreation is actively cleaning up graffiti on trails. He's seeing many shopping carts around town and wonders what needs to be done with them as far as the law is concerned.
- Dan Cederberg noted that Randy has done great giving out bus tickets. There were good aspects of jail diversion, but he hasn't seen anything about public safety.
- Ethan Lerman wondered about having Randy take advantage of the community service program. Sue Wilkins offered to help Randy get in touch with the right person. People could help clean up parks, do river clean-up and a lot more. Kids under 18 can also help by doing their community service with Randy. Ethan Lerman also needs the information about transients needing to be located because the court could help locate them.
- Keithi Worthington discussed the Frequent User System Engagement (FUSE) group who are people with mental health issues with no case management services. She has seen homeless courts in other cities that could be helpful here, which include law enforcement and court for the homeless.
- Bryan von Lossberg thought that the Coordinated Entry System was doing great work, although more connections needed to be made. We are better than we were 2 – 3 years ago. He felt that it was a quandary that Missoula's services were attracting homeless people from out of town, but services were still needed in Missoula.
- Sue Wilkins wanted more information about the statewide homeless conference that Theresa Williams went to in Helena. It was the first ever for the state. Bryan said he would ask Theresa for more information and email it to the group.

Respectfully Submitted,
Heidi Bakula, Executive Assistant