

**Mayor's Downtown Advisory Commission Quarterly Meeting Minutes  
October 22, 2019**

**Commission Members in Attendance:** Margaret Borg (Retired Attorney), Sue Wilkins (Missoula Correctional Services), Ethan Smith (Police Department), Dan Cederberg (Attorney), Eran Fowler Pehan (Housing & Community Development), Bryan von Lossberg (City Council), Amy Allison Thompson (Poverello Center), Elizabeth Marshall (Palace Apartments), Theresa Williams (Reaching Home Coordinator), Ginny Merriam (Mayor's Office), Ryan Boyd (Salvation Army), Dave Chrismon (Downtown Ambassador) and Randy Krastel (BID Police Officer)

**Commission Members Absent:** Lt. Jake Rosling (Police Officer), Keithi Worthington (City Attorney), John Engen (Mayor), Tom Snyder (Downtown Business Owner), Juanita Vero (County Commissioner) and Ethan Lerman (Municipal Court Judge),

**Others in Attendance:** Heidi Bakula (Mayor's Office), John Wood (Practicum Student for Randy Krastel) and Sam Hilliard (Program Specialist for Reaching Home Program)

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of July 9, 2019 were approved as submitted.

1. Public Comment - None
2. Introductions
3. Current Issues Update

- Emergency Winter Shelter Plan – Ginny Merriam, Amy Allison Thompson and Ryan Boyd

Eran Pehan explained that in 2018 churches were running into city code problems when attempting to provide temporary winter shelter to homeless individuals. In 2018 the City of Missoula enacted an interim emergency ordinance so that the Salvation Army could house overflow from the Poverello Center during the frigid cold temperatures in Missoula. The city also has a temporary interim ordinance to provide these services during the 2019 winter season.

Currently, the City of Missoula is in the process of passing a permanent ordinance change that would make it easier for religious organizations to provide shelter during the winter season. The permanent ordinance change will be done by late December of 2019 or early January of 2020.

Ginny Merriam added that she had been working on the communications plan for several weeks and of course there were many opinions, both for and against this change. The plan was to wait until after the joint meeting of the city council and the county commissioners to make the announcement, but she wanted MDAC members to be aware of what was happening before the joint meeting took place. There have also been some neighborhood meetings about on the subject.

Amy Allison Thompson of the Poverello Center stated that they had been planning what to do for winter shelter since last winter to be proactive, and the city and county were at the table with them. The Poverello did limit the amount it could house to 175 as a result of what happened last winter, and they will need to enlist a second location so they asked the Salvation Army again. The plan is for all individuals to be housed to start at the Poverello Center and from there they can decide where people are to be housed at night. Behavior is the main focus this year instead of intoxication. Amy had been in

conversations with the police department on what to communicate to neighbors near the Poverello Center and the Salvation Army. They still had to work out transportation between the two facilities. She knew they would need more blankets and towels.

Bryan von Lossberg added that the Missoula Interfaith Collaborative and the Union Gospel Mission were working on a transportation plan.

Ginny asked Amy how planning differed from last year. Amy said that there was not much planning done in 2018. This year they were coming up with internal processes to make it a smoother process and they were training their staff to be more prepared. The Poverello Center was lowering barriers and providing 140 beds at the Poverello Center and 50 beds at the Salvation Army.

Bryan recommended that Amy talk about the funding contributed, the coordination of space and the lowering of barriers when she spoke at the committee of the whole meeting. These were all key factors to mention at the meeting.

Eran Pehan added that the City of Missoula was contributing \$50,000 and Missoula County was contributing \$20,000 for the additional services. St. Patrick Hospital and Community Hospital were also being asked to make a contribution because of the \$40,000 gap in funding the winter shelter. Amy added that most of the funds needed were for staffing, eleven full-time staff members would be needed. The Poverello Center still had \$10,000 in its building reserve for repairs at the Salvation Army, transportation costs and liability insurance. This would be a short term solution until 2022 when the new Trinity Center would be ready.

Dave Chrismon asked Amy if the Poverello Center would be considered low barrier for the winter season. Amy said that they would focus on a specific time period and not temperature and consider behavior to determine a person's eligibility.

Ginny asked if there were any concerns raised at the Monday night city council meeting. Amy responded that there was quite a bit of concern, but it was over things that were already raised as concerns such as people in the garbage, defecation, pretty much the regular things she was used to hearing about. Ryan Boyd from the Salvation Army added that management at the Corso Apartments were not very excited about it, but others felt it was a good solution since it would be behavior based.

Amy explained that the store managers at the Good Food Store were discussing it and would meet again the following week about concerns and challenges with the Salvation Army hosting folks. The Good Food Store was excited that the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) dropped by to discuss concerns with them.

Eran also stated that the outreach was super impressive. Bryan thought that they should share that information with council, they explored many ideas that did not pan out. It took time but they left no stone unturned. He was deeply thankful to the MDAC members for their work on the project.

Bryan asked Randy Krastel and Ethan Smith if they had anything to add. Ethan thought that the staff needed de-escalation and safety training since the staff had such a terrible time last year. Amy stated that the Poverello Center was holding de-escalation training the following week for the staff.

Bryan also thought that they needed a plan for all the agencies involved to touch base somehow. Amy agreed and said that they could report information at the regular neighborhood meetings. Eran thought

they should convene a monthly meeting and give city council updates. Amy said she could do it by email. Bryan offered to help get the information to city council.

#### 4. Downtown Update

Randy Krastel stated that he only had a few calls over the last three weeks. John Wood, Randy's Practicum Student from the university, explained that he had been meeting lots of people and he thought Missoula seemed to have more resources than any other city in Montana, but those resources were not enough. It was refreshing for him to see how much the community was involved in working on homelessness and thought it was good for the public to see since most felt nothing was being done to solve homelessness.

Theresa Williams said there was still a gap in resources for mental health for those in crisis. A 24/7 response from providers was still needed. John added that there just are no services available after 5:00 or 6:00 pm. Ethan Smith hoped that the new Trinity Center would resolve this issue.

Ryan Body of the Salvation Army explained that they had bus ticket money available, but people have to have someone available to help them on the other end so they are not homeless when they arrive. She also said they had rental assistance available for those in danger of losing housing. Rent and deposit money was coming in the near future.

Eran Pehan discussed the DNA Climber workshop at the university. This would be a great option for low income people to bring their kids, forty-five kids showed up for the workshop.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Heidi Bakula, Executive Assistant