

**Mayor's Downtown Advisory Commission Quarterly Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2020**

Commission Members in Attendance: Margaret Borg (Retired Attorney), Eran Fowler Pehan (Housing & Community Development), Elizabeth Marshall (Palace Apartments), Theresa Williams (Reaching Home Coordinator, Co-chair), Ginny Merriam (Mayor's Office), Ryan Boyd (Salvation Army), Lt. Jake Rosling (Police Officer), John Engen (Mayor), Ryan Kamura (Crime Prevention Officer), Amy Allison Thompson (Poverello Center) and Dan Cederberg (Attorney)

Commission Members Absent: Ethan Lerman (Municipal Court Judge), Sue Wilkins (Missoula Correctional Services), Bryan von Lossberg (City Council, Co-chair), Randy Krastel (BID Police Officer), Keithi Worthington (City Attorney) and Juanita Vero (County Commissioner)

Others in Attendance: Heidi Bakula (Mayor's Office), Linda McCarthy (Missoula Downtown) and Doug Cook (Practicum Student for Theresa Williams)

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of January 14, 2020 were approved as submitted.

1. Public Comment - None
2. Introductions and Welcome

Eran Pehan told the commission that she would be stepping down as co-chair and that Theresa Williams would be taking her place. Eran and Ginny Merriam gave a short overview of MDAC. It started in 2006 with the Panhandling Working Group, then they added the Real Change, Not Spare Change program. After twelve years of Ginny coordinating the meeting, she handed it off to Councilman, Bryan von Lossberg.

Linda McCarthy from Missoula Downtown discussed the Downtown Ambassador, Dave Chrismon, who retired earlier in 2020. They have not replaced his position yet.

3. Current Issues Update

- Other Quality of Life Issues Downtown

Ryan Kamura said that he was working on winter shelter with Amy Allison Thompson of the Poverello Center. There were no major issues that he was aware of; they did install parking barricades to prevent overnight camping. Amy added that the winter shelter began on November 1st at Johnson Street. They are only able to house 88 people at the Poverello Center due to COVID restrictions, so they opened the Johnson Street facility to shelter more homeless people. They needed a large facility and Amy thanked the city for providing the temporary space. They can house 150 people at the Johnson Street facility with social distancing 24 hours a day. They provide sack lunches at the facility and one hot meal per day. She was having a neighborhood meeting the next day. She also said that they had been serving 30 people, but that it jumped to over 60 by the weekend. They were seeing a few folks from the Reserve Street encampment. They were able to serve people with pets and couples could stay together if they wanted to.

Theresa Williams said that they just received a CDBG grant which allowed them to add two new members to the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT), plus they were able to utilize a COVID grant and

now they have a total of five people on HOT so they are fully staffed. They were able to reach out to twenty-five different businesses in one week to let them know their services are available.

4. Update on Downtown Issues

Mayor Engen explained that he was interested in filling the gaps in service since safety nets were gone for people to fall back on and now it was up to municipalities to help with more intervention. The Mobile Crisis Team would be coming online on November 16, 2020 and it would be another tool to add support along with the Crisis Intervention Team, the Homeless Outreach Team, Downtown Ambassadors and first responders. He is hopeful that it will improve outcomes, conserve resources and answer with the appropriate response. The Mobile Crisis Team carried some expectation that it would solve all problems related to mental health, but that expectation was not realistic. The city would have to see what the outcomes would be and look at all the data to understand what types of calls were coming in. If folks were having a behavioral crisis often there is not a place to take those individuals that has the therapeutic depth that is needed. He is hoping that the Trinity Project will fill that need and it will have a crisis stabilization component. Once Trinity comes on-line, there would be savings to the city but at this point it is hard to quantify.

It was time to retool what the city's tasks were and new housing is what was needed. People cannot rely on the state or federal government to take care of them like it used to, the responsibility was now on municipalities to step in.

Recently Dakota House was constructed for crisis stabilization, but they don't have staff and only have a few beds. The question is what capacity is needed. Dakota House had barriers and law enforcement cannot deliver people to them for services. They can try to get people admitted through St. Pat's Hospital.

Linda McCarthy from Missoula Downtown thought that the downtown was scary because of COVID and the new restrictions. The Downtown BID Officer, Randy Krastel, had been quarantined four or five times due to interactions with homeless individuals. One person spit on him and it got in his eye, but he did not get COVID. Dave Chrismon had worked on 800 graffiti tags and is still on an anti-graffiti taskforce. Business owners are having a difficult time and may go under. Another stimulus package would really help them. She was able to shift funds from the downtown ambassador position to a second downtown officer. Once COVID is over, they will hire a new downtown Ambassador.

Elizabeth Marshall talked about the Palace Apartments and how it had been much quieter lately. The protests on the sidewalk were hard on residents at the Palace and so were parties that would erupt on the sidewalk. She thought life was quieter because of the cold.

Ryan Boyd from the Salvation Army said they were offering bus tickets, showers and laundry by appointment. They were also able to help with rental and deposit assistance and they were using some leftover COVID money. The Christmas toy drive moved to an online format.

Theresa Williams introduced her practicum student Doug Cook. Doug was working with Randy Krastel and Jake Gillhouse, the new Business Improvement District Officer, and trying to be with them at least fifteen hours per week. Theresa also added that she was moving to a position at the Fire Department to be the Crisis Intervention Team Program Manager.

Mayor Engen asked Ryan Kamura, the new Crime Prevention Officer, what he was seeing with fresh eyes since he started working for the city. Ryan thought that he would be wearing many hats working for the city to stay on top of everything. He had been a trainer for the Crisis Response Team.

Respectfully Submitted,
Heidi Bakula, Executive Assistant