

**Missoula City/County Elected Officials Policy Meeting
Planning and Grants Services Interlocal Agreement
January 26, 2011
10:05 a.m. – 11:55 a.m.
Council Chambers, 140 W Pine**

Present: Ed Childers, Renee Mitchell, Dick Haines, Marilyn Marler, Bill Carey, Jean Curtiss, Bob Jaffe, Pam Walzer, Jason Wiener, Dave Strohmaier, Jon Wilkins, Lyn Hellegaard, Cynthia Wolken, Ann Cundy, Donna Gaukler, Lisa Moisey, Mike Barton, Dale Bickell, Mayor Engen, William Geer, Bonnie Buckingham, Lavender Lori Parr, James McCubbin, Kim Briggeman, Paul Hubbard, KD Dickinson, Bert Lindler, Patrick O’Herren, Jim Berkey, John Hendrickson, Heidi Kendall, Ellen Buchanan and Shelley Oly

1. Introductions and Public Comments

Cynthia Wolken was introduced as the newest member to City Council.

Paul Hubbard (CFAC) stated CFAC released a report entitled *Losing Ground*. A report that showed developmental patterns were rapidly converting farm and ranch lands into residential lots:

- Since 1986 Missoula has lost 29,000 acres of working farmlands.
- A multi-pronged strategy was proposed in the report to comprehensively conserve agricultural lands as working landscapes and enhance the community’s food security:
 - Demonstrated public interest.
 - Willingness to lead the public process.
 - 1,355 individual signatures have been obtained plus 33 organizations that have relevant interest and expertise in the issues of development and farmland conservation that have endorsed this proposal.
- The first part of the proposal is to designate agricultural cornerstone areas to prioritize the conservation of lands where cultural resources are still intact.
- The second piece of the proposal is to adopt agricultural resource standards to mitigate the loss of farm lands at the point of subdivision.
- The third part is to implement an incentive program to encourage and reward conservation within the cornerstone areas.

Heidi Kendall (Missoula Chapter of the Missoula Conservation Voters) offered their support at local and state levels.

Bert Lindler (Hellgate Hunters and Anglers) supported the policies to save the agricultural lands and handed out the [endorsement](#). This organization promoted for conservation of wildlife wild places and fair chase hunting and fishing heritage. The legacy of hunting and fishing and viewing wildlife require the maintenance of working farms and ranches.

Don McArthur (MMW Architects) endorsed the proposal to look at conservation of Missoula agricultural lands. Agricultural land is the foundation and basis for our community. The more the resources are protected the more Missoula will grow hence more opportunity to design building and homes.

KD Dickinson (Portico Real Estate) supported the CFAC proposal and open space. People move to Missoula because of the trails, working landscapes, green spaces, and forests. Parks offer a place to rest, wildlife areas provide habitat and working farms provide essential agricultural products. Open space was a top feature in the real estate market when buying homes.

Laura Parr (MT Sustainable Growers Union) endorsed this farm land conservation policy. It is important to the small farmer and the local community to have land for future generations to continue our way of life.

Jim Burkey (CFAC) explained City and County officials need to work together on future agriculture lands. The intention of cornerstone areas is to conserve masses of agriculture lands to insure farm lands and ranches for the future. He handed out a [draft proposal](#) with suggested language to be inserted to identify and designate the cornerstone areas and [maps](#) that show potential agriculture cornerstones.

The Commissioners appreciate the work that went into CFAC and the realtors' reports and met with City Council to how to proceed with this item. A committee has been formed to include members of both governing bodies, the developer/realtor interests, CFAC and staff from OPG to see if there are conceptual items that could be brought forward to the governing bodies. This committee has met and would be exchanging some possible proposals.

2. **Approval of [July 28, 2010 minutes](#)** – approved as presented.

3. **Mike Barton** ([click on this link to preview presentation](#))

Mike Barton noted that there were links attached to almost every slide to allow more information on the various activities in OPG. Some of the highlights include:

- ✓ The decline of Planning Board meetings reflects a decline in land use activity. This has allowed staff to work with the Grants division and Transportation.
- ✓ Revenues are up 25% but behind predictions for the County.
- ✓ More projects such as subdivision, rezonings and conditional uses will be seen in the 2nd half of FY11.
- ✓ Data is being collected to be used by the neighborhood and community councils in implementing strategies they have developed.
- ✓ There are basic zoning information classes to educate the developers and realtors of Missoula.
- ✓ The County fairgrounds are now listed on the Historic Preservation National Register.
- ✓ The long range transportation plan will be implemented in the 2nd half of FY11.
- ✓ There is a strong effort in Missoula community aimed at the prevention of violence, the Grant's staff has assisted more than 600 victims of violent crime in the first half of FY11.

3. **Dennis Taylor Report** ([click on this link to view presentation](#))

Mayor Engen presented the report. The goal of this report was to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the current organizational structure and recommend improvements.

- The first task was to determine the strengths, weaknesses and perceived problems of the planning and development review process.
- The second task was to look at the current practices of the planning and development process and compare this with other cities.
- The result was that the City of Missoula needed to develop a modern, efficient planning and development review process system.
- Some critical issues included timeliness, communication, leadership, customer service and organizational cultures.

- The structural and organizational change recommended was a One-Stop Shop.
 - Consolidate functions in a single City department with one department head responsible for management.
 - Option 1 was a robust department that included planning and engineering functions, building inspection, economic development and redevelopment, CDBG and HOME programs, business improvement district, a housing component, historic preservation and parking.
 - Option 2 was an integrated department with engineering, planning and building inspection.
- The process compiles a list of best management practices.
 - Move from sequential to concurrent development review.
 - Ensure one manager is responsible for the system.
 - Create a multi-member inter agency review committee.
 - Establish a project manager approach to coordinate review projects.
 - Upgrade to an automated permit system that allowed simultaneous tracking on the internet.
 - Create agreed upon timelines and monitor those timelines.
 - Adopt expedited review alternatives.
 - Create easy public access to information, procedures and processes.
 - Train for efficiency and improved customer service quality.
 - Create a business assistance team to help navigate the process.
 - Create an industry advisory council.
 - Conduct City sponsored training for the development community.
 - Create and implement a communications plan.
 - Conduct an annual survey of stakeholder.
- The one stop shop concept would create a one stop permit information and a development service center.

Questions and discussion from members on the Dennis Taylor report included:

- 1) The report offered structural changes in the way departments are organized and how work was processed that make sense. The reason staff are regulators and not facilitators is because of the various conflicting interests they need to represent in the community. Staff has been criticized because they are not facilitators and this issued should be addressed. We need processes in place that are more predictable and offer better communication.
- 2) The recommendations about better customer service are warranted. A suggestion could be to have some customer service training and a better centralization of communication among the staff.
- 3) An important aspect would be to have a main receptionist area to route visitors to the appropriate office.
- 4) Someone needs to take ownership to make sure these suggestions are followed through to completion.
- 5) Was there any discussion as to whether the joint City/County departments were working or does implementing changes mean the severing of City and County ties. Severing was Mr. Taylor's recommendation, however that does come with consequences.
- 6) There has been a referral on the table since 2008 to address this issue.
- 7) It would be helpful to have staff that worked both sides of the City/County line. In OPG there are large long term planning processes versus review projects. In the City, staff that review plans are planners. Long range planning is different than current

planning and current planning is managing the projects that come in the door. It makes sense to do the long range planning pieces as joint City and County projects.

8) Mr. Taylor's recommendation was to have a City planning function and a City review function.

9) What is the impression of effectiveness of permitting and planning function in the county and the recommendations of this report? Conceptually this report sounds good and some changes need to take place. The county's obligation is to serve the public and if other ways can be identified to improve that service then that would be a good thing. However the bottom line will be the expense. A development review team (DRT) has already started to look at projects in the County. Much of this is how the City and County performs structurally.

There is a remarkable relationship between the City and the County. Our governing bodies focus on the best and most efficient way to serve the public. The next step would be to bring Mr. Taylor back to talk through the process pieces.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelley Oly

Support Services Administrator
Office of Planning and Grants

(To listen to this meeting in its entirety, [click on this link](#))