

**Mayor's Downtown Advisory Commission
Minutes
September 2, 2014**

Commission Members in Attendance: Ginny Merriam (City of Missoula), Keithi Worthington (Deputy City Attorney), Sue Wilkins (Missoula Correctional Services), Rob Scheben (Police Department), Travis Mateer (Poverello Center), Michael Moore (Reaching Home: Missoula's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness), Eran Fowler Pehan (Poverello Center), Dan Cederberg (Downtown Attorney), Melanie Brock, Margaret Borg (Retired Attorney), Jon Wilkins (City Council), Caitlin Copple (City Council), Jason Wiener (City Council), Bryan Von Lossberg (City Council), Tara Moss (Montgomery Distillery), Brent Dobak (Downtown Ambassador), and Melinda Mason (WORD)

Commission Members Absent: Paige Livingston (One Eleven), Michele Landquist (County Commissioner), Barbara Wickel (Missoula Interfaith Collaborative), Melissa Gordon (Grants), Susan Hay Patrick (United Way), Laurie Johnson (Downtown Ambassador) and Jenny Montgomery (Montgomery Distillery)

Others in Attendance: Heidi Bakula (City of Missoula)

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of July 1, 2014 were approved as corrected.

Special Presentations:

- None

Committee Updates

- Crime and Prevention – Keithi Worthington and Rob Scheben
No update
- Real Change Promotion / Human Services

The Real Change subcommittee worked on many projects during 2014 to generate revenue but only made \$1,000 so the program did not qualify for the \$5,000 match. Downtown business owners tend to believe that any money generated goes directly to the homeless instead of the hot team or homeless outreach programs. The public still does not realize how much money the hot team will save taxpayers by responding to various transient issues.

- A suggestion was made to have a Real Change Facebook page in order to show the public, on a daily basis, the work being done by the homeless outreach teams.

There was discussion on whether or not to suspend the real change program.

- If MDAC were to pursue Real Change the impacts of the contributions would need to be very apparent to the public, such as funds being used to finance a wet shelter or more hot teams, but it had to be tangible.
- The public tends to believe that the problem is getting worse with the camps along the Kim Williams Trail and the homeless person that was killed and dumped in the river.
- The private funder of the real change program did not see enough of a result and wants to see something tangible as well.

- Another problem is that the educational aspect of the hot team is not something that can be measured easily and seen by the public.
- A suggestion was made to try to look at fundraising differently. What if credit cards could be used to donate with online?
- Some committee members were reluctant to sunset the program and end any fundraising, advertising, or educational opportunities.
- The most important idea to convey will always be “don’t give to panhandlers” but “support the outreach programs.” Unfortunately some take this as a mixed message.
- MDAC needs a group from the university to sponsor the committee so educational opportunities could happen at orientation or on a much more regular basis with college kids.
- It was suggested that any press related spots be both positive and negative since negative may convey a more forceful message.

Michael Moore has been meeting with the mayor and Jean Curtis about the Wet Housing/Housing First program.

- It will take 1 - 2 years to get the program up and running.
- Problems include finding a location, bringing all the partners together (Turning Point, Western Montana Mental Health Center, Partnership Health Center, etc.).
- At what point should MDAC get involved with this process?
- Wet housing will not solve all problems but it will help those who want to be helped especially by getting those off the street who constantly need emergency services.
- The concept of wet housing will have to be sold to the public and stakeholders as far as financing, location, and buy-in.
- The idea of wet housing should be carried by the community and no one entity or entities.
- Dan Cederberg stated that the BID rate payers will not support wet housing. Many would encourage jail over wet housing to make more impact. Travis Mateer offered to come and have a discussion with the rate payers about all the aspects related to this topic.
- Wet housing will not solve 100% of the problem. A place to detox is needed and ordinances are needed in order for those who break the law to serve jail time and work off fines.
- Ordinances – there is no political will for city council to push more stringent ordinances on aggressive panhandling or pedestrian interference. Wet housing is an option outside city ordinances.
- A question was raised as to whether or not service from the Western Montana Mental Health Center or St. Pat’s Hospital could be purchased right now. Could the city write a check? Maybe one person per month could be served this way.
- Sharehouse has provided service in the past but it is very expensive and HUD funding was used previously.
- Collaboration would be the best approach. Maybe CIT funding with the state could be increased. This funding could be used to hire a social worker at the jail.
- Any type of detox housing would have to be medically staffed so patients are monitored closely. Hospitals don’t want to do it because of expense.
- Winter 2014 will be challenging since the Poverello Center will no longer accept intoxicated people even if temperatures are below freezing.

What is MDAC capable of taking on and what can be done this fall?

- Student outreach education on panhandling – Travis Mateer
- Look into a program in stores to round up to generate funds for Real Change – Melanie Brock

- Have MDAC members meet with the BID or the City Council to provide education – Ginny Merriam and Caitlin Copple
- Since the BID board does not include rate payers figure out a method (breakfast) to meet and educate them – Dan Cederberg
- Travis Mateer volunteered himself for any conversations related to homelessness and outreach.
- A meeting with MDA, BID and all downtown businesses will be pursued with the possibility of bringing in a facilitator. Dan Cederberg will have a discussion with his contacts and get back with Ginny Merriam.

➤ Built Environment – Margaret Borg –
MAM Art Park Gallery Night

All were invited to gallery night on Friday, September 5th.

Respectfully Submitted,
Heidi J. Bakula
Executive Assistant

Date of Next Meeting
Jack Reidy Conference Room
October 7, 2014