

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Council Chambers
January 17, 2017

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) Hanel, Cromley, Yakawich, Cimmino, Brewster, McFadden, Friedel, Swanson, Sullivan, Clark, Brown.

CM excused:

ADJOURN TIME: 10:15 pm

Agenda

TOPIC #1	Legislative Update
PRESENTER	Ed Bartlett, Lobbyist
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Ed Bartlett: weekly written reports and bi-weekly verbal at the work sessions. State budget and esp. the revenues are a big problem. Public incapacitation is being drafted. Besides introduced TIF bills, expect a dozen more before the end of the session. HB 194 hearing today, prohibit cities from adopting and enforcing cell phone/texting prohibitions.
- Hanel: FY 17 biennium est. was \$300M reserve is down to \$80M? Mr. Bartlett: \$80M at best. Governor's budget proposes \$300M at end of FY 19.
- Sullivan: newspaper article about SB 27, sponsor said that city didn't allow public testimony at TIF project meeting. Mr. Bartlett: in process of correcting it. Thursday noon meetings with delegation.
- **Public Comment:** None

TOPIC #2	MacDonald Building TIF
PRESENTER	Greg Krueger, Downtown Billings Alliance (DBA) Development Director
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Greg Krueger – handouts – building history, schedule for consideration and plans for redevelopment. 12 housing units on 2nd and 3rd floors. Explains how the grant to owners conforms to the urban renewal plan, downtown framework plan and state law. A number of restrictions. \$700K reimbursement for eligible expenses over 3 years. \$4.6M project. Introduces the owners/developers.
- Hanel: what is the elevator need? Mr. Krueger: in middle of building which doesn't fit housing development. More accessible to tenants.
- Swanson: Parking? Mr. Krueger: won't build any new but spaces are available in Park 1.
- Cromley: asbestos abatement?
- Bill Honaker: abatement will cost \$100-\$150k but est only at this point. Mostly contaminants that you expect in older buildings.

- Yakawich: pool still there? How much demand for housing? No pool. Securities Bldg near 0 vacancy.
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- **Public Comment:**
- Terry Odegard, 2101 Lake Hills, Billings, MT: compliment owners not selling their property for the OBSC project and for having skin in the game. Concerned about parking for the building. Plan to testify on TIF bills. Open check book, need some parameters. Need affordable housing on south side.
- Tom Zurbuchen, 1747 Wicks Lane, Billings, MT: east and south districts are using money for infrastructure but none of that being done in the downtown. Where is the low income development?
- Ms. Volek: Feb. 6 work session agenda item on TIF districts.

TOPIC #3	Preliminary Findings of Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan
PRESENTER	Mike Svetz, Pros Consulting
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Mike Whitaker introduces Mike Svetz, Pros Consulting. PowerPoint presentation. Goes through demographics and what that means for park use and recreation.
- Hanel: aging population but lots of emphasis on youth sports and recreation.
- Clark: survey method? Mail, fill out paper or online, geo and demographically balanced.
- Yakawich: programming for elderly? Safety a big concern and elderly have to be age segmented too with more activity/adventure for younger seniors
- Brown: no “aha” moments so far; will there be any later?
- Brown: trails little used but high interest and for future use.
- Sullivan: private competitors offering services? Survey indicates City is missing out on some popular programs.
- Cimmino: 500 survey respondents represent small portion of the City and few resources and lots of parks. Wonder if people want to pay for swimming pool? Use social media more. Mr. Svetz: survey is intended to be representative of community
- Clark: people feeling safe in parks? Will further investigate those that do not feel safe and see how to proceed.
- **Public Comment:**
- Tom Zurbuchen, 1747 Wicks Lane, Billings, MT: got to see the survey results and everybody wants but few want to pay for it. Need to define activity of “swimming.” What can be done to start developing parks? Starting point should be to ID a small project and succeed then move on to others.
- Steve Arveschoug, Big Sky Economic Development, 1081 Strawberry Avenue, Billings, MT: survey talked about these types of investments are necessary for economic development. Encouraged by findings; maintain what we have, visionary, Public, Private Partnerships (3P) opportunities. Some people meeting on Corette plant site and Coulson park and I-90 corridor.

- Matthew Colebank, Billings Aquatic Club, 2029 Cook Avenue, Billings, MT: rent space from Rocky Mountain College and MSU. Interested in partnership with City to develop swimming facility. Close to 200 swimmers in Club, need more space.
- Terry Odegard, 2101 Lake Hills, Billings, MT: tremendous value in swimming for exercise. Could partner with clinics. Need activity that can be used year around.
- Kristy Drake, Billings TrailNet, 2416 Avalon Drive, Billings, MT: trails work. Would love to have more involvement with media. Not surprised by the survey responses.

Recess for a break at 7:35 p.m.
Reconvene at 7:55 p.m.

TOPIC #4	Road Bonding Projects
PRESENTER	Dave Mumford, Public Works Director
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Dave Mumford: reviews possible road projects. Extensive discussion about gas tax increase, MIC initiative, etc. to fund roads.
- Friedel: options for 19th & 20th Street? Looking at options.
- Clark: how far back would it put PW to wait until legislature? May not make any difference. Volek: ACT group choose to pursue MT Infrastructure Coalition agenda. They are hopeful that Gas Tax will pass.
- Brown: overpass project EBURD has been talking about. How is City involved? TIF has set aside funds and City is working with them. Both involved. City would be consultant.
- Yakawich: Rimrock Task Force looking for study on Airport to Molt Road. Outside City limits, so planning would need to do study. Yakawich: would like to see sooner rather than later.
- Cimmino: instead of reconstruction of 32nd St. West just deal with intersections? Will bottleneck somewhere, needs reconstruction. Cimmino: Inner Belt Loop tie in to connect Zimmerman and 27th St.? Council could look at connecting Airport Road to Zimmerman Park as trail connection.
- Sullivan: Inner Belt Loop increase traffic that will require street widening? Traffic volume low, will not create significant needs.
- Fridel: Exposition still a need since MetraPark expanded parking? East end TIF using TIF funds for that project.
- Mumford: happy to evaluate other projects Council is interested in. Gas Tax funding hasn't changed in over 15 years. Council can decide what to do with potential funding.
- **Public Comment:**
- Tom Zurbuchen, 1747 Wicks Lane, Billings, MT: don't bond inner belt loop or 32nd. Don't have citywide support for any of the projects. Encourage council to bond against the arterial fee.
- Bill Cole, 3733 Tommy Armour Circle, Billings, MT: connection to Highway 3 to Molt road. Contentious discussions. Someday it will be critically important.

TOPIC #5	Animal Control – Bee Ordinance
PRESENTER	Lonnie Larson, Yellowstone Beekeepers Association
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Lonnie Larson: about 50 members in the association. Describes the types of bees and how hives operate.
- Sullivan: threat of “killer bees”? Climate too harsh.
- Yakawich: help bee population? Other issues need to be addressed first.
- Volek: no more than 2 hives per acre and must be registered. Annual license needed and City may enter location.
- Hanel: Animal Control have “bee suits”? Volek: no, rely on association.
- Tom Stinchfield, Animal Control Supervisor: requires education and dedication. Cold doesn’t kill bees, moisture does. Just need to keep them fed.
- Brown: ordinance exists because it was a blanket over all livestock? Volek: True, interest has become larger now.
- Friedel: how did original ordinance come about? Brent Brooks, City Attorney: can research origination and date.
- Cromley: definition of residential unit? Larson: want to clarify 2 hives per residential unit to avoid commercial use. Cromley: differentiate for apartments.
- Friedel: hives come in different sizes? Larson: they can get taller but not wider. Hives are built to a certain specification.
- Hanel: importance of water nearby? Larson: bees need water nearby, can be bird bath, ditch, etc.
- Sullivan: fees to Dept. of Agriculture? Larson: \$25 fee first year and \$19 for site, then \$19 per year per site.
- Hanel: Yellowstone Valley Beekeepers possible mutual agreement included in ordinance? Brooks: could clarify that an outside organization handles inspections and issues.
- Brewster: how far do bees venture? Larson: 2 miles normal and up to 6 miles.
- Consensus: work on an ordinance and present it at a future business meeting.
- **Public Comment:**
 - Tom Zurbuchen, 1747 Wicks Lane, Billings, MT: allergic to bee stings and oppose passing bee ordinance.
 - Steve Collins, 56 Calendula Court, Billings, MT: 6-foot fence requirement keeps bees above your head and less bothersome. Strong financial incentive to collect bee boxes if City needs assistance.
 - Chuck Bushey, 1333 Colton Blvd, Billings, MT: beekeeping is very time consuming. Support allowing bees.
 - Bruce Kelling, 2006 McKay Lane, Billings, MT: apartment building would not meet requirements for beekeeping. 1 out of every 3 bites of food you eat happens because of bees. City needs to attract people that are forward thinking people.
 - Jeanette Vieg, 525 Gay Place, Billings, MT: supports bees.

TOPIC #6	High Sierra Park and PMD
PRESENTER	Mike Whitaker, Parks Director
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Mike Whitaker: High Sierra Park – not just the dog park. Assessment area, established 1986, \$110,000/year, average assessment of \$200/year/property.
- Sullivan: how much of \$110,000 assessment is used for park and not the dog park? Jon Thompson, Parks Superintendent: not sure of split, but can get number for Council. Park is used by people from all over the City.
- Cimmino: promised community another disc golf park to ease Pioneer Park use. Whitaker: majority of attractions lend to regional draw.
- Brewster: park was chained off in past, now open due to new houses? Whitaker: people throughout community use park. Have been assessing park maintenance fees for at least 10 years. Thompson: 1995 3rd & 4th filing definitely assessed. Before 1995 unsure of assessments. 7 million square feet in park 570 parcels assessed. City's maintenance very minimal at disc golf course.
- Volek: staff could present different options to Council if needed.
- Sullivan: not fair to charge residents when majority of money goes to dog park.
- Clark: concerned about getting rid of PMD's
- Cimmino: do characteristics of High Sierra Park meet criteria to transform from PMD to general fund? Whitaker: more of a community park. Could open up change to all PMD's.
- Brown: how to assess if changed to general fund? Whitaker: have to find different funding source. Would have to be assessed against the rest of the City.
- Cromley: people in the PMD are paying for upkeep of property that is not in the PMD? Whitaker: yes, because the park is adjacent to their property.
- Mayor Hanel: if this changes, it will open up a lot of other PMD issues.
- **Public Comment:**
 - Tom Zurbuchen, 1747 Wicks Lane, Billings, MT: City has probably illegally assessed homeowners and better correct it before getting sued.
 - Terry Odegard, 2101 Lake Hills, Billings, MT: preliminary title search discloses park fees in the area. People in the area are unhappy. Council needs to think about the fairness of it.

TOPIC #7	Council Discussion
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Sullivan: please email work plan ideas in advance for meeting on 1/21 8 am – 12 pm.
- Yakawich: research better sound systems and mouse.
- Sullivan: would like to see Ed Bartlett on Skype instead of comm. phone.

TOPIC #8	Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

None