

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Council Chambers
April 16, 2018

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) Cole, Cromley, Yakawich, Brewster, Ewalt, Joy, Friedel, Gibbs, Ronning, Clark, Brown.

CM excused:

ADJOURN TIME: 10:20 PM – to Exec session

Agenda

TOPIC #1	CDBG / HOME Recommendations Review
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Brenda Beckett, Community Development Manager: updating plans and recommending programs for next year. \$650k CDBG and \$350k for HOME. \$1.5M total budget with VISTA and program income. History of funding. Conflict of interest issue in Great Falls, member ranked project low that applied for funding. Organization member sat on Council. Also found some relationships that had conflict.
- Brown: we are structured differently than Great Falls, so we're somewhat shielded? Brenda: explains how Great Falls functions and grants to agencies, causing the conflict and we don't do the agency grants any more.
- Gibbs: formal training on conflicts? Yes, with the Community Development Board. Council does a good job of identifying conflicts at the start of meetings.
- Ronning: funding for non-profits go to you or others? Has to go to outside agency that works with disadvantaged groups.
- Brewster: staff and Board does great job.
- **Public comment:**
- None

TOPIC #2	OBS Planning Agreement
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Steve Arveschoug, Big Sky Economic Development, Executive Director: thanks Council and updates on funding. Describes work ahead and schedule for Council action on the planning agreement. Introduces Bob Dunn.
- Bob Dunn, Hammes Group: Notes that he hasn't spoken with all CMs because Council has changed since December. Talks about Concept Plan and steps that need to occur next. Acknowledges the Council's careful consideration and that there were negative votes. Process will marry physical plan (master plan) with

financial plan. None of the \$675k will come to Hammes. Will work to solicit contractors to do part of the work, manage them, analyze them and put them together into the final development plan. Large commitment of time and money. 100% transparent and accountable for the local \$675k. Not a new process, but uncommon. Conclusion: re-urbanization will be real and material, unlike any in the past. Cities will choose either: to drive that process and meet tomorrow's workers' needs and their employers or do nothing and not be able to gain employment and grow the community. Burden is on present taxpayers if there's no growth. Hope to move to big vision for the community.

- Friedel: 6-5 vote wasn't because it's not a good idea, but who pays and benefits from it.
- Brewster: cities he talked with are working on downtown redevelopment and convention centers were negatives and did not benefit them. How do we avoid that? Bob: many other cities have done it and succeed, so comments seem to support doing nothing. Cities and developers need look at convention center's future use, function. Gives example of Green Bay stadium that hosts much more than 10 football games per year. Allentown arena shares its infrastructure with many other users and that makes it one of the most successful venues in the country.
- Ronning: appreciate that Hammes is bringing vision to us, old economies are shrinking, have done too much planning based on what we've already done, not enough on what we want Billings to become. Bob: share today's experience, meeting with prominent businessman whose daughter just moved back here. Gold standard and that's what we should want for our future. Big opportunities here.
- Joy: lag between public perceptions/opinions and reality; what has worked to close the gap. Bob: anticipate questions and will be planning for the next few months so we can answer them. Important process of community involvement
- Cole: this community built on personal relationships; will you use someone here to represent the company? What deliverables will there be that have value even if you don't invest. Bob: planning will ID if and who will be local contact and functions. These projects tend to build momentum over time and what is produced will help no matter who provides the capital.
- Yakawich: opposition careful and thoughtful. We're doing better with public info. Plans on the shelf, but this one is more? Bob: can do a lot of planning but Hammes does it with a purpose. This will be an underwriting plan, taking a risk, work has to produce results.
- Cole: how do we deal with other downtown development over the next year? Stifling redevelopment? Bob: attracting attention to downtown and spurring investment.
- Clark: Allentown not Billings; they have a greater population to support it. Bob: arena built for a region, just as OBS is being envisioned. Not as high population but fundamentals are more similar than not. They started in a much worse economic condition than Billings.
- Cole: agree that Allentown has succeeded, but need to identify more local successes.

- Brown: need better local buy-in. City Council vote reflects the community – pretty evenly split. How soon can we ID benefits for other parts of the community? Bob: have to continue talking about 2 choices; forward looking and successful or don't do anything, rely on what worked in the past. What are the economic outcomes of the 2 alternatives?
- Brown: how does a convention center boost private economy? It's not just a convention center, is it? Bob: no. Want to ID multiple anchors now or in future.
- Ewalt: have only income and property tax. METRA needs \$3M support/yr. Bob: cities that don't grow from urban core, whole city will pay higher taxes.
- John Brewer, Chamber of Commerce, CEO: reviews the Allentown visit agenda. About 17 contributors.
- Yakawich: would like 2 to 5-page report on Allentown visit. John: OK
- Brewster: Council disagreements last week doesn't mean that next vote will be the same.
- **Public Comment:**
- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, Montana: OBS Planning agreement – what is it, does one exist, etc. Reads the State statute about conflict of interest.
- Daniel Barnhart, 550 Pinon Drive, Billings, Montana: local Americans for Prosperity Member - want Council to reconsider vote on \$100,000 GF. Compares it to other spending, not consistent with concept plan.

TOPIC #3	Quarterly Updates
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- **BIRD – Tim Goodridge:** restates the Friday document. Overview of new projects.
- Ewalt: what is "capital" in the budget statement? Time: engineering on the project.
- Clark: when do you find out the amount of increment? First Monday in August.
- **DBP – Maisie Sulser:** report in Friday packet, including some recent projects.
- Yakawich: appreciate your passion about work on downtown. Inspired by Stillwater and McDonalds buildings, not by Westwood, Good Earth, other deteriorating buildings. What is being done? Maisie: met with owners and trying to influence redevelopment. Warm weather will lead to more contacts.
- Cole: some complaints from merchants about lack of contact. Encourage you to do more.
- Brown: why don't businesses use the deteriorating buildings? Owners, realtors, etc.? Maisie: working on backlog, some problems with owners and realtors. It's a balance.
- Ronning: empty buildings, how many are habitable? A handful, 10% vacant are habitable.
- Clark: not obligating any more money? Maisie: working on development agreements for buildings already granted. No new ones.

- Cromley: talked with Tauberts or other merchants about keeping a western store? Maisie: talked with realtors about the building.
- **SBURA – Steve Ziere**
- Cole: conflict representing SBURA and work for NAI? Nol
- Steve: appraisals underway. Conflict discussion is that he doesn't vote, so no conflict.
- Brewster: think that Brent should review potential conflict. Steve – will do it.
- Ewalt: describe the proposed property purchase: 10 acres next to Amend Park and 4 acres next to Red Lion hotel. Will work on concept development plan that will ID parking, building space, etc.
- Steve: have board vacancy.
- Yakawich: timeframe for Optimist parking, Hallowell and local street paving? Optimist should be done soon. FY21 and FY 22 improve King Ave. East and Hallowell. Local streets are later.
- **Budget – Andy Zoeller**
- Zoeller, not a lot to add beyond the report that was sent on Friday, answer any questions?
- Cole: comparison to same time period last year. Has City ever considered reporting where it "should" be at the end of quarters? Andy: haven't done it, could do it, but it's time intensive.
- Friedel: historically, are we about where we should be and cash flow OK? Yes.
- Joy: Water debt? Not due yet.
- Yakawich: flow chart of how gas tax works ... Andy: will have to research and respond.
- **Health Fund – Bruce McCandless:** fund is healthy, expect fewer expenses at beginning of year due to deductibles.
- Brown: when will RFP go out for provider? Bruce: mid-2019.
- **Initiatives – Bruce McCandless:** several have been completed, will fall off work plan when done. Public Safety districts: presentation material for new members, purpose, impacts, methods, take research to the next level, different impacts on downtown vs residential tax exempt properties, survey of other communities that have used districts (in or out of state), fairest way? Concerns about assessing tax exempts such as churches and small social service agencies, put it back on work session agenda, probably August or Sept.
- **Friedel:** Public Safety District next step? Can move forward according to Council. Financial issues need to be resolved with DOR. Thought Council was holding off. Taxable value needs to be discussed.
- **Cole:** written report? 2 reports presented, can send to Council again.
- **Cromley:** research different ways to do this.
- **Brown:** replace levy or in addition? Uncertain what direction Council wants to go.
- **Cole:** consensus to bring back info around end of summer? Yes.
- **Strategic/Work Plan – Bruce McCandless**
- Will send out present plan, update accomplishments, send out work plan.
- **City-wide Park District 1 – Mike Whitaker** – good progress on Rose Park buildings, South Park spray ground will open at same time as other aquatic

facilities, finish Optimist in 2-3 weeks, Hawthorne playground equipment ordered and removing old pieces,

- Friedel: pump at Rose Park not working well and do we have money to repair or replace? Mike: have a new pump, will rebuild old one for a spare. Bruce: parks are funded by general fund.
- Ewalt: can Beartooth Park equipment that was removed be used in Castlerock Park? Not recommended.
- Ewalt: trails don't have toilets. Mike: developing trailheads and toilets will be installed there. Bruce: let staff know what areas need toilets. Staff will work on options.
- Ewalt: Cimmino wanted a toilet at dog park. Mike: porta-john provided by private parties.
- **Code Enforcement – Nicole Cromwell –** 6 of dirty dozen came off the list from last report.
- **Public Comment:**
- Scott Hanser, SBURA Vice President: support Steve Zier for his representation of the SBURA in buying property for sports facilities. Knowledgeable about the area, TIF, etc.
- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, Montana: think there is a conflict with Steve Zier and buying land. City should review the buy-sell before signing. Parking is a problem.
- Steve Ziere: RFP isn't written. Will follow up with Brent and Bruce SBURA board member: Support Steve in land transaction.

Mayor Cole called for recess at 9:36 pm.

Mayor Cole called the meeting back to order at 9:42 pm.

TOPIC #4	Bresnan Communications Franchise Contract
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Brent Brooks, City Attorney: updates on status of negotiations. Will put this back on work session agenda before it expires and hope to have Charter rep. at that meeting. Channel 7 wants to keep current location.
- **Public Comment:**
- None

TOPIC #5	Noise Ordinance Amendments
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Brent Brooks: short presentation. Historical background on status of the code changes. 2 items for Council discussion: Scope of work for PhD noise ordinance assessment and code change that limits outdoor event waivers to no more than 4 in 12 months.

- Joy: do the changes take into account athletic fields such as at the high schools? Brent: yes.
- Yakawich: likes the public meetings/input. Will he do that? Brent: yes, we'll ask what he suggests.
- Cromley: thought there was a blanket waiver for athletic venues.
- Brown: add the 4 waivers in 12 months' amendment.
- Cole: how do we implement in mid-year? Suggest that we count 4 per calendar year.
- **Public Comment:**
- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, Montana: constitutional right to healthful environment, including sound/noise. City does a poor job enforcing noise code.
- Yakawich: truck noise issues. Kevin: City had the code that said muffler has to be as originally equipped, but Council took it out of the code.

TOPIC #6	Council Discussion
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Gibbs: where are we at with City Administrator recruiter selection? Mayor Cole: Will get something out this week.
- **Public Comment:**

TOPIC #7	Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- None