

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Council Chambers
September 8, 2015

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) Hanel, Cromley, Yakawich, Cimmino, Pitman, McFadden, Bird, Swanson, McCall, Crouch, Brown.

Meeting called to order by V Mayor McCall at 5:30 pm.

Announcements by Tina Volek: Chamber of commerce annual meeting, airport tour, community leadership meeting

McCall: City Administrator performance review on 9/23 or 9/24. Recommend 9/23 at 4:00 – 5:30pm.

ADJOURN TIME: 9:11 pm

Agenda

TOPIC #1	Habitat for Humanity Presentation
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Fred Button: hand-out presentation material. Jim Woolingham, Habitat CEO,
- presents the material through pg 3. Fred presents through page 6. Jim presents through end.
- Crouch: contribute to national? Yes.
- Yakawich: abandoned houses, can they be purchased, rehabilitated or demolished? No, focus on new construction but will work with others for land, money, better housing.
- McCall: build 4 per year, how many in pipe line? 7-8 building for others before qualifying for their own homes.
- **Public comments:** none

TOPIC #2	Centennial Park Master Plan
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Mike Whitaker: presentation introduction, public input process.
- Yakawich: define athletic field and ball field? Athletic and sports fields are any field that is maintained to accommodate athletic sports play for organized sports play.
- Stan: Centennial recommendations, 3 schematic plans, received feedback/comments and refined into a single schematic plan. Service meetings with Parks board to come up with final master plan.

- Bird: pathways around dog park? Yes. Entry anywhere else but near parking? No. Discourage parking on St. Johns in response to residents.
- McCall: # of parking spaces? About 175. Dog park size? About 6.6 acres.
- Pitman: water feature? Distributed through park to pull people and dogs away from entrances. Recycled water. Concerned about activity level around the proposed dog park, so created pathways, shelters and water feature to draw away from entrances.
- Swanson: streets that surround the park? 32nd, St Johns, Howard and 36th. Good plan.
- Stan: storm water plan requires retention pond, which is located at the dog park.
- Whitaker: questions or comments?
- Cimmino: Centennial park 30 acres? Master plan was supposed to be for 8 acres? No, the whole park. Parks 2020 plan used as reference? Yes, but that was done over 17 years ago. The 8 acres was with the ice facility, once it was eliminated, needed to look at the entire park. Yes, but it's an outdated plan.
- Brown: how many adjacent owners attended the master plan meetings? I do not know. If city had other land available, would this still be recommended for dog park? Yes, because the storm water retention pond is located here, the dog park is a good use. Does the design reduce smell and sounds? Sound – 3 separate entrances will reduce sound/barking. Smell – 7 acre park helps to reduce impact.
- Volek: were all neighbors notified about the public meetings, so adjacent owners could have attended. Yes
- McCall: hearing location? Meadowlark Elementary. People clean up after dogs? 90-95% clean up after dogs and peer pressure is used.
- Bird: odor is concern, but dog owners at High Sierra are responsible and no noticeable odor.
- Yakawich: oppose dog park in this location. More practical to put dog park near cemetery. Other land would be better.
- McCall: Smith family interested in helping with handicapped facilities. Considered and possible on this land.
- Volek: little leagues spent lots of money here and used council contingency for improvements. The fields were left in current location. Mike: over \$200,000 spent on fields, so don't want to waste that investment.
- Cimmino: \$3.3 million improvement cost? Where does it come from? No resources identified at this time. Dog park group has money to do that part and will move forward if plan is approved.
- Bird: hope that CMs heard from nearby residents. Brown: lots of people who showed up were dog supporters and did not attend the public meetings. Yakawich: didn't hear from residents, just his own observation. Still have question about alternative locations.
- Bird: were some attendees at meetings nearby residents? Whitaker: went above and beyond to notify residents.
- McFadden: park hours and nearness to houses? Whitaker: standard park rules, close at dusk.
- Volek: City has sought federal funding for additional park land and has not been successful.

- Crouch: Boys and Girls Ranch still a possibility? Still being considered, but this one is central and other could be west end facility. Neighbors thought they weren't heard at the meetings.
- **Public comments:**
- Lou Morrison: (no address given) park board member for about a year. Park employees and planners should be commended.
- Tom Rubsis: 105 Legends Way, Billings, MT: park board member for 2 years. Thanks for planning money, plan will work well for community. Dog park is a balance. SW corner of park is for drainage and should be used for something like the dog park, not other improvements.
- Richard Clark: 1207 25th St. West, Billings, MT: west end task force chair. 2 meetings at task force. Some complaints from 32nd but none when dog park moved west. Houses west and south may still be concerned.
- Matt Erhard: 3230 St. Johns, Billings, MT: across from proposed dog park. No place for a dog park. Use for other park activities instead. Has not ever visited the heights dog park.
- Yakawich: what concerns should we hear?
- Matt Erhard: dirt from balloon fest, people will leave garbage, who will pick up after dogs, fights among owners.
- Mel Stroud: 3242 St. Johns, Billings, MT: Rest of park development is OK but don't know about dog park.
- Darryl Sept: 3036 St. Johns, Billings, MT: Traffic on street is fast, and very busy with traffic from the career center. Concerned about dog park and parking, as well as clean up after dogs.
- Yakawich: did you attend public meeting? Yes, but didn't know about west end task force meetings.
- Dale Samsall: 3133 St. Johns, Billings, MT: agree with park development but not the dog park.
- Sue Bressler: 220 Yellowstone, Billings, MT: Friends of Billings dog parks supporter. The group has raised \$65k. West end park needed and this is a good location that cannot be used for other things due to storm drain. Realtor friend stated that people want to live near dog parks.
- Marshia Clousing: 3016 Gloxinia, Billings, MT: dog park supporter and park board member.
- Tina: want this on future agenda for discussion and action? Consensus: yes. Probably the Oct. 13 meeting.

TOPIC #3	Review of the 2016 Unified Planning Work Program
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Candy Millar: presentation, won't do Transit part of plan but Debra Hagel is present and can answer those questions. Must meet requirements to ensure continued federal transportation planning funds. Outline staff activities in this plan and then report to MDT to identify funds that have been spent for reimbursement.
- Yakawich: how can city and county work better together so that when city annexes, improvements are up to city standards or they're not hard to construct? Candi: not the document to coordinate city and county standards. Growth policy is the place to do that.
- Bird: is this the same thing as Rimrock's to Valley pedestrian bicycle study? Candi: No
- Cimmino: staff work element/allocation slide: only includes Planning staff, one vacant position? Candi: federal planning process includes it, but not funded or authorized in City budget.
- **Public comments:**
- none

TOPIC #4	Landfill Fees
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Dave Mumford: address EBURD request to waive landfill fees. Council policy decision, provide direction to City Administrator and then to PW Director. TIF district, money stays in the district, does not help the City's general fund or other taxes. Only benefits when district sunsets. PW doesn't receive tax money but sends \$600k to the GF for services and franchise fees. \$16.67/ton for disposal, one of cheapest in nation. Charged to all customers, including PW and Library. Question whether the waiver is exclusive to EBURD, all TIF districts, Citywide? 4 options to consider: 1) PW could absorb costs but don't know the cost because it depends on how much demolition is done; 2) Planning could determine if building is blighted and if so, GF could pay or reduce payments from PW in equal amount; 3) increased taxable value from redevelopment could be used to reimburse owner for demo costs including the disposal cost; 4) no change. Does Council need more information?
- Brown: could there be additional options of available for limited time or partial cost waiver? Mumford: could do either but Council would still need to decide where money comes from.
- Pitman: only staff report or BIRD present too? Yes, BIRD can comment as well
- Cromley: demolition debris is a lot at one time? Mumford: depends on the size of structure.
- Cimmino: success stories of bank and library redevelopment and money used for demo costs. Prefer that to PW or GF paying the fees.
- Yakawich: a lot of blighted buildings in east district? Mumford: some in all areas of city. Abandoned buildings, if there's no incentive to demolish, they'll just stay.
- Swanson: infill desirable, using TIFD money is good. Mumford: incentive from TIF if property is redeveloped and produces more tax increment.

- Brown: Policy change? Tina and Bruce: GF doesn't benefit but there is more TIFD money that has to be used in the district. Property owners apply, development agreement and council can prioritize that demolition costs be covered.
- Mumford: No discussion with BIRD about option 3 but have discussed other ones.
- **Public comments:**
- Marty Connell: Demolition is permissible cost. 45% of TIFD on FIB was criticized, so have avoided. Buildings need to be demolished, environmental problems are hard to deal with. Best idea we've come up with. Get people off center and stimulate demolition of blighted buildings. Proposal is for 2 building seasons. Disposal is 20% - 25% of total demo costs. Willing to identify the blighted buildings we're talking about.
- Bird: What defines blighted building? Abandoned structures, attractive nuisances and structures inadequately maintained. Certify blighted property? Could come up with a list. Transient problem in blighted properties? Absolutely
- Volek: Abandoned building code in place, damaged buildings are challenge. Concern expressed about being designated as "blighted." Need objective standards to define blight. Be careful about property rights. Using code enforcement to keep standards.
- Cromley: Explain the 45% problem? Trying not to exceed 45% in the past, but open to different numbers depending on project.
- Kelly McCarthy: Letter from Jim Markel, Red Oxx Manufacturing, requesting help with dump fees to clear properties. 2 year limit may give public incentive to clear blighted properties.
- Volek: Need resolution from Council, give some guidance on elements; time, area, what is to be covered, development agreement, criteria for inclusion and funding source.
- Mumford: make sure keep asbestos and hazardous material completely separate.
- Swanson: Focus on pilot, infill program.
- Marty Connell: BIRD will do the building analysis, maybe city-wide.

TOPIC #5	Council Discussion
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Cimmino: United Way school supply donation.
- Yakawich: 9/11 observance on courthouse lawn.
- Bird: Grand Ave speed limit near Senior High. Volek: Mr. Mumford can come in and make a presentation regarding laws and will try to get a traffic control officer out to that area. Bird: Update on Battin Building, bankruptcy, etc?
- Pitman: 4 new officers sworn-in today. Good quality people.

TOPIC #6	Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- NONE