

**SOUTH SIDE TASK FORCE MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2015
!! WELCOME AND FREE PIZZA AT 6:30 P.M. !!
REGULAR MEETING 6:30 P.M. – 8:3 P.M.
SOUTHSIDE SENIOR CENTER
901 SOUTH 30TH STREET, BILLINGS, MONTANA**

AGENDA

Meeting Called to Order

Introduction and welcome of all guests
Minutes of the last meeting
Visit with local City Council members, Law Enforcement (Your questions.)

Presentations (on programs and issues in Our Neighborhood)

Community Development Presentation – (15 minutes)
How to be a Part of Your Government – (15 minutes)

Neighborhood Concerns

Committee Reports

1. Phillips 66 Report
2. Alternatives Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Grants Report
5. Legislative Report

Correspondence

New Business

Old Business

Adjournment

**For Code Enforcement issues, call Tanya Punt at 657- 8288.
For Graffiti Removal, call John at 371-6901.
For Info on the Task Force, call Michele Zahn, Chair, at 652-3337, Matt
Shipp, Vice Chair, at 247-5738 or 318-423-1732, or Mary Westwood,
Secretary, at 259-3756.
Minutes of the Regular Meeting of**

THE SOUTH SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD TASK FORCE

February 19, 2015

Southside Senior Center, 901 South 30th Street, Billings, Montana

Present: Danny Ball, Fran Ball, Alan Baum, Jan Begger, City Council Member Brent Cromley, Linda Deavila, Dale Fincel, Georgia Geigle, Melissa Henderson, Constance Johnson, Reverend Matt Lundgren, Patrick Riedl, Matt Shipp, Dolores Terpstra, Missey Valverde, Mary Westwood, City Council Member Mike Yakawich, and Michele Zahn,

The meeting was called to order by Chair Michele Zahn at 7:00 p.m. Introductions of all present were made and all attendees were welcomed. Zahn thanked those who had brought the food everyone enjoyed during the Potluck.

Linda Deavila moved for approval of the January minutes as presented and Rev. Matt Lundgren seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as presented.

No law enforcement was present for the meeting.

City Council Member Mike Yakawich said the Parks Department was working on the South Park Playground and the new spray park. Within the next three years, Parks will also be looking at improving the tennis courts at South Park. Yakawich has been working on cleanup of the business that burned down across from Garfield. One member asked about the used appliance dealer that has washers creeping out of his fence on 37th Street South and First Avenue South. Yakawich also discussed the request to zoning that tow truck operators be allowed to park vehicles in the neighborhoods. There are some 55 tow trucks in the community. Of concern to him are the noise and pollution they bring into neighborhoods.

Lundgren moved that the Task Force send a letter to the Zoning Commission and to the City Council opposing allowing tow trucks to park in the neighborhoods and Fran Ball seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously by the Task Force with Yakawich abstaining from the vote.

City Council Member Brent Cromley talked about the recent ethics complaints that had been brought before the City Ethics panel. No validity was found in those complaints, but the City is looking at its Ethics policy and procedure to make sure it conforms with state law.

Lisa Harmon of the Downtown Billings Alliance talked about the efforts downtown residents and businesses have been involved in to end aggressive panhandling and to provide additional resources for downtown, like the two officers they have paid for who help cover downtown with the regular officer on the beat. Anyone in

the downtown area who needs their assistance can call 690-4227. Last year, the DBA received over 1200 calls at that number. Harmon said that in the ten years she has been on the job, she has become very concerned with the people who engage in serial inebriation or problem drinking and has traveled to places like Reno, Nevada, and San Antonio, Texas to see how those cities handle these chronic drinkers. Those visits have led to the idea of a sobering center, a place where the chronic drinkers can be kept off the streets until they sober up and, perhaps, can decide to do something different with their lives.

Harmon's group has gotten a \$15,000 grant to have an outreach worker ride with the resource officers in an effort to make a transition to recovery possible for these people. She says there are 74 chronic inebriates in the area and 95% of them are Native American. Through changes in Medicaid and help from Riverstone Health, it may be possible to change these peoples lives. As to where the sobering center might be, Harmon said the City is looking at many locations still and has not decided yet where it will go. She acknowledged that the Task Force does not want it on the South Side along with all the other institutions here. Harmon also announced that the August 23rd Alive After 5 would be held in South Park.

Melissa Henderson of Riverstone Health said the Gardener's Market would be open again this year on Thursday evenings from June 11th to October 1st. Riverstone is looking for ideas to make it more fun and more of an event so attendance will continue to grow. Riverstone is also promoting a free 12-week Active Living Every Day program with classes (not exercise classes) that begin March 9-13th. Downtown locations are The Billings Clinic, St. Vincent Healthcare and the YMCA. Anyone wishing to attend should call 406-247-3271 or email info@healthybydesignyellowstone.org to register for these classes. Included are a free book, online resources, a step counter, prizes and more. And Riverstone is also conducting a Healthy Homes Lead Prevention program and anyone interested in that should call Riverstone and ask for Hannah.

Henderson also expressed concern that funding for the Community Health Centers may be reduced by the federal government. This would mean that 9,000 of the clients Riverstone serves could not be served. She urged people to write to their congressmen about this issue.

Lundgren invited everyone to the groundbreaking at Friendship House, 3123 8th Avenue South, for their new kitchen and classroom at 3 p.m. on March 2nd.

Zahn reported that Phillips 66 will again do a youth-oriented program for its September Eat and Meet. The refinery is currently working on a \$260 million upgrade project which will also result in Jupiter Sulfur doing a \$70 million project.

Those projects should start in August and run through 2017. The Phillips 66 Advisory Committee is looking for a senior representative at this time.

Jan Begger reported that the Culinary Arts Program ladies cooked for the Legislature and Governor Steve Bullock actually called ahead to make sure he could sample their food when they cooked in the State Capitol.

Zahn discussed a variance request on Buchanan Street that would replace two homes with two new homes and the Task Force decided it did not wish to take a position on this variance.

Matt Shipp presented a postcard he had made to invite everyone in the neighborhood to attend a Task Force meeting. The postcard was approved and offering free pizza at the meeting were approved by the Task Force. Mary Westwood moved that the postcard be sent using funds from the City mailing account and that the pizza be paid for by the Task Force treasury. Shipp seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Yakawich said he would organize the Easter Egg Hunt again and said it would put out about 10,000 eggs. Fundraising needs to be done by everyone, as well as finding prizes because Easter is earlier this year. Yakawich said he hoped to raise some \$3,000, but wanted to be authorized to spend \$2,000 for eggs and supplies at this time. Lundgren moved that \$2,000 be authorized and Linda Deavila seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Danny Ball said he would be happy to help and sponsor a dumpster for cleanup in the neighborhood. Dale Fincel said he could access a dump truck for that purpose. Shipp said he would be willing to coordinate things for cleanup in the neighborhood and he was authorized by the Task Force to do so.

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ENJOY FREE PIZZA WITH THE TASK FORCE AT THE MARCH 19TH MEETING. PIZZA WILL BE SERVED BEGINNING AT 6:30 P.M. WITH THE MEETING TO FOLLOW AT 7:00 P.M. So bring your friends and neighbors to the South Side Neighborhood Task Force meeting at the Southside Senior Citizen Center, 901 South 30th Street and have them help us empower Our Neighborhood.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Westwood