

**SOUTH SIDE TASK FORCE MEETING
THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2015
REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M. – 8:30 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)

South Park Spray Park and Tennis Court Improvements – (30 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

Report on the Easter Egg Hunt

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

March 19, 2015

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

Present: Danny Ball, Fran Ball, Charlotte Cooper, City Council Member Brent Cromley, Marilyn Cullen, Maia Dickerson, Becky Dixon, Dale Fincel, Sergeant Ronda Fox, Georgia Geigle, Bonnie Hetland, Constance Johnson, Larry Kennedy, Teresa Kennedy, Pat Leikam, Yvette Musewick, Liz Romo, Jim Ronquillo, Shirley Ronshaugen, Betty Schaak, Jim Schilke, Paula Schilke, Matt Shipp, Jessica Sprattler, Kanon Torgerson, Angela Tschacher, Missey Valverde, Mary Westwood, Lynda Woods, 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 Matt Ship and his helpers for bringing the Pizza the members and attendees enjoyed.

Dale Fincel moved for approval of the February minutes as presented and Jim Ronquillo seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as presented.

Sergeant Ronda Fox of the Billings Police Department reported on crime in the neighborhood. She said there had been quite a number of runaways and mental health calls in the area. Statistics showed 10 assaults, 4 burglaries, 3 disorderly conducts, 8 drug possession or violations, 1 driving under the influence (DUI), 1 forgery, 2 frauds, 10 thefts, 7 motor vehicle thefts, 2 sexual assaults, 8 runaways and 4 vandalisms or criminal mischief. Four of the motor vehicles were recovered, one in Wyoming. Traffic officers continue to give out many tickets to drivers for no insurance. Ronquillo complimented the police for the good job they did with the standoff on South Billings Boulevard where the person involved was high on meth.

Fox said the department is waiting for the State Legislator to act and give them other options to deal with what are now open container issues by providing some kind of confinement for public intoxication. Of course, with the jail short on beds, she said she didn't know what creative ways that problem would be dealt with here in Billings. One woman asked about drug issues and wondered why officers have not responded to her reports of sales and usage. Fox said the drug enforcement officers are very busy with the big cases and her officers have had to deal with much of the "regular" drug trafficking. She reminded the Task Force that the City is four officers short of its full complement and did not get mill levy funds approved to increase numbers on the force. Another woman asked if

the box that tells the speed cars are going could be put near Orchard School because of a problem with speeding there.

City Council Member Mike Yakawich said that the Zoning Commission recommended that the City Council deny the request from tow companies that they be allowed to park their trucks in the neighborhoods. He thanked the Task Force for their support of that denial and the letter that was sent to the Zoning Commission and the Council. The City will also be building a new water treatment plant which will be state of the art in that regard. City Council Member Brent Cromley said the new plant was needed to be sure the water the City returns to the Yellowstone River meets water quality standards set by the federal government. This project has been planned for a long time and, hopefully, will be completed with only a minor increase in the cost to ratepayers.

Yakawich said the Parks Department will be coming before the Task Force to ask where to put the new Spray Park planned for South Park. One constituent also complained about a house on Washington Street where there are problems and Yakawich encouraged her to contact him via his Email, which is yak.mike@gmail.com.

Lynda Woods of the Community Development office introduced herself and said she had come to get Task Force input on how Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funds should be spent. Funds have been used in the past to promote the preservation of affordable housing. The City expects to receive \$450,000 in CDBG funds and \$197,000 in HOME funds. Billings is one of three entitlement communities in Montana and five programs are being proposed to use the funds. They are:

1. First Time Homebuyers Program – provides downpayment for first time homebuyers
2. Home Repair and Rehabilitation – provides funds for repairing and rehabilitating existing housing including manufactured homes
3. Acquisition, Rehab and Resale of Foreclosed Property
4. Housing Development Fund – to assist with new housing
5. Poverty Initiatives – provides funds to hire VISTA Americorps on these issues

The Task Force and its guests were given ranking sheets to indicate which of these programs were most important to them. The results of this vote will be shared with the Task Force at a later date. Woods said the City is also hoping to get some HOME funds to work on its Inebriate Center and wants public involvement in that study. Anyone interested can learn more at www.4realchange.org.

Zahn said the new Home Center, which should help people who want homes should be open in April and that group should come to the Task Force in May. Also, a new Children's Museum is supposed to open in June for the 3- to 8-year-old crowd. Anyone interested could go to www.wisewonders.org. It is expected there will be a small fee to visit this museum.

Maia Dickerson of Riverstone Health reminded everyone that the Gardener's Market will be open from June 11th to October 1st in South Park. There will probably be cooking classes and incentives to purchase items. She asked anyone who has ideas on how to make the market better or anything you want to see at the market to contact her at 651-6466.

Danny Ball talked about how many homes have been sold on the South Side and what prices people were getting for them. He urged anyone thinking of selling to call a Realtor like him so they can get the most money possible out of their home.

Zahn reported that the Phillips 66 Advisory Council had met at City College to look at the programs there that relate to the refinery. She also indicated that Phillips is considering sending out an Email blast should there be an emergency at the refinery. Yakawich moved that the secretary prepare a list of Emails for Phillips and Dale Fincel seconded the motion. The group voted to release the Emails to Phillips should they decide to do this.

Kanon Torgerson, who is on the Board of Directors for the Family Tree Center, provided information about a pinwheel planting the group will have on the Courthouse Lawn on April 2 at noon in honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month. The group is also offering a variety of parenting classes through April 22 at Walla Walla University on Wednesdays from 6 p.m. To 8 p.m. Anyone needing more information about these classes or upcoming sessions should contact the Family Tree Center at 252-9799.

Yakawich and Ronquillo talked about the progress they have made toward the Easter Egg Hunt. Funds received so far are \$100 from Cereal Foods, \$50 from Brent Cromley, \$25 from Alternatives/Passages, \$250 from the Elks Lodge and \$250 from Community Leadership Development Inc. (CLDI). The Task Force expects to put out some 10,000 eggs and to have bicycles to give away to some of the lucky egg gatherers.

Shipp said he has decided to hold the cleanup of the neighborhood on April 25th and asked everyone to consider participating. Bags and gloves will be provided and it will be held the same weekend as the Bright and Beautiful cleanup. Participants will be asked to meet at the Gazebo to begin the effort. More information will be available at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

The next Regular Meeting of the Task Force will be held on THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2015, at 7 P.M. at the Southside Senior Center. Treats will be provided. 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
Secretary

!! ATTENTION ALL SOUTH SIDE RESIDENTS !!

Three meetings will be held with the Parks Department Consultant on the new Spray Park. Please attend at least ONE of these meetings and give your input.

Southside Senior Center
901 South 30th Street
6 p.m. On Monday, April 13, 2015

Parks Department Offices
390 North 23rd Street
11:30 a.m. On Tuesday, April 14, 2015

Riverside Middle School
Intersection of Washington and Madison Streets