

**SOUTH SIDE TASK FORCE MEETING
THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 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)

Family Promise – (15 minutes)

Billings Community Space – (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 Lundgren, Vice Chair, at 259-5569, or Mary Westwood, Secretary, at 259-3756.

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
THE SOUTH SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD TASK FORCE

May 21, 2015

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

Present: Miesha Arnold, Fran Ball, Brenda Beckett, Irene Boehm, Walter Brueckner, Katie Ceras, City Council Member Brent Cromley, Marilyn Cullen, Linda Deavila, Becky Dixon, Lisa Donnot, Dale Fincel, Tommie Lee Gallup, Georgia Geigle, Bonnie Hettland, Mark Jarvis, Constance Johnson, Patrick Klugman, Kelly Mordinger, Pastor Dale Metzger, Jim Ronquillo, Dayton Rush, Teddi Shaten, Matthew Shipp, Gina Simonetti, Jenn Teten, Angela Tschacher, Missey Valverde, Jordan Westwood, Mary Westwood, Michael Whitaker, 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 Kathleen Candelaria for sending treats for the meeting.

Marilyn Cullen moved for approval of the April minutes as amended with the list of attendees and Linda Deavila seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as amended.

Officer Caudillo from the Billings Police Department appeared on behalf of Sergeant Ronda Fox, but said he did not have any statistics on crime in our neighborhood. He did report that five more officers have been hired. When asked, he said it takes a minimum of 8 months before officers are replaced by the department.

City Council Member Mike Yakawich thanked Matt Shipp for his service to the Task Force and said that he was sorry to see him leave the neighborhood even though he has some exciting adventures ahead of him in Europe. The Task Force echoed his sentiments by giving Shipp a round of applause and thanking him for his service to our neighborhood.

Yakawich told the Task Force that the new playground should be completed soon in South Park. Mike Whitaker, the head of the City Parks Department, said the playground equipment should arrive the end of June. Yakawich said he is trying to use the Boarded Up House ordinance championed by former Chair Marion Dozier to clean up some of the empty houses in the neighborhood. He also continues to work on the "junkyard" across First Avenue South from Garfield School. And he has enlisted Eric Basye of Community Leadership Development Incorporated (CLDI) in an effort to get landlords to take better care of their rental property.

City Council Member Brent Cromley said the Animal Control Board is considering an ordinance that would allow people to keep bees within the City limits and will also be looking at whether dogs can be on leashes in parks, provided the owners clean up after them. Another big issue coming up involves the West End and efforts by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints to put a large meeting house on Rimrock Road below where their temple now stands. The neighbors in that area are very concerned about this large gathering place coming into their residential area.

Whitaker reported that the linking location for the Spray Pad in South Park will go before City Council in the near future. If the Council is comfortable with the site, they will give Parks authority to move forward with the project by entering the design phase. Dayton Rush, the architect working on the project said he and his firm would use the information gathered in previous public meetings to design the pad. He said the project and its goals should work well with the other components of the Park. The main goal is to get the most splash for the bucks available. Whitaker said the restroom addition requested by the Task Force might add about \$60,000 to the cost of the project. But it might be an alternative in the bidding that could be added on or added later.

Yakawich invited everyone to this year's March Against Drugs and Violence, which is focusing on the issue of Human Trafficking. The March will be held on **SATURDAY, JUNE 13TH FROM 11:30 A.M. TO 2 P.M. ON THE COURTHOUSE LAWN DOWNTOWN.** Special guest will be Secretary of State Linda McCulloch and there will be a barbeque, ice cream, soda, door prizes and tee shirts for marchers. On **FRIDAY, JUNE 12th,** the group will hold a special form on Human Trafficking Prevention Education with a film screening of "Chosen" and a Safe Haven Campaign Information **AT THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB ON ORCHARD LANE FROM 6:30 TO 7:30 P.M.**

Yakawich introduced Ginny Brady, the outreach lead on this issue. She said that the average age of young people being trafficked is 12 years old. All children are fair game for traffickers because they have not yet developed the coping skills to understand they are at risk and they are more apt to make bad choices. A pimp may make from \$150,000 to \$200,000 from a child's work and each pimp usually runs from four to six children. The Safe Haven Campaign is designed to give anyone being trafficked a safe alternative to remaining in their horrible circumstances. Anyone can call 1-888-3737-888 to get help from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline. Because of the influx of people into the Bakken oil fields, trafficking has become a big problem in Montana, Brady said.

Mary Westwood moved that the Task Force take a strong stand against human trafficking and express their support for the March Against Drugs and Violence. Missey Valverde seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Brenda Beckett introduced the VISTA/Americorps volunteers and said they are young people working hard to improve our community and others within a two-hour drive of Billings. She asked them to explain what they were doing, and expressed her own appreciation of the work Shipp has done as a VISTA working through Montana State University Billings.

Katie Ceras is working with Family Promise, a local non-profit that helps them with plans for a new Day Center at offices at the old Gallies Filter Building on the corner of Minnesota Avenue and South 26th Street.

Walter Brueckner and Jordan Westerholm have been working on community gardens through the Billings Housing Authority, with the idea of helping people get more nutritious food. They have a plot at 8th Street West and Avenue B and have begun work on three locations on the South Side, which would include raised beds. 7 people have signed up to join the project so far. They are also looking at the Boys and Girls Club and are doing bucket gardens with kids. Part of the job also helps build skills for people.

Kelly Meringer is working with Rebuilding Together which is a group of volunteers that does upgrades on homes. Their current focus is on homes belonging to the elderly and veterans. They also help people with disabilities by renovating homes to make them more accessible. Meringer said doing these things helps neighborhoods like the South Side stay viable and alive. On June 13th. The group will be working on a home for a veteran's family and volunteers are welcome to come and assist. Rebuilding together takes applications year round for its services.

People in the neighborhood should watch out for bike racers in the near future. The group was informed that there will be bicycle races around South Park on June 8th, June 15th and June 22nd. There will also be the Amped Rock Competition concert at the Downtown SkatePark from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on June 13th.

Tommilee Gallup of Riverstone Health reminded everyone that the first Gardeners' Market will be on Thursdays, beginning June 1st, at South Park from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. every week into the fall. SNAP incentives will be available that allow some buyers to double their dollars at the Market.

Zahn reported that Phillips 66 has scheduled its Eat and Meet for Thursday, September 10th. The most recent Citizens Advisory Council focused on pipelines. All the Conoco/Phillips pipelines are controlled out of Bartlesville, Oklahoma. She said the pipeline people are working on projects to change the river crossings to prevent spills that have damaged rivers in the past.

The group received a thank you note from Jim Ronquillo and Mike Yakawich thanking them for their help with the Easter Egg Hunt. Zahn also received an Email from a resident in the Rimrock Task Force area who is concerned about the LDS meeting house proposed for their residential neighborhood. The writer was concerned about the concentration of mega churches in the West End. The Zoning Commission split 2-2 on whether this proposed meeting house should be allowed. After discussion, Bonnie Hetland moved that a letter be sent to the Mayor and City Council encouraging them to recognize and honor the voice of neighborhood groups in their decisions regarding any large facilities put into residential neighborhoods. Dale Fincel seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Westwood reported that the Nominating Committee proposed that the Reverend Matt Lundgren take over the job of Vice Chair from Matt Shipp, who will be leaving. Further nominations were called for three times. Dale Fincel moved that Lundgren be approved for the post of Vice Chair unanimously and Westwood seconded the motion. Lundgren was elected Vice Chair unanimously.

Shipp also said **EVERYONE IS INVITED TO A FOCUS GROUP ON JUNE 11TH AT GARFIELD IN ROOM 108 AT 6 P.M. TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF THE LITERACY CENTER THERE**. He urged people to attend to determine what happens with this community asset.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

The next Regular Meeting of the Task Force will be held on THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 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 enlist their help in making Our Neighborhood the best part of Billings.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Westwood
Secretary