

**SOUTH SIDE TASK FORCE MEETING
THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2015
REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.
SOUTHSIDE SENIOR CENTER
901 SOUTH 30TH STREET, BILLINGS, MONTANA
(PLEASE NOTE: THE TASK FORCE MAY BE MOVING ITS MEETINGS TO A
NEW LOCATION NEXT MONTH. SO CHECK THIS AREA FOR THAT INFO.)**

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 Pad Developments – Parks Department (10 minutes)
Results of the Growth Survey – Candi Millar – (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

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

June 18, 2015

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

Present: Danny Ball, Jan Begger, Kathleen Candelaria, Council Member Brent Cromley, Linda Deavila, Lisa Donnot, Dale Fincel, Carmen Huffman, Reverend Matt Lundgren, Pastor Dale Metzger, Matt Rich, Jim Ronquillo, 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 Parkview and Carmen Huffman for bringing treats for the meeting.

Jan Begger moved for approval of the May minutes as amended with the correction of one name and Jim Ronquillo seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as amended.

No law enforcement was present for the meeting.

City Council Member Mike Yakawich said a fence has gone up around the junkyard near Garfield School, but he continues to work on that area. The City Council passed its budget and Yakawich and City Council Member Brent Cromley were successful in cutting \$150,000 out of the total amount. Yakawich said he had hoped to cut \$350,000 out of the multimillion dollar sum. Work on the playground should begin soon. (It began on July 7th.) And the groundbreaking for the spray park should be held this year and hopefully it will be in place by June of next year. He reminded everyone of the Juneteenth celebration that would be held on Saturday, June 20th in South Park.

Lisa Donnot from Family Promise, formerly known as the Interfaith Hospitality Network, and Katie Ceras who works with her said they hope to have their new Day Center open in the old Galles Filter Building near the SkatePark by mid-September. She said Family Promise tries to help homeless families achieve independence by providing them with places to stay in area churches and helping them access other services which will lead them to a better life. The Day Center is needed so the families have a place to get ready for their day and do some of the work they need to do to access services. Family Promise offices will also be located in the Center, but there will be no sleeping on the premises. Currently the offices and Day Center are in a small area at Bethlehem Lutheran Church that is inadequate for their needs.

Every family has a case plan that will take them out of homelessness and give them a better life. Donnot said her group is also working with Community Leadership Development Incorporated (CLDI) to increase the number of transitional housing units available to people in her program. People may also need to work on their relationships to one another, getting an education, finding employment or transitioning from a situation of domestic abuse. The organization is currently working with 32 families. All people in the program are subject to random drug tests and no sexual or violent offenders are allowed in the program.

On Sunday, June 21st, there will be a community services show at the Bighorn Resort from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and any group is welcome to a booth for free to tell others about their organization and what they do. Various food items will be for sale to attendees.

Reverend Matt Lundgren talked about the Billings Community Space which has opened up in the old Granny's Attic location on Minnesota Avenue between South Broadway and South 29th Street. A coalition of people came together to use the space and includes a church, a fencing club, tae kwon do, music groups and practice space for loud bands. There has been some issues over zoning as the City thinks it may be assembly use rather than retail use, which is the current zoning for the building. At present, people are using just the main floor for a nominal fee of \$75 per month, but they are required to have proof of insurance and background checks. Lundgren encouraged anyone who may be interested in using the space to talk with him or the people at the Montana Rescue Mission.

Yakawich reminded everyone of the Last Best Country Fest to be held in South Park on July 11th. Anyone who wants to help out can get a free ticket. To volunteer you can go online or call Yakawich at 647-6391.

Zahn attended the Community Innovations Summit which talked about the handling of people who otherwise would have gotten open container or disturbance charges. The group is looking for alternatives to jail, such as a sobering center. As a result of some changes, the bicycle police have been citing people for 5 incidents of open container before they make an arrest. So it is still important that open container offenses be reported, Zahn said. One member said that, in recent weeks, several people have been aggressively approached around the former Our Lady of Guadalupe church building, which is now for sale by the diocese.

Mary Westwood said she and Mike Yakawich attended the focus group on the Literacy Center at Garfield and that Constance Johnson would be at the next

meeting to share a questionnaire with members on what the Center can do to serve the neighborhood.

Zahn said the Phillips 66 Advisory Council heard legislative updates and learned that no oil rigs were drilling in Montana. The refinery did pass a Homeland Security audit. The Phillips 66 Eat and Meet will be held on Thursday, September 10th and Zahn asked if there were people willing to man the Task Force booth at the event. Several people volunteered to do the job.

Kathleen Candelaria reported from the Alternatives board meeting that the ladies made the strawberry shortcake for the Strawberry Fest and also presented inspiring testimonies at the March Against Drugs and Violence. Alternatives recently received a \$1.5 million grant that will help men be better fathers. Over five years, the funds will hire ten case managers to help with things like housing and other types of counseling to improve the men's lives and the lives of their children.

Ronquillo reported that there was \$1,255.95 in the checking account and \$3,206.52 in the CD. He personally thanked the ladies from Passages for their help with the barbecue at the March against Drugs and Violence.

Ronquillo also asked why there needed to be a fence around the spray park when none of the other spray parks have a fence. He was concerned that it was another way to treat the South Side differently. Ronquillo moved that the group direct a letter to the City Parks Department raising this question. Dale Fincel seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Westwood asked if the group wanted her to look for grants and funds that could be used to build the second rest room at South Park. Linda Deavila moved that Westwood be authorized to do this and Ronquillo seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

Zahn said there were no zoning issues in our area. She also received a letter from the Senior Center asking that we pay \$50 a month to use the facility. Friendship House offered to let us use their facility for free beginning in August. Yakawich moved that the Task Force move to the Friendship House and Candelaria seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Yakawich thanked the group for their support of the March Against Drugs and Violence. A get well card was circulated for Sergeant at Arms Missey Valverde, who is very ill.

Everyone was invited to celebrate the 30-year anniversary of the South Park Senior Center on Saturday, June 27th from noon to 5 p.m. Ronquillo and Jake Romero will be making spaghetti dinner and the only payment required is what you want to donate to the center. There will also be a fabulous silent auction.

The meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Westwood
Secretary

