

**SOUTH SIDE TASK FORCE MEETING
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2015
REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.
FRIENDSHIP HOUSE
3123 8TH AVENUE SOUTH, 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)

Crimestoppers and Community Policing -- (15 minutes)
Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch – (15 minutes)

Neighborhood Concerns

Committee Reports

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

Correspondence

New Business

Old Business

Thank Yous

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

November 19, 2015

Friendship House, 3123 8th Avenue South, Billings, Montana

Present: Emily Aerts, Madeline Alpert, Danny Ball, Fran Ball, Christi Beals, Dan Bearcrane, Jan Begger, Kim Benfit, Mike Blackman, Irene Boehm, Kathleen Candelaria, City Council Member Brent Cromley, Marilyn Cullen, Linda Deavila, Lisa Donnot, Dale Fincel, Melissa Henderson, Lucy Hernandez, Linda Kelly, William Kelly, The Reverend Matt Lundgren, Amity Malberg, Pastor Dale Metzger, Ali Nelson, Jack O'Donnell, Jim Ronquillo, Paula Schilke, Denise Smith, Angela Tschacher, Mary Westwood, City Council Member Mike Yakawich, Michele Zahn and Tammy Zemliska.

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. Pizza purchased by the Task Force was enjoyed by all and Vice Chair Matt Lundgren was thanked for being the pizza delivery person.

Sergeant Clyde Reed of the Billings Police Department gave a report to the body about crime in our area. He indicated that during the month of October there were 481 calls for service in the Task Force area, including 70 disturbance calls and 77 suspicious activity calls. Officers also responded to 28 welfare checks, 9 suicide attempts or threats, 13 incidences of threats or harassment and 13 reports of alcohol-related incidents. Volunteers also took 15 abandoned vehicle reports. In the area, there were 16 drug investigations, 4 of which were unfounded and one of which is an ongoing investigation with no further information at this time. Two cases involved illegal possession of prescription medications and one traffic stop involved marijuana. The rest involved methamphetamine and resulted in arrests. The most dynamic case involved a fleeing bicyclist who was ultimately stopped with 7.5 grams of meth in his possession.

Reed said there were 11 reports of vehicle thefts, a slightly higher number than usual, but 5 vehicles were recovered and an additional 2 were located and determined to be unauthorized use cases. The other 4 vehicles are still missing, but 2 were taken while unlocked with keys in them. Four burglaries and one attempted burglary occurred in our area and items taken included firearms, tools, small electronics, jewelry, cash and potatoes. There were 2 hit and run crashes, Reed said, and five property damage crashes. Officers made 31 traffic stops and handled 11 traffic complaints or investigations, as well as dealing with 7 drunk drivers.

Bill Kelly asked about suspicious activity occurring in the alley behind his home, including the blocking of his driveway. He said there were many cars visiting one of his neighbors for short periods of time and he is concerned it is drug activity. Reed suggested he contact Sergeant Neal Lawrence who is in charge of the Drug Task Force at this time.

City Council Member Mike Yakawich congratulated City Council Member Brent Cromley on his re-election to his Ward 1 Council seat. Yakawich said he continues to work on the problem of abandoned buildings. It looks like the Splash Pad will open in South Park in the spring of 2017. He also learned that someone has purchased the City land next to the 3Gs convenience store on South 27th Street. Al Koelzer, a commercial Realtor, is the new owner, but it is unclear if he purchased it for himself or for some other person. Yakawich also has Code Enforcement working on an abandoned vehicle which always shows up near South Park. Riverstone Health is asking the City for \$50,000 to assist in improving its clinic building. The agency has already received \$3 million in federal funds and another \$1 million in private donations and the County will be putting in \$50,000 over 2 years like Riverstone is asking the City to do. Laurel will also be asked to help with the project. Cromley agreed that it was a good use of funds and Paula Schilke pointed out what a great asset Riverstone is to the South Side. The people who work there staff the Orchard School clinic, the jail clinic and others throughout the County.

Denise Smith of the Montana Rescue Mission said the open House the Mission recently held will become an annual event. Some 100 people attended this year and MRM worked to dispel rumors like the one that sometimes they are full. She said if people need a place to stay, they make a place for them, even if it's on the floor. They do issue ID cards to keep track of the people they serve, but this year the Mission has served 71,000 hot meals. The number they have served is also up 15% at 1,753 and they expect to serve over 2,000 by the end of the year. Right now they have two blue ribbon chefs cooking at the facility. They have also been inviting different local groups to cook meals, like Yellowstone4 Bank. And Smith said the Mission has been partnering with other non-profits, like Family Services to share resources when one or the other has too much or too little of something.

Smith said that the Mission has begun working to wrap people in services in an effort to end their homelessness. Ninety per cent of the people they assist are the working poor and every two weeks they are held accountable for how well they are progressing on their life plan. They also have a New Life Program where they spent 18-20 months working with people who are serious about getting away from their addictions and living a better life. She pointed to a woman who made a new life and is now trying to help others. They also provide

health care to the homeless. Angela Tschacher Asked if any help was needed with the Thanksgiving meal and Smith said some helpers were needed for prep work on Monday through Wednesday and cranberries and pumpkin pie are needed for Thanksgiving. In other news, Smith said there would be a huge garage sale of Christmas items on Saturday, November 21, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the old Granny's Attic location. The Mission is still assessing the problems with that building to see if they can open it to the community again. Smith also passed out information about the Mission and its programs and Emergency Maps for the homeless that show them where resources are available in Billings.

Tammy Zemliska of SCRAP, a creative reuse facility located in the old MRM secondhand store at 21 South 29th Street, invited everyone to come and explore her new shop. Her shop is part of the National Network of Creative Reuse, which has nine stores across the nation. Zemliska called the facility a re-boutique where everything in it is made up of 75% repurposed material. The shop does sell items for artists on consignment with a 60% for the artist and 40% for the store split. The store also offers a materials room with fabric, wood and others items for projects on sale. Workroom and studio space is also offered and art camps for kids will be held in the summer. Zemliska invited people to have parties at the facility and also announced the following classes:

Adult coloring: Dec.8 and 15 from 5 to 7 p.m.

Open workshop with mini kits for all ages (like bracelets, coasters, envelopes, cheese board, puzzle and scrappy corsages): Dec.10 and 17 from 5 to 7 p.m.

Cupboard Door Art with chalk paint: Dec 12 and 19 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Pallet Art: Dec. 6 and 13 from 2 to 5 p.m.

Christmas Present Wrapping (in a scrappy way): Dec 20 from 2 to 5 p.m. and Dec 22 from 5 to 7 p.m. (First 2 presents for \$5 and three or more for \$10).

Zemliska said the shop will generally be open Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. There is also a membership program that helps support the facility.

And SCRAP will be part of the Christmas Stroll in early December will include public judging of some of their art.

Zahn reported that the recent Community Conversations held by the City focused on pedestrian and Bicycle issues and neighborhood engagement. The charter issue also has come up again, but no one on the South Side has stepped forward to join that discussion group. Zahn also attended the Community Innovations meeting and learned that some locations on the South Side are being considered as sites for the sober living facility. One reason given for this is that people with addiction problems are usually low-income folks. The idea of a mixed community on Minnesota Avenue is being considered. The group will ask for funds to hire a new Resource Outreach Counselor, who would also be a

police officer. Because of recent policy changes, the regularly-addicted alcoholics are disbursing from Downtown.

Zahn also reported that Phillips 66 will do a 56 day shutdown from April to June of 2017 as they hire some 400 people to install new equipment as part of the upgrade of the refinery. They just wanted the community to know this will be happening.

Kathleen Candelaria reported on Alternatives, Inc. and a new program they will be implementing to provide consultations and assistance remotely to people in correctional facilities. Called Project Echo, it will be run by Dr. Eric Arzubi of Montana State University and will help inmates who have behavioral health and addiction issues. The program has a core group consisting of a pharmacist, an addictions counselor, a case manager and a psychiatrist. Case managers who need help with inmates could call in via various electronic devices and use the members of the core group to facilitate more positive outcomes for correction inmates, thus making broader use of limited resources. Candelaria also reported that Passages received approval of 15 additional beds for their Transitional Living Program. The beds are temporary for now, but Passages has been experiencing challenges in identifying housing for the women in the Transitional Living Program and recently contacted HRDC to partner with them and their Home Center to help the women learn how to be good renters when they are released into society.

Treasurer Jim Ronquillo reported the Task Force had \$1,945.54 in its checking account with a few outstanding bills still pending, \$2,721.67 in its grant/savings account and \$3,212 in its CD at the present time.

Ronquillo said that Southern Lights had also told him they will now have a staff member living in the facility to keep an eye on things as they had said they would when they first built it.

Everyone was invited to have breakfast with Santa on December 6th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the South Park Senior Center, 901 South 30th Street. The cost for adults is \$8.00, \$4.00 for children 6 to 12, and children under 6 eat free.

Mike Yakawich reported that the Nominating Committee had nominated Michelle Zahn and Matt Lundgren for Chair, Dale Metzger for Vice Chair and Jim Ronquillo for Treasurer. Other nominations were called for 3 times, but no other nominations were forthcoming. Because there was a contest for one seat, the election for Task Force officers was held by written secret ballot with the votes counted by our City Council members. After counting the ballots, they reported

that Lundgren was elected Chair, Metzger was elected Vice Chair and Jim Ronquillo was re-elected Treasurer.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

The next Regular Meeting of the Task Force will be held on THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2015, at 7 P.M. at the Friendship House, 3123 8th Avenue South, Billings, Montana. Treats will be provided for all. So ask your friends and neighbors to join the South Side Neighborhood Task Force for some holiday cheer at our next meeting and help make Our Neighborhood the best part of Billings.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Westwood
Secretary