

**SOUTH SIDE TASK FORCE MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2016
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)

Culinary Arts Program, Passages -- Megan Jessee – (15 minutes)

Neighborhood Concerns

Treasurer's Report

Correspondence

Old Business

Review and Update of Task Force Goals
Time of Meeting (TABLED)

New 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 Matt Lundgren, Chair, at 259-5569, Pastor Dale Metzger, Vice Chair, at 2483978, Jim Ronquillo, Treasurer, at 252-5353 or Mary Westwood, Secretary, at 259-3756.

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

February 18, 2016
Friendship House, 3123 8th Avenue South, Billings, Montana

Present: Emily Aerts, Danny Ball, Fran Ball, Larry Bean, Brenda Beckett, Jan Begger, Brenda Blackman, Mike Blackman, City Council Member Richard Clark, City Council Member Brent Cromley, Maia Dickerson, Lisa Donnot, Marguerite Felig, Dale Fincel, Kayla Janowski, Patt Leikam, Matt Lennick, The Reverend Matt Lundgren, Pastor Dale Metzger, Scott Nafts, Tony Nichols, Kallie Parsons, Alicia Pettys, Don Roberts, Jim Ronquillo, Angela Tschacher, Mary Westwood, City Council Member Mike Yakawich, Michele Zahn, and Tammy Zemliska.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Matt Lundgren at 7:00 p.m. Introductions of all present were made and all attendees were welcomed. Treats were provided by Brenda and Mike Blackman.

Jim Ronquillo moved for approval of the January, 2016 minutes as presented and Dale Fincel seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as presented.

City Council Member Mike Yakawich introduced Scott Nafts of the Billings Elks Lodge, a group that is making a substantial contribution to the South Side Easter Egg Hunt and thanked the Elks for support of the event.

City Council Member Brent Cromley said the Council has approved the Resource Outreach Contact person to work with serial inebriates in Downtown Billings. Because many of the transients are showing up in City parks at night, including South Park, this is a serious problem for the community. Yakawich said Phillips 66 is requesting annexation of land behind the Post Office that they own. He said there will be a group meeting to work on graffiti and he urged everyone to call in addresses where it is found so the group can be aware of what needs to be done. Yakawich said he is also working on property on First Avenue South where a building is in bad shape, as well as keeping up with abandoned vehicles in the neighborhood.

City Council Member Dick Clark said the City is really getting into the budget and there should be some changes because of the four new Council Members this session. This is Clark's 15th year on the Council.

Officer Matt Lennick of the Billings Police Department said the police are keeping an eye on an active drug area in our neighborhood. And the North Park Task Force is interested in joining the South Side to combat graffiti. Kallie Parsons of

Crimestoppers said she will help coordinate those efforts. Lennick and his fellow officer Tony Nichols said they think they know at least one of the young people doing the painting. Michelle Zahn asked if the young people could be satisfied by public art projects. There is a spray wall behind the Good Earth Market, but the officers didn't think these art projects would stop the graffiti.

It was suggested that the officers talk to John Thompson of parks about better training for seasonal workers on handling transients and on getting better lights for the Gazebo. The City does have a trailer with supplies for removing graffiti and sites can be put on a list for pressure washing. Anyone willing to help should call Kallie at Crimestoppers and let her know they will assist in graffiti removal. The officers also offered ride-along forms for anyone who would like to observe police work up close.

Lennick and Nichols presented a report showing 401 calls for service in the Task Force area in January, resulting in 114 cases. The most common offense was possession of drug paraphernalia. Five hit and run and property damage crashes were reported in the Task Force area. Mary Westwood asked that the officers report all the serious crimes every month as well as traffic offenses.

Brenda Beckett, Director of the Community Development Office, presented the options available for the vote of the Task Force in using Community Development Block Grant Money and HOME Investment Partnership Funds. She pointed out that her agency is facing another 10% reduction in funds and that Housing and Urban Development is moving more toward competitive grants, which it is difficult for Billings to obtain in competitions with larger communities. She pointed out the good work here department has done over the last few years and how much effort the VISTA workers they hire have done in recruiting some 600 volunteers for the community. Westwood asked why the Task Forces are no longer allowed to initiate what CDBG funds will be used for, like the bathroom that is needed to serve the children of South Park. Beckett said the group's focus is affordable housing and there are more difficulties with properties that are owned by public entities.

Larry Bean of the Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council, an affiliate of Northern Plains Resource Council talked about what his organization was doing in the community. The 250 members of the organization have various committees working on issues like oil, gas and coal export, sustainability of our community and food issues. On March 19th, they will talk about what should happen to the Corrette Plant site and everyone is invited to look at this public vision for this riverfront property. Alicia Pettys of Northern Plains said PPL may be looking to buy the site for storage. Bean said one committee is looking at establishing a food hub for the community to support local farmers and ranchers. Right now

they are gathering information, but anyone interest is welcome to join and should contact YVCC. Pettys said Northern Plains will be adding a solar display soon that will make them an energy producer rather than a consumer.

Treasurer Ronquillo said there was \$1,745.54 in the checking account and \$3,212.24 in the CD. Westwood moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and Fincel seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously. Ronquillo moved to approve paying Fincel for the sign he created and Danny Ball seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

The group discussed moving the meeting to 6 p.m., but the motion was tabled.

Family Promise announced the grand opening of their new Day Center at 10 South 26th Street on March 4, 20156. All are welcome to attend.

Lundgren asked the Task Force members so inclined to list the bathroom in South Park as their top priority for CDBG funds as the group voted on the priority sheets presented to them by Beckett. The vote was completed and the results given to the CDBG Board and Beckett. Ronquillo moved that the Task Force send a letter to the CDBG Board and The City Council about the bathroom needed in South Park. Fincel seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously. Patt Leikam said the CDBG Board is limited in what they can do because in 2012, the Council changed the funds from grants to loans

The group generally discussed food goals for the neighborhood.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The next Regular meeting of the Task Force will be held on THURSDAY MARCH 17, 2016, 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 our next meeting and help make Our Neighborhood the best part of Billings.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Westwood
Secretary

PLEASE REVIEW GOALS FOR THIS MEETING!

SOUTH SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD TASK FORCE GOALS

(Approved 2013)

1. Add 10 new members to our Task Force.
2. Recruit and mentor new leadership for the Task Force.
3. Replace South Park curbs and gutters and add a spray park and wading pool.
4. Replace Highland Park curbs and gutters.
5. Add 5 new blocks to Neighborhood Watch, including block parties and help with signs.
6. Support more single family home ownership in the South Side Neighborhood.
7. Organize and encourage new activities to enhance the use of South Park.
8. Reach out to and encourage South Side businesses to attend our Task Force meetings.
9. Address drug houses, gang issues and graffiti in our Neighborhood whenever possible.
10. Seek to address homelessness and transient issues in our Neighborhood.

Passages – March 2016 Update

Passages will be hosting our 7th Annual Alumni Celebration on April 1, 2016 (no joke). A luncheon and awards ceremony will be held at the Valley Federal Credit Union at 207 North Broadway. All former Passages residents are invited to attend.

This year, Passages will be awarding a \$500 stipend to be used towards mandatory expenses such as rent, utilities, etc. Interested alumni must submit an essay describing the key to their success in the community, who has been their biggest support and what advice they have for others going through the

program. The selection will be announced at the luncheon. Other various awards are given as well and all attendees will receive “swag bags” with fun gifts.

The luncheon will be prepared by the Passage Culinary Arts Program.

Alumni can RSVP at 294-9609 ext 239 or via FaceBook.



Re-envisioning the Riverfront: Corette Site Design Charrette

Saturday March 19

2 - 5 p.m.

**First Congregational Church Fellowship Hall
310 N. 27th Street
Billings**

Join a broad coalition of Billings organizations and businesses for a ***community visioning session about future uses of the former Corette power plant site*** that would make Billings an even better place to live. The event is free and open to the public— light refreshments will be provided.