



Rimrock Neighborhoods Task Force Membership Meeting Minutes September 18, 2024 ~ 7:00 PM Mayflower Church

Howard Evans, Chair called the meeting to order, welcoming members, guests & public officials. Minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

Public officials present:

- Vice-Mayor Mike Boyett (city council ward 5)
- Mayor Bill Cole
- Sergeant Jeff Stovall, Billings Police Department
- Mike Pigg, Billings Parks & Recreation Director

7 members were in attendance; a voting quorum was established
3 out of 4 board members were present. (Tom Yampradit was unable to attend)

PRESENTATIONS:

LAW ENFORCEMENT UPDATE: Sergeant Stovall, Billings Police Dept (BPD):

Sgt. Stovall gave us an update of recent police activity in Billings. This included information about two recent police actions. One involved a pursuit in a domestic violence situation. The other was also domestic violence related, and unfortunately resulted in the death of 2 innocent individuals.

Sgt. Stovall discussed the Neighborhood Watch program. Those who are interested in starting a Neighborhood Watch can contact Sgt Stovall. Additionally, information on starting a Neighborhood Watch program is available at NCPC.org and NNW.org. Mayor Cole offered that he would explore some kind of funding mechanism, to help citizens defray costs related to starting a Neighborhood Watch. Sgt. Stovall indicated that the websites NCPC.org and NNW.org may have info on grants available.

Sgt. Stovall answered questions about Project Eyes on the Block. Citizens and businesses who have security cameras can register with the Billings Police Department. This helps officers who are investigating crime know who has security cameras. Registering with the program does not give the police access to your video footage. It simply means you are willing to consider sharing your video footage should police be investigating a crime. The program has been very successful. (MORE INFO WILL BE INCLUDED IN OUR OCTOBER NEWSLETTER)

Mayor Cole asked if the police have access to cameras operated by public works, not for traffic enforcement, but for seeking suspects and evidence in criminal cases. Sgt. Stovall indicated they don't. He did share that both Lowe's and Albertson's do share security camera footage with police. The Mayor committed to pursuing the matter with Public Works.

PARKS & RECREATION PRESENTATION - Mike Pigg, Director of Parks, Recreation & Public Lands, City of Billings:

Mike Pigg shared an overview of the scope of responsibility of his team, which includes:

- manicured parks (like Pioneer Park)
- sports complexes (such as Amend Park)
- street landscapes (such as planters and grassy medians)
- trails
- natural areas (example: Phipps Park). More than half of the land mass is natural areas.
- 25 restroom facilities at parks.

- more than 100 irrigation systems, such as simple streetscapes, all the way up to pump stations. The largest systems are Stewart Park and Pioneer Parks.
- 41 different playgrounds at parks. All playgrounds are checked every day for safety.
- 28 basketball courts
- 27 tennis courts
- cemeteries
- 25 picnic shelters around town, which can be rented.
- 2 pools.
- over 10,000 trees (planting, pruning, etc) Approximately 60 were lost during the recent wind storm.
- sound stage
- large events (example: balloon rally at Amend Park)
- youth camps - over 1300 kids this year
- volunteer program (over 2,400 hours of volunteer time annually)
- "Rec to You" program - taking programs to local parks
- flag football and other youth sports programs
- adult basketball and volleyball leagues
- adult piano lessons
- therapeutic swimming
- "Toddler Talk"
- junior life-guarding
- "Miracle Field" at Poly Vista Park
- senior center at 390 N 23rd
- adult fitness and enrichment classes in partnership with Adult Resource Alliance

Mike's team has not had a budget increase since 2017, even though that year an audit showed they were underfunded. He has been creative in finding ways to do more with less funding.

Skyline Trail is still being managed by the contractor, but will be coming into the Parks Department as soon as the contractor finishes all work. Skyline Trail has actually saved money for Mike's team, as there is less clean-up to do from parties and people camping in their cars.

Mayor Cole discussed some items of interest about funding with the last 2 city budgets, and how this impacts the Parks Department. The number one priority for the City Council is public safety. More police officers, fire fighters, city attorneys and a new municipal court judge have been added, and we are still in the hiring process for many of these new positions. To make this happen, the Parks budget was reduced. Over 80% of the City budget goes to Police and Fire.

OLD BUSINESS:

BOARD VACANCY: Howard Evans opened nominations for Secretary of the Board. No nominations were offered.. Leslie Cooke will continue to perform the duties of board secretary for the time being, as we continue seeking a new board member to serve as secretary. Howard stressed how it is critical that we fill the open position as there are several issues facing the board.

RIMTOP & RIMROCK ISSUES: Howard Evans is leading efforts to monitor the various issues on top of the rims; Leslie Cooke is leading efforts on Rimrock Rd. Safety.

RIMROCK CORRIDOR SAFETY COMMITTEE UPDATE: Leslie Cooke gave an update on the work of the committee, and the need for volunteers to help. Leslie stressed that volunteering won't be time-consuming. A few volunteers are already committed. Some will help with social media posts, some with letters to the editor, some will attend meetings. Leslie recapped the meetings that she and Tom Yampradit have already attended, and those that are planned. Leslie has interviewed one parent whose child was injured on Rimrock Rd last year. A 2nd parent whose child was in an accident will be interviewed next week. All this will build towards our task force's active participation in the City's "TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN". The plan is currently out for bid, in order to hire a consulting firm who will help manage the project. Questions, comments, and offers to be involved, should be directed to rimrocktaskforce@gmail.com

RIMTOP UPDATE: Howard Evans gave an update on the LAASF. Construction is moving along. Howard forwards weekly updates to anyone who would like them. If you'd like to be included in Howard's updates, send an email to rimrocktaskforce@gmail.com and we'll add you to Howard's email list.

NEW BUSINESS:

Howard Evans discussed:

1. Possibility of a holiday social during our November meeting. Ideas were shared. The board will discuss and we'll communicate prior to that meeting.
2. Suggestions for charities we are supporting

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 20th .

Respectfully submitted, Leslie Cooke, Vice Chair, Acting Secretary