

SOUTH SIDE TASK FORCE MEETING
THURSDAY, June 20 16, 2013
MEETING 7 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.
Southside Senior Citizen Center – 901 South 30th Street
AGENDA

Meeting Called to Order

Introduction and welcome of all guests
Minutes of the last meeting
Visit with local City Council members, Law Enforcement
(Bring your questions for these officials.)

Presentation

Kidz Concerts in South Park – Ian Elliot (15 minutes)

Neighborhood Concerns

Committee Reports

1. Correspondence
2. Phillips 66 Report
3. Alternatives Report
4. Gazebo Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Grants Report

New Business

Other Task Forces

Old Business

Neighborhood Watch

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 Mike Yakawich, Chair, at 254-2445
or Kathleen Candelaria, Vice Chair, at 697- 5580.

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

May 16, 2013

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

Present: Fran Ball, Donna Bulatowicz, Kathleen Candelaria, Mallory Fflug, Bonnie Hetland, Darrell LaMere, Police Sergeant Neil Lawrence, Kristen Lundgren, Rev. Matt Lundgren, Pastor France Marcott, Eleanor Maslowski, Dana O'Neill, Molly Richard, City Council Member Jim Ronquillo, Clifford Roth, Doug Ruebke, Dolores Terpstra, Missey Valverde, Rachel Wagner, Mary Westwood, Mike Yakawich and Michelle Zahn.

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Kathleen Candelaria at 7:00 p.m. She explained that the Chair was at a scholarship award ceremony for his children and would be at the meeting a bit late. Introductions of all present were made and all attendees were welcomed. Candelaria thanked Eleanor Maslowski for bringing the treats.

Matt Lundgren moved for approval of the minutes of the April meeting as presented and Dolores Terpstra seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as presented.

Sergeant Neil Lawrence of the Billings Police Department reported on crimes in the neighborhood. He said there had been 5 thefts from motor vehicles, 5 other thefts, 3 DUIs, 5 burglaries with one misdemeanor arrest, and 14 criminal mischief complaints. A burglary will often be a misdemeanor unless someone is hurt, in which case it becomes aggravated burglary, a felony. Lawrence said the bicycle officers were out now and would be patrolling the area, especially South Park. He reminded everyone to lock doors now that warmer weather is here because criminals will look for an open door to go in to steal things. Members asked him about activity they had seen at local addresses. Lawrence said there had also been some tagging done near Riverside School.

Maslowski said there had been complaints about salesmen going around and being very aggressive. She said she knew of at least one incident where they pushed their way into a home uninvited. Lawrence said salespeople need to have a license to operate and they can be cited for being to aggressive or soliciting in a property that is posted with a no solicitation sign. Matt Lundgren asked him to have officers stop by Friendship House on a regular basis so the children there develop a good relationship with officers.

Kristen Lundgren has been working with Mike Yakawich and teenagers on a presentation on substance abuse prevention. Her teenage helpers had a

concert, but she came to show the Task Force what they were working on. She also reminded everyone that the **March Against Drugs and Violence** would be held on **Saturday, June 8, 2013, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.** with a barbecue and door prizes. The event begins and ends on the **Courthouse Lawn**. Everyone is invited to attend, and there will be music by Austin Martin and Prodigal. This year, the March will focus on alcohol as an issue of concern. Of special concern are young people who begin drinking in their early teens or younger. They have 4 to 5 times higher risk for pancreatitis and have great difficulty in life. She told the story of two such young people. One young man's life was destroyed when, under the influence, he sent naked pictures of an ex-girlfriend on the Internet and was arrested for a felony.

Lundgren said most children get their first alcohol in their parents' home, often without the parent's knowledge, or from an adult they know. Research on brain development shows this is very damaging. But some parents think it is okay to let children drink as long as they are supervised, though statistics show that is not the case. Statistics show that this is a big problem in Montana. 1 in 5 kids admitted to binge drinking in the last month. Young people who take their first drink before the age of 18 are four times more likely to have problems with alcohol. Montana is in the top ten for alcohol problems and consumes more alcohol per capita than any other of the 54 states or territories. Some \$511 million are spent annually on alcohol-related problems with only \$10.7 million going for alcohol treatment. Some \$100 million alone is spent on alcohol-related health problems. And alcohol use costs \$53 million a year in lost productivity. Lundgren said one-third of crime is alcohol-related and levels of child abuse and neglect are on the rise because of the problem.

Lundgren said alcohol is a problem that is 100% preventable. One way we can help is by getting tough on underage drinking and doing all we can to delay young people getting into drinking. Every adult should "be your own bouncer" and keep the liquor cabinet locked up. Kids won't take alcohol if they think they will get caught. She urged everyone to protect the children in their lives from this problem.

Terpstra reminded everyone to attend the **Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, June 9th at the Southside Senior Center from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** Jim Ronquillo and Bill Kennedy will be serving their great pancakes, hash browns, eggs, sausage and bacon. There will also be many nice **auction items to bid on** and funds will be used for building maintenance. The cost is \$7 for adults and \$3 for children ages 6 to 12.

Matt Lundgren urged people to attend the Friendship House Reunion on Friday, May 17, 2013 from 5 to 7 p.m. as previous alumni of Friendship House get together to discuss the event.

Pastor France Marcott said she has gotten a lot of feedback from the neighborhood in support of the idea of a grocery store and restaurant on the South Side. She will be organizing focus groups to look at different ways of doing it.

Yakawich announced that the Cereal Foods Company on First Avenue South is going to be putting in foam around their fans to reduce the noise they make while processing grain at their plant. He said this was a good way for them to be a good business neighbor.

Mary Westwood invited everyone to a meeting on Smart Growth run by the Environmental Protection Agency at 7 p.m. on May 22nd at the Mansfield Health Center near 12th Avenue North and North 30th Street. The meeting will focus on a checklist that will help with future school siting and, hopefully, prevent the bad decisions like the one that was made when Garfield was closed.

Yakawich praised the volunteers who had worked on the Bright and Beautiful project which collected 42 bags of trash. He especially praised Missey Valverde for her efforts in the Park.

Donna Bulatowicz said MSU Billings graduate students will be working on literacy this summer and 16 places were available for students of all ages who may want to work on reading and writing. Scholarships are available if the students do not have resources to pay for the class. She urged those interested to contact her at Garfield. The class is set to begin the last week in June.

Michelle Zahn reported that the Citizens Advisory Council had taken a tour of the refinery. No safety or environmental issues were raised this month. The group settled on the Eat and Meet being held on September 12 at 5 p.m. in South Park and it was decided it will be a very family friendly event.

Candelaria said Alternatives/Passages is looking at a work program to help ease jail crowding and they have seen an increase in their pre-screening programs. They are also looking at having people pay for the time they spend in a program as a way of getting them to seriously commit to their goals and to provide revenue for the needed staff to do the program.

Yakawich reminded everyone that the Gazebo grand opening would be on May 18th at noon with a barbecue, music by the Big Sky Chorale and the Senior Drum

Corps. Senator Max Baucus is expected to be there along with other dignitaries. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be provided, but salads are needed and anyone who can bring one should sign up with Westwood.

Darrell LaMere reminded folks that HomeWORD will be giving First Time Homebuyer classes on June 4-6 and July 16-18 from 6 to 9 p.m. in the Southern Lights Community Room at 801 South 28th Street. The fee to take the class is very modest and people interested in buying a home are encouraged to attend.

The treasurer is ill and so there was no treasurer's report.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the **South Side Neighborhood Task Force** will be on **Thursday, June 20, 2013, at the Southside Senior Center, 901 South 30th Street, Billings, Montana, beginning at 7 p.m.** Everyone from the South Side is welcome to attend. Stop by and ask your neighbors to join this active group. We want our neighborhood to be always be the best part of Billings.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Westwood
Secretary