

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Council Chambers
July 1, 2013

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) x Hanel, x Ronquillo, x Cromley, x Cimmino, Pitman,
x McFadden, x Bird, x Ulledalen, x McCall, x Astle, x Crouch.

ADJOURN TIME: 7:00 p.m.

Agenda

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| TOPIC #1 | Aviation & Transit Board Recommendation for J. Bruce Putnam Memorial |
| PRESENTER | Tom Binford, Director of Aviation & Transit |
| NOTES/OUTCOME | |

- Tom Binford: Introduced citizens /committee wishing to place a memorial in honor of past aviation and transit director, Bruce Putnam. Mr. Putnam worked for the City for over 28 years before retiring in 2006. Committee proposed a buffalo-themed memorial be placed on the airport terminal footprint. Bruce loved history, especially Montana and Western history. He deeply respected Native American history and culture. The buffalo is a very important component of their culture. A committee was formed to work on this project. *Reviewed Bruce's many accomplishments with the City.* The memorial will consist of 3 buffalo sculptures, a large one (17' long x 9' tall) and 2 smaller ones (12.5' long x 6.5' tall). Proposed selling miniature-scale sculptures to help offset the expense of the larger ones. Proposed a budget and asked for airport funds to supplement the expense. Requested funds are in line with other art displays and exhibits at the airport. Sculptures can be used for educational purposes to visitors to the area about buffalo and Mr. Putnam. Could be controversial, but consistent with some past practices and worthy. Council approval needed before proceeding.
- Mark Kennedy, Airport Commission Member: Talked about proposed fundraising. Wanted the sculpture to mean something to all visitors. Described the late Bruce Putnam as the "Star of the Big Sky." Thought about creating a non-profit for fundraising. Artist Charles Ringer will create the metal sculptures, and Native American artist, Angela Babby, will provide the individual, unique glass beads for each sculpture. They should sell themselves.
- Teresa Darnielle Morris, Billings Community Foundation: Foundation was incorporated in 2006. Works with non-profits and donors on community projects. Foundation is a granting organization. This foundation is designed to benefit the greater Billings area. Ms. Morris has been a financial advisor for 27 years. Gave history of the Foundation's development. Reviewed menu of services offered by the Foundation.

- Ulledalen: Asked for the Foundation presentation, because it could work with the City on other projects.
- Ronquillo: Gave history of first airport sculpture and stated it drew people to the area. Sculptures draw visitors.
- Tom Binford: Nice museum and art area at the airport. Good investment.
- Bird: Buffalo sculpture supports Billings as Montana’s Trailhead; the gateway to the plains. Nothing represents the plains better than Tatonka, “Buffalo”.
- Mayor Hanel: Fundraising plan may be more successful than imagined. Sculptures should sell very well.
- Tom Binford: Every sculpture is an original.
- Crouch: Knew Bruce’s father and he would be thrilled for the recognition.
- Cimmino: Wonderful tribute. Read about this in the airport board minutes, been excited about it for awhile.
- McCall: Agreed, wonderful art piece.
- Tina: Consensus is clear. Council will have to approve actual purchase after fundraising is complete.
- Cimmino: What is the timeline?
- Tom: Would like this fall, but will do it when possible, sooner rather than later.
- Public comments: None.

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| TOPIC #2 | First Congregational Church Pocket Park |
| PRESENTER | Greg Krueger, Development Director, Downtown Billings Partnership |
| NOTES/OUTCOME | |

- Greg Krueger: Pocket parks are part of the 1998 downtown framework plan and the Urban Renewal Plan for N. 27th St. district. Lack green space in downtown. Counter-productive to acquire large amounts of land to turn into parks downtown. Parks enhance downtown. Looking to alleys and other ineffective spaces to make into green spaces. 1st Congregational Church space was used as MET bus transfer station until the transfer center opened a few years ago. No longer used for that purpose; hosts 4 parking spaces. During that time, MET took care of the space. In 2003, when the North Broadway streetscape was installed, garbage cans were added to this area. In 2005, the Business Improvement District was created and the church space became a part of the route. BID maintained the space, but it is falling apart. Landscaping is overgrown; weeds are prevalent; and the masonry and benches are unsafe. Reviewed concept plans. If curb is pushed to drive lane, it creates a large, programmable space. Could accommodate public art, ice skating, checkerboard, a small covered area, a community Christmas tree could be erected, etc. Could offer parking spaces for portable food vendors/carts. Merchants don’t want to give up 4 parking spots. Could leave parking, but move the curb and sidewalk back to the street and use portion of the space. Church will offer labor. Received \$2,500 donation from Downtown Rotary to get this started. Made this an urban renewal project and putting tax increment monies into it over the next couple of years. Asked if Council is OK with concept.
- Mayor Hanel: How much does the church own and how much is City owned?
- Dr. Ron Burnam: Think it is all church property, with an easement to the City for MET.

- Ulledalen: Should consider keeping the parking spaces, area businesses would benefit.
- Dr. Burnam: Some church members would object to losing the parking spaces. Space has deteriorated. Church would like to participate with the City to improve it.
- Mayor Hanel: Concerned about daycare using this space; would not be safe due to proximity of busy street.
- Greg: Just an option, if there were an ice skating rink. Could include a pedestrian barrier.
- Cimmino: Does the daycare use the 4 parking spaces?
- Dr. Burnam: Not generally. Parents pull off in front of the church and use the alley.
- Ulledalen: Worked downtown over 30 years and pleasant places to sit are missing. Need more of those.
- McFadden: Agreed with Ulledalen. Pocket parks will invite people to enjoy the streetscapes and downtown area.
- Greg: Need direction from staff to begin paperwork between the Church and BID.
Turned over presentation to Lisa Harmon.
- McCall: Great idea. Consider Alley scapes?
- Lisa Harmon, Executive Director of DBA and BID: Need to offer more public space. Alleys should be considered. Made the downtown area livable and now need to make it loveable. Other cities like Seattle, etc. are having success transforming their alleys. Food trucks and carts could be encouraged. Studied the alley behind Park 1 garage and next to Hedden Empire bldg. 10,000 bricks available from PW for repurposing. N. 29th Street needs help attracting foot traffic, including in the parking garage. *Concept drawings presented.* Talked with PW/Engineering – think this alley could be vacated and dedicated to an alley scape. Utilities and trash collection could still access space, as needed. Limber Tree Yoga is doing a mural wall as part of its lease with Bruce Lee. BID is helping activate that space. Needed Council to consider vacating this alley. Hoped this would serve as a pilot project for future projects. Alley vacations allow businesses to expand by having additional accesses. Public art features would be integrated in everything that is done.
- Mayor Hanel: Will utility / traffic signal boxes be wrapped?
- Lisa: The public art subcommittee selected the first 2 locations; 1 is under Skypoint; the other is on 3rd Ave. N. near the Alberta Bair Theatre. Will call for artists to do the work. Project approved by Dave Mumford and Debi Meling. There are 2 sponsors for the 2 boxes. Subcommittee is involved in the mural project on 29th and Chalk on the Walk on 3rd Ave. N., which involved 3rd Ave. N. businesses. Will be an annual event. Art for the masses is supported by DBA. Will be more public art popping up around downtown. Planted sunflowers during the Strawberry Festival along Montana Avenue in areas that needed some beautification.
- Cimmino: Decorated signal boxes in Bozeman, Butte and Missoula, hoped Billings would have some.
- Ulledalen: Potential for other donors, once projects start. Others like to get involved.
- Greg Krueger: Rescued a number of things from the Battin Building to incorporate in the downtown area.

- McCall: Reminiscent of San Diego and the gas light district. Color everywhere! Good concept.
- Lisa: Also considering string lighting.
- Public comments: None.
- Consensus: Move forward with plans for development of pocket parks.
- Tina: Will move ahead with terminating easement with the church and facilitate an easement to DBA.

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| TOPIC #3 | Policies Review (City Council E-Mail & Media Communication) |
| PRESENTER | Tina Volek, City Administrator |
| NOTES/OUTCOME | |

- Tina: Forwarded current e-mail and media communication policies to Council for review. Policies should be reviewed every 3 years by Council. Council e-mail policy is working well. Communication policy narrows who and when there are public statements at events. Policies have worked well in the past; do not see any changes needed at this time. Will put renewal on future Council Consent Agenda.
- Ulledalen: Think e-mail policy is working well. Need to develop new ways to force info to the public. May be a good topic for strategic planning process. The press does not cover City events like it used to. How to drive news from the website and Facebook pages? Future blogging capability to get community more involved and engaged.
- Tina: Discussed what can be done with City info.; i.e., successful Parks Department social media campaign. Wants a social media committee. Younger generations are not using conventional media.
- Ronquillo: CityLink newspaper is good communication. Need more people at community meetings. Computer will encourage youth to engage.
- Public comments: None.

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| TOPIC #4 | Priority Based Budgeting / Strategic Plan |
| PRESENTER | Tina Volek, City Administrator |
| NOTES/OUTCOME | |

- Tina: FY14 budget has \$25,000 allocated for new strategic plan. 2006 plan very successful and well used, but City needs new one. Reviewed with Council ICMA strategic planning process outline. Questions for Council: Create a timeline? Council involved with facilitator selection? What role of community conversations? Special interest in PBB? Would like to have plan completed before starting the FY15 budget.
- McCall: Time to start the selection process. Important to involve councilmembers who will be leaving the Council.
- Tina: RFP should be ready in September and begin the process in the fall.
- Mayor Hanel: Would like to be involved in RFP and/or facilitator selection.
- Tina: Will ask for a subcommittee of the Council to work on RFP.
- Astle: Why not wait for a new Council?
- Tina: Formerly heard from Council that process should involve current experienced Council, but process would carry over to involve new councilmembers.

- McCall: Suggested sharing the experiences of those who have been involved in past process. Makes sense.
- Bird: There is value in the past process experience, not recreating the wheel.
- Cromley: Reach out to councilmember candidates and invite them to participate.
- Tina: Okay, will do that. If continue with PBB, should apply in the strategic planning process and involve departments in the process, too.
- Ulledalen: Has an issue with asking for candidate participation, but OK with inviting the ones who are elected in November. Too much confusion among candidates.
- Mayor Hanel: Meetings will be public, so candidates could attend and learn/participate.
- Tina: Suggested seeking public comments on planning process and goals through community conversations beginning in September.
- Bird: Wanted to utilize current councilmembers' knowledge in the process to build the base. Need to keep on this or will lose momentum and focus.
- Ronquillo: Is a very time-consuming process. There were a lot of evening and Saturday meetings. Everyone needs to participate and have a good facilitator. Helped councilmembers to get to know each other better.
- Cimmino: Agreed with using seasoned councilmembers' knowledge. Must keep the strategy in focus for the strategic planning session.
- Ulledalen: Took a lot to get the motor started last time. There were a lot of meetings. Will have to commit time and staff must be involved. If salvaging PBB, must identify the missing links and may require PBB representative's involvement. Out-of-area consultant was important for getting priorities on paper – pulled info from Council because the consultant didn't know anything about the area. Helpful to get Council thinking about what is important and a priority for the City of Billings and what makes this City great. Keep on track or City will end up in budget crisis.
- Bird: Hoped candidates will commit to attending and learning about the process.
- McCall: What is the anticipated cost?
- Tina: Budgeted \$25,000. Cost \$14,000 in 2006. Asked for Council volunteers to be appointed to ad hoc subcommittee to work with staff at the July 22 meeting. Council to send her an e-mail if interested in being appointed.
- Public comments: None.

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| TOPIC #5 | Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda |
| PRESENTER | |
| NOTES/OUTCOME | |

- None.

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| Additional Information: |
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