

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Council Chambers
November 4, 2013

ATTENDANCE:

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

ADJOURN TIME: 7:00 P.M.

Agenda

TOPIC #1	Priority Based Budgeting/Strategic Planning
PRESENTER	Tina Volek, City Administrator
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Tina Volek: Provided, in the Friday packet, a proposed website placement to invite people to comment on strategic plan. Dr. Sipe will be available on the evening of November 20th. *Reviewed presentation.* Intend to involve the public in the community's new strategic plan. Public Comment period will close November 15th. The Magic City pledge has 3 values: Integrity, Collaboration and Stewardship. There were 6 strategic focal points in 2007:
 1. Honest, responsive government;
 2. Comprehensive, orderly growth;
 3. Transportation linkages;
 4. Preservation of resources;
 5. Economic development;
 6. Involved, united community.*Reviewed results from community conversations.* With Council approval, the presentation will be posted to the website.
- Bird: Will there be public service announcements to let citizens know about this?
- Tina: Will do a news release. Due to the timeframe, public service announcements are not doable. Will have a note on the front of the City's website.
- Pitman: Linked through Facebook, etc.?
- Tina: Certainly can.
- Pitman: Provide Councilmembers with an email with a hyperlink so it can be forwarded.
- Ulledalen: Can something be put on Channel 7?
- Tina: Will contact them and see if something can be done. Channel 7 ran information about the first of the community conversation meetings, along with dates of the following meetings.
- Public Comment: None.

TOPIC #2	Quarterly Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Initiatives • Downtown Billings Partnership • Cell Phone Statistics • New Library Construction Project • City-Wide Park District 1 Projects
PRESENTER	Tina Volek, City Administrator; Greg Kruger, DBP; Bill Cochran, Library Director; and Mike Whitaker, Parks Director.
NOTES/OUTCOME	

▪ **Budget and Initiatives:**

- Tina: Budget item was forwarded to Council in Friday packet. Mr. Weber, Finance Director, was not able to attend this meeting. Initiatives were also in the Friday packet. Anything on the list that is noted as completed will be removed from the list, unless otherwise directed.

▪ **Downtown Billings Partnership:**

- Greg Kruger, Downtown Billings Partnership / Downtown Billings Alliance: Gave presentation. Downtown Alliance is comprised of the Downtown Billings Partnership (DBP); the Business Improvement District (BID), managed by Lisa Harmon; and the Downtown Billings Association (DBA), managed by Greg Kruger. The Board has representatives from taxing jurisdictions (County, City, School District, Big Sky ED) and other stakeholder organizations, including parking and 6 at-large positions. May change bylaws and articles of incorporation to add more at-large positions. Look to improve conflict of interest policies. Items will be forwarded to Council when completed. Sixty-six percent (66%) of stakeholders view Downtown very safe; 90% recognized the importance of arts and culture to the community. Will continue to work on safe programs, but will add the arts and cultures programs. Had a 2-day strategy session a year ago and these were the objectives:

1. Street level businesses;
2. Pocket parks & gathering places;
3. Public art & artspace project;
4. Customer friendly parking;
5. Revolving loan fund; and
6. BID renewal.

Met with parishioners at the First Congregational Church about the pocket park. Parks Department removed overgrowth in pocket park and removal of trees. BID and DBA received a \$2,500 grant from Billings Rotary Club which will be used for demolition and clearing the site.

Reviewing alleyscape for N. 29th; looking at lighting enhancements on North Broadway; would be instituted by tenants and property owners.

- Bird: Timeframe for completion of the pocket park and alleyscape?
- Greg: There isn't. Need to get finalized plans, but would like to get the demolition phases on both projects completed before the end of the fiscal year.
The public art project will be wrapping 4 traffic signal boxes with local artwork this year. Hope to do 4 per year. Looking at an artspace project.
- Bird: What is the estimated upfront investment?
- Greg: At least \$600,000 over a period time; several phases. Need to identify a site. Artspace is actually where a non-profit comes in and takes a space or building(s) and refurbishes it and makes living quarters for artists who live/work from there.
Looking for new technology for smart meter parking. Have them in Great Falls. Also want to eliminate the 2-hour limit, and increase the cost for parking, after the initial 2-hour, incrementally. Need rapid responses to customer needs and parking staff should be enforcers and ambassadors who inform. Also looking at informative signage for free parking options.
- McFadden: Does free itinerant parking promote leased parking?
- Greg: No, but gets cars off the street and makes better use of parking garages.
On the 3rd iteration of the interlocal agreement – it's a 5-year agreement between the City and downtown banks. Current one will expire in 2015. Banks had their annual meeting and authorized a 5% loan rate – 4% to the City and 1% to the applicant for the loan. Amortize for 20 years, but have a 10-year payment schedule with a balloon at year 10. There are no delinquent loans presently. There is a \$3.2 million line of credit which has all been paid back.
Will have two new police officers for the Downtown area. Thanked Officers Harley and Shane for the incredible success of the bicycle patrol. They are very unique officers; a special breed. Very proud of Police Department. They were the cream of the crop. Very lucky to have had them. This program is going to allow for renewal of the BID for another 10 years. Thanked Billings Police Department and City Administration for the public/private cooperative.
- Bird: Any plans to formally recognize Officers Winden and Cagle for their contributions?
- Greg: Would like to present a plaque at a future Council meeting and then will keep another plaque in the office.
- Bird: Can Council give a letter or something thanking them for their service?
- Tina: Can do something for them at a Council meeting.
- Greg: *Reviewed the taxable value increases.* Expected to continue to increase. About \$2 million per year is collected in increment. Have three strong organizations working together as the Alliance. Believe the future of Billings is tied to the future of Downtown.
- McFadden: How does west end development affect Downtown?
- Greg: Growth in other areas of the City is made possible because there is a strong City Center. City Center pays taxes. It pays per square foot far more than any new development. Big parking lots don't generate taxes. It grows, the economy grows and Billings grows.
- McCall: Citizen surveys indicate significant improvement concerning personal safety. Visited Chicago and saw the use of linking portable decks. Restaurants and shops put

them in places for 10-minute parking –would be a great industry and niche here in Billings.

- Greg: Working with Public Works to look at different road closure options that would allow for those to be placed in the streets where there isn't such a crowd. People could actually sit in the street. Are doing a little of that in Missoula.
- **Cell Phone Statistics:**
- Tina: Cell phone statistics were included in the Friday packet. 165 citations and 145 warnings from June 1 to September 30.
- Crouch: Is there any indication of number of repeat offenders?
- Tina: Don't know, but can find out.
- Bird: Why so many warnings?
- Tina: Perhaps it is due to the number of people who do not live in Billings. Will ask for some explanation on that.
- Cimmino: Will there be sign placement for out-of-towners? And larger?
- Tina: Talked with Dave Mumford, and was told they are as large as they can be. Will ask about additional signs.
- **New Library Construction Project:**
- Bill Cochran: Written report submitted last week. Anticipate closing library on Friday, Dec. 13th and reopening in new building on Jan. 6. Ribbon cutting dedication of new building is Feb. 1. One last tour for Council at 5:30, on Nov. 12 or 18. Much of the interior finishings are in; skylight has been installed. Have a contract with a moving company that specializes in moving libraries, only. Movers will follow the asbestos abatement work.
- Tina: May be better to tour on the 12th, but some Councilmembers will be out-of-town. Will work on setting time and date and get back to you.
- McCall: Encouraged the tour. Council may be able to help with grand opening.
- Ronquillo: Sun reflection from building at 5:15 p.m. is blinding. Thought it wasn't supposed to do that.
- Bill: Will look into it.
- Cimmino: Total budget -- \$20 million total cost. Voters approved \$13 million; Foundation raised \$3 million, still working on that?
- Bill: \$16.3 million bonds, includes \$3 million from Foundation. \$2 million from donor for design. Unobligated reserves healthy and using them for things like asbestos abatement and site preparation.
- Cimmino: Reviewed the Foundation website – investments for naming rights?
- Bill: This was an active part of capital campaign. There are portions of the project that have not been named – will continue the process. Integra donating high speed internet and will get computer lab named for them.
- **City-Wide Park District 1 Projects:**
- Mike Whitaker: Presentation sent on Friday. *Gave presentation.* All 2013 projects underway or completed. Two replacement water slides were opened in July at Rose Park Pool; there were issues with the speed slide – design flaws. Those have been corrected

and should be ready for the 2014 season. Six restroom remodels will be done within the next month. The modular restrooms should be set by the first of the year. Requested bids for fall protection at playgrounds in November; will install in January. Will begin work on 2014 deferred maintenance projects in January. First priority is the Pioneer Park tennis courts. Want to complete before the State tennis tournament, the third week in May.

- Ronquillo: Restroom doors were removed. Will they be reinstalled?
- Mike: North Park doors will be replaced; no plan yet on South Park. New restrooms will have doors.
- Ronquillo: Optimist Park – Little League removed sod and installed bleachers without master plan update. How did that happen? May need you to come back to the task force to explain.
- Mike: The League was instructed to not build the field, but did it anyway.
- McFadden: Dog park status – want to get started at Centennial Park? When will master plan be updated?
- Mike: Master plan update planned to start in January 2014. Will take about 90 days to complete the master plan.
- Tina: A dog park is one of several contenders for the use of the space; will need to go through the master plan process and all options will be presented to the folks at that meeting. Will come up with some recommendations for Council. Other sites are being considered for dog parks and Beneful dog food has a grant program.
- McCall: YBGR planning to place a dog park on their property – 22 acres. Looks like it will work. County Commissioners may help.
- Cromley: New benches in the parks?
- Mike: Know there was an installation in Pioneer Park. Bought 90 tables instead of 75. Will find out and report where benches were or are planned to be installed.
- Bird: South Park sprayground location? Plan for improving basketball court in South Park?
- Mike: Haven't determined location yet. Had to close and remove the wading pools first. The basketball court is not on the schedule yet, but know that it needs to be done.
- Cimmino: Received an email that the Billings Tennis Association will make in-kind donation. Last week's payables included payment to Tennis Association for lessons as part of the summer program for about \$24,000. That's separate and apart?
- Mike: That's correct. That's in the recreation division. They provided us \$37,000 for resurfacing other 6 courts at Pioneer.
- Pitman: Following up on memorial trees, benches, etc.; are those included?
- Mike: Sold 18 memorial trees so far. About halfway finished with gift catalogue that makes additional donations possible.
- Public comments: None.
- Tina: Postponed executive session to Nov. 18, because it's not published on this agenda.

TOPIC #3	Council Discussion
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Pitman: Groundbreaking for Inner Belt Loop on Thursday.
- Ronquillo: Reviewed letter from Jerry Ray responding to the BIRD reports. What action is being taken by the City?
- Brent Brooks: Attorneys working on case consolidation and resolution. Judge Watters has current cases and may be transferred to a different judge. Case not moving rapidly because of that.
- Bird: Commented that October was Domestic Violence Awareness month. Saw interviews of PD Officer Katie Nash, Domestic Violence Coordinator. Was a pleasure to meet her. Community blessed to have a person of her caliber; says a lot about PD to have a specific person designated to address domestic violence. Possible can of worms – unfortunate remarks made by County official. Encouraged Council to issue a statement that those remarks do not represent the State or others in this community. Personally offended and State has been tarnished.
- Hanel: Can Council make a statement or better from individuals?
- Brent Brooks: Council could express their collective thoughts or individually. All are elected officials, so probably a policy decision, not a legal one.
- Crouch: Supported CM Bird’s statements.
- Mayor Hanel: There is probably no one who would disagree with CM Bird’s concern, but wanted to be cautious. If one wished to express their opinion on their own time, then do so, absolutely!

TOPIC #4	Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- **Jerry Ray, 2646 Grand, Billings, MT:** Discussed cronyism within the City. Witnessed Tom Hanel arguing about an appraisal of City property; not qualified to appraise and neither was the realtor who did the appraisal. All professionals should be considered. Don’t believe the City Administrator should be able to pick a group of people within her staff to select their cronies to be on it. Should be turned over to all professions, bring in all the names that are qualified and pick from that list. Needs to be a fair and equitable system. As it is now, there is no way.
- Mayor Hanel: It was a comparative market analysis, not an appraisal for the public park area.
- Tina: Hired someone to do the comparative analysis considering values with different zonings. Meeting held recently with the community. Recommendation is R-7000-R, single family only, and forwarded for the Zoning Commission’s agenda. The market will set the true value. In the past few weeks have hired a professional salesman for the Empire Garage; hired 2 commercial appraisers for a parcel being considered for the dispatch center; hired an individual from the real estate community to work on Lampman

Park. Work consistently with appraisers and realtors. Considering an RFP to hire someone to market and purchase all City lands on a yearly basis. Depends on the amount of activity, which there hasn't been a lot until recently. Difficult to find available, qualified appraisers. Booking months out for professional appraisers.

- Cimmino: Are we talking about Lampman Park? Were the neighbors interested in saving the park?
- Tina: Neighbors are not interested in saving the property as a park. They did not want it to be sold for multi-family, recommended for single family zoning.
- Cimmino: Was there just one individual that provided an analysis and not an appraisal, based on market analysis?
- Tina: Yes.
- Cimmino: Like the idea of an RFP to generate interest; can draw from a large pool of professionals – might be a good time to come up with an RFP so others can take part. No one has a monopoly on the market. Supported an RFP.
- McCall: Agreed with CM Cimmino. An RFP is a good thing. What process is used now to select a real estate professional?
- Tina: In this case, I'm not sure what occurred.
- Mike Whitaker: Purchasing procedure has been so long, went with a known expert in the field.
- Tina: In this case it was Mr. Llewellyn.
- Jerry Ray: Mr. Llewellyn rents from the City. Handy.
- Tina: Yes, he does.
- Jerry Ray: Isn't only the real estate profession. There are many professions, including the legal profession. In his opinion has a conflict of interest in the cases that were discussed earlier. There should be a process that each profession has a list of people on a scorecard or whatever and it is done on a basis like that. No more cronyism. Everyone who is qualified should get a shot at it.
- McCall: Point is well-taken and should be looked into.
- Jerry Ray: If you don't look at it now, it will never change. It's too easy with cronyism. And in some situations the City has lost a lot of money due to cronyism.