

MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

CONDENSED BOARD MEETING MINUTES

July 15, 2021

FINAL

A Regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency was held on Thursday, July 15, 2021 via Zoom at 12:00 p.m. Those in attendance were as follows:

Board: Karl Englund, Nancy Moe, Ruth Reineking, Tasha Jones

Staff: Ellen Buchanan, Annette Marchesseault, Tod Gass, Jilayne Dunn, Lesley Pugh

Public: Linda McCarthy, Downtown Missoula Partnership; Robert Giblin, Downtown Missoula Partnership; Spider McKnight, Six Pony Hitch, LLC; Jeremy Keene, City of Missoula Public Works & Mobility; William Parnell, Anderson ZurMuehlen; Ginny Merriam, City of Missoula Communications Officer; Jane Van Fossen, Citizen; Missoula Access Community Television (MCAT)

CALL TO ORDER

12:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 17, 2021 Regular Board Meeting Minutes were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no public comments.

ACTION ITEMS

Downtown Missoula Partnership – Caras Park Improvements (Front Street URD) – TIF Request (Buchanan)

Buchanan said the Downtown Master Plan was adopted by the MRA Board and City Council in 2019. One of the focus areas included the Clark Fork River park system along the River, and specifically Caras Park, which MRA was a key partner in the development of many years ago. Following the Downtown Master Plan approval and adoption, the City Parks & Recreation Dept. and Downtown Missoula Partnership (DMP) joined forces and commissioned Dover, Kohl & Partners (DKP) to do a North Riverside Parks & Trails Plan which took a detailed look at everything from Kiwanis Park to Downtown Lions Park at the California Street Bridge. There was a major focus on Caras Park in that Plan. The vision that came out of that process is a very ambitious road map for how the community would like to make investments in that area over the next five to twenty years and turn it into an

area that gets a lot of use year-round. Right now it is basically seasonal, and there are some proposed modifications and additions to the Park that would give it a more year-round presence and impact on the community.

Buchanan said coincidentally, the Beartracks Bridge project has the bridge torn up and Caras Park is impacted in terms of functionality while that construction project is going on. The City is getting a greatly improved bridge across the river, but two summer and shoulder seasons in Caras Park are being disrupted by that construction. Also coincidentally, the City has a stormwater project that is proposed in Caras Park. In 2015, the City undertook Phase 1 of a stormwater improvement project in the Park and MRA helped fund that project. It was understood at the time there would need to be a subsequent phase to take the level of treatment of stormwater to the next level. That will occur this fall and will disrupt a portion of Caras Park that is recommended for modification through the North Riverside Parks & Trails Plan. If they combine the modifications to that portion of Caras Park with the stormwater project, there will be a cost savings because a contractor will already be mobilized on the site.

DMP has committed to raising \$600,000 which would be a match to the \$600,000 the City is putting into it. These numbers are pre-bid numbers and Buchanan said she did not know how the bids affected them. Linda McCarthy and her staff at DMP have been diligently working on raising funds to do this portion of the Caras Park improvements including removal of the concrete seating and flattening the bank a considerable amount. The seating will become ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible with more grass and less hardscape, along with some other infrastructure improvements including lighting and electrical service which is always a problem as events grow and food vendors become more sophisticated in terms of their offerings.

DMP has requested that MRA contribute \$50,000 to their fundraising effort. Buchanan said the Front Street District is getting a lot of attention and has a lot of requests and a lot of potential, but not a lot of money at this point. Staff thinks when certified taxable values come in early August, the District should see a significant increase in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenue, but there are no guarantees. Buchanan delineated in her memo some of the projects that should be assessed more fully that MRA hasn't seen full value from in the past including AC Hotel, restaurants in The Merc, the townhomes on LeVasseur Street and whatever amount of work has been done on the micro apartments as of the appraisal date of January 1st, and whatever additional value the Department of Revenue (DOR) gave to The Wren Hotel renovation. Buchanan said staff is recommending that the MRA Board approve this request, but do it with the same condition that has been placed on other approvals such as the Library and Wren Hotel, that the money will be forthcoming when it is available. It may be available come August, or later, but to be responsible it has to be conditioned like this.

Linda McCarthy, DMP, joined the meeting via Zoom with Robert Giblin, DMP's Director of Administration. She said she was at the Library Grand Opening and thanked the Board for their support to that project. That building and what happens there is the new anchor for downtown and something they are all very proud of. DMP is in the midst of a silent phase of a capital campaign and are trying to raise enough money for the Phase 1 improvements to Caras Park to start in October. She said it is a partnership with the City of Missoula

stormwater infiltration project which is in its second phase. The City bid the project last month and they came in a little higher than what the budget was. If they can fund the whole project it would be \$1.4 million for Phase 2. That includes rebuilding the amphitheater seating, putting grass in between rows of concrete, flattening the green hill and building a seating wall around it, adding lighting and power infrastructure, change the dead grass around the events ring into a plaza, and widening the riverfront trail from eight feet to 18 feet. DMP is working closely with Parks & Rec staff and Stormwater staff on this project. To date they have raised almost \$350,000 over the last eight weeks and feel confident they can get to where they need to go. They started out with a commitment to \$600,000 and have bumped that up to \$650,000. When DMP is done with their campaign they will ask Mayor Engen and Donna Gaukler, Director of Parks & Rec, if they can fill the gap that will be left over. DMP has about 20 more businesses they need to make the ask to and another 20 they need to follow up with. McCarthy said they have had really good response from a lot of different businesses in the community and are trying to do this with gifts and three-year pledges, if necessary, from Missoula's business community as opposed to going out and doing event fundraising for this project.

McCarthy said DMP has invested over \$650,000 into park improvements over the last ten years for things like building the stage, canopy over the stage, brick repair, painting, new walls, and upgrades to electrical. This would be Phase 1 of North Riverside Parks & Trails improvement and they will continue to work on other future phases which include the underbridge improvements, plaza for the Clark Fork Market, riverfront trail widening throughout the corridor into a plaza with formal access points to the water including ADA access, new restrooms and eventually an ice ribbon. Their goal with this plan is "parks for everyone". They've had more and more people living downtown and utilizing the riverfront parks and trails for more than just festivals and events. They need to create and maintain spaces that provide opportunities for all people year-round, and that is the primarily the goal of the North Riverside Parks & Trails Plan.

McCarthy said what's different about the North Riverside Parks & Trails Plan from the Downtown Master Plan is that everything in the North Riverside Parks & Trails Plan is public: public parks, public trails and public parking. Whereas with the Downtown Master Plan there is a lot of private investment needed to make that Plan come to fruition. DMP is hoping MRA can allocate \$50,000 of TIF to this project and be a part of the funds they bring to Mayor Engen and Gaukler as the match for getting Phase 1 done alongside the stormwater project.

Reineking said the North Riverside Parks & Trails Plan is really fantastic for the long-term. She said this is a good start. Englund asked McCarthy if the plan is to make modifications to what was bid or to raise the additional money. McCarthy said a little bit of both. DMP is upping their game in the fundraising space, but they will also have to tailor the bid a bit and dial down on some of the expenses. She did not know specifically what that would be at this point.

REINEKING: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD APPROVE A REQUEST FROM THE DOWNTOWN MISSOULA PARTNERSHIP FOR FUNDING FOR THE RECOMMENDED CARAS PARK IMPROVEMENTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$50,000 WITH THE CONDITION THAT FUNDING IS CONTINGENT UPON ADEQUATE FUNDING BEING AVAILABLE

AND PAYMENT WILL BE MADE ONLY AFTER THERE ARE ADEQUATE REVENUES AVAILABLE IN THE FRONT STREET URD AND AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE REQUIRED AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE MRA AND THE DOWNTOWN MISSOULA PARTNERSHIP OR THE MISSOULA DOWNTOWN FOUNDATION.

Moe seconded the motion.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (4 ayes, 0 nays).

MRA Audit Contract (FY21-FY23) – Request for Approval

Dunn said the City recently led the Request for Proposals (RFP) process for audit services for a five-year fiscal period and Anderson ZurMuehlen (AZ) was the sole respondent to that process. There is a link in Dunn's memo to their submittal. City staff, MRA and the Missoula Parking Commission (MPC) have reviewed their submittal and found it acceptable. AZ has routinely provided quality work for MRA and completed audits in a timely manner. Their staff is knowledgeable about TIF and the unique redevelopment programs we have here in Missoula.

Dunn said typically AZ assigns a supervisor to oversee the audit, but often there is a new staff person who comes in and does a lot of the field work. That provides a fresh set of eyes and a continuity of understanding of what MRA does, which is a great scenario. MRA gets a fresh set of eyes and also continuity. Dunn included in her memo a breakdown of AZ's fees and the cost for last year which was \$15,000. They are also proposing \$15,000 for FY21 and then a 5% increase for the subsequent years. The staff recommendation is approval of the proposal by AZ to provide audit services for MRA for fiscal years ending June 30, 2021 through June 30, 2025.

MOE: BASED ON OUR PAST EXPERIENCE WITH ANDERSON ZURMUEHLEN AND THE WORK THAT THEY'VE DONE FOR US AND WITH OUR STAFF, I MOVE THAT WE APPROVE THE PROPOSAL BY ANDERSON ZURMUEHLEN & CO., PC. TO PROVIDE AUDIT SERVICES FOR THE AGENCY FOR FISCAL YEARS ENDING JUNE 30, 2021 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2025 IN THE AMOUNTS REPRESENTED IN THIS MEMO.

Jones seconded the motion.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (4 ayes, 0 nays).

NON-ACTION ITEMS

Public Works Facilities Plan – Presentation by Jeremy Keene, Director of Public Works & Mobility

Jeremy Keene, Director of Public Works & Mobility, presented the Public Works Facilities Master Plan which was a partnership between MRA and Public Works & Mobility to take a look at their Scott Street area for future Public Works facilities, primarily focused on operational and maintenance space. He thanked MRA for the support and said it was a big

help to have MRA assistance to get the consultant hired and work on this study. He said there have been no final decisions made as the Master Plan is an informational piece to provide information and direction for them. It continues to be a work in progress as they work on the different puzzle pieces. They are interested in any input MRA has and the presentation is to give a sense of where they're headed.

View presentation here:

<https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/57020/Public-Works-Facilities-Master-Plan-Presentation-7-15-21>

Jones said it doesn't look like much of Parks & Rec will be moving to the Scott Street facility. Keene said that was correct, at the end of the day the only space designated for Parks & Rec is their vehicles including winter storage and when they are waiting to be serviced at Vehicle Maintenance. Reineking said in reading the report it looks like Parks & Rec wants to be scattered around. Keene said in talking with them it sounds like there is benefit in having satellite locations for both Parks & Rec and Public Works. For example, having a space out at Fort Missoula to store equipment/materials saves trips across town. Public Works and Parks & Rec are collaborating on that space as well as at the Wastewater Treatment Plant where Parks & Rec has space to do nursery for trees and compost. They are looking at where it makes sense to have other materials and equipment stored. Reineking said the report mentioned daily trips. Keene said they are looking at travel times and where they have to go to get material and reload. In general, they are planning to keep their sand and salt operations at Public Works on Scott Street. A lot of the recycling of material they are doing could be done out at the Wastewater Treatment Plant in conjunction with the compost operation and stockpiling of topsoil. Reineking said she doesn't doubt the benefits of having those materials out there, but the report said it's "very close", so she looked at a map and wondered how to get there. She said as the crow flies it might be "very close", but it is a roundabout way.

Reineking said she likes the Master Plan and wanted Keene to talk more about the road that goes around it and the new residential street. She said it will help all of the new residents that will go north of it in Villagio Apartments and the Ravara development, but if you still have to go south of that overpass over the railroad it is still through a fairly narrow residential road on Scott Street south of the Master Plan area. She said this is a good start and does not know what the solution is for south of the overpass. Ultimately something will have to happen for those residents. Keene said access to this area is one of the major constraints. Whether it's Public Works putting more facilities over there or developing more residential housing, the City will have to deal with transportation and access. Part of the Master Plan that was done for the North Reserve-Scott Street URD was to look at those new transportation routes. One idea is to create a new collector road that skirts to the south and connects to the interstate. The truck traffic can use a corner that runs along the edge of the residential area rather than going right through the middle of it. The railroad is a major constraint, and getting across the railroad with another crossing is not realistic to do any time soon. They do think that a new connection to the interstate is something that is more achievable and would alleviate a lot of the truck traffic. Keene said it is something they are prioritizing to try to get a project going to do a new interchange at Coal Mine Road.

Keene said also getting connectivity to the west is very important. Eventually a new road that connects all the way to Reserve Street will be important and those are conversations the City is having around both this Public Works project and the Scott Street residential project to identify when those things need to happen and what the priorities are for the different connections. Englund asked about the priority of the roads. Keene said he would like to see them be a near-term priority to establish that corridor. They don't have all of the right-of-way (ROW) they need up the interstate, but this piece would get them over to Rodgers or Cemetery Road which would be a good start. Reineking asked about the extension of Turner Street. Keene said it is something that Ravara is looking at right now to get neighborhood connectivity through their site. The drawings are very conceptual, but getting that neighborhood connectivity through the site is very important.

Reineking said Keene's report mentions green space buffers between some of the residential areas and asked him to elaborate. Keene said thinking about how the edge works between the Public Works facility that operates 24 hours/day and a residential neighborhood is really important. They tried to put some larger buildings that would help with buffering noise and then a green space outside of that to let those buildings scale-down to a neighborhood scale. That is one concept they have discussed with the Ravara architects as well and they will look at it and propose some ideas so the City's plan may be adapted with what they are doing. Another idea is that they can also use parking as a buffer.

Moe asked about the park that is proposed to be taken out where the Administration Building would be. She said it was referred to as an "undersized park", which to her is an acknowledgement that park space is needed in the area. She asked if the City has had meetings with the neighbors yet. Keene said the Ravara team had their first neighborhood meeting on Monday night. Moe asked what the neighborhood reaction is to taking that park out and where the City proposes to relocate a park in that area. Keene said the neighborhood is concerned about taking out the park. The City is looking at two sites to the north. One is the Catholic Cemetery property and they are discussing a possible lease for that land to allow for a five-acre park. The second option is to look at the land the City owns that was part of City Cemetery future development. It's the property they call the "Rodgers property", it is to the west of Shakespeare and north of Rodgers. Those are two options that would allow a larger park to be developed and the City will continue to work on those in concert with the Public Works Facilities Plan.

Moe said she likes the rerouting of the truck traffic to the south edge of the development and along the railroad tracks to get that traffic away from the residential areas. She said what she sees in the Plan is a lot of asphalt and roof space. In thinking about how hot it is this summer and how hot asphalt and roofs are, she asked what the discussion is on what to do with stormwater and wastewater that would be generated off of this area. Keene said their consultant spent time on this and they had a lot of good discussions around how to build sustainable buildings in this project. He said not all of the green space that could be there is shown, but part of the idea is that these green spaces can also be used for stormwater. They can look at other runoff minimization through things like green roofs or creating stormwater swales within the asphalt areas. He said that stuff has to get flushed out more, but Moe is right, it is a big space with a lot of hardscape.

Moe said this could be a model project to show how the City is doing such a large project and also complying with the Conservation and Climate Action Plan, Zero Waste, Climate Smart Missoula, and other initiatives the City is taking on to encourage environmentally conscious developments. She said this seems big and she would like to see it showcase those ideas. Keene agreed. He said they have to lead on this as the City and this is a facility they will own and operate for many years, so it makes all kinds of sense to do it right the first time. Moe asked when they will see that kind of development. Keene said it's really in the next phase of actually designing buildings and refining the site layout. It is something they will look at as they get into a more detailed design. Some of the other opportunities they've talked about are doing things like solar or ground source heat pumps at a site like this where they have a lot of area to be used to do the ground source heating or using wells to do that. They are exploring it both with the City's project and with the Ravara folks. Moe asked what kind of accommodations are going to have to be made for the power that this facility will need, and along with ground source heating, she asked if solar panels are part of the discussion. Keene said they want to follow the green energy resolutions for the City so they will look at how they can be at least purchasing green power or generating their own green power for a facility like this. With all of the roof area they have solar makes a lot of sense. He said they've had conversations with Republic Services about their methane recovery, which is also considered a green or sustainable method of providing power or fuel to vehicles. He said it's yet to come, but something they are definitely interested in doing.

Moe said she is concerned about purchasing green power, especially since NorthWestern Energy announced their plan for a new power plant that will be gas-fired, which is not green energy and seems to violate the agreements they have with a number of cities, including Missoula. Keene said their options are fairly limited in terms of what they can purchase on the market. Right now, unless something changes with the regulations, their best option for green power is to do it themselves and generate power behind the meter. With a large facility like this they are able to do that, but it's harder to do on an individual scale. Moe said she is glad they are thinking about all these things and looks forward to when MRA can receive more information about the planning. Keene said the other thing about designing green buildings is just efficiency. He said you gain an awful lot by just designing energy-efficient buildings so they have to use less power upfront. That is another opportunity they have to design these buildings in a way that they use less power.

Reineking asked if they will have sufficient charging stations for electric vehicles, based on the assumption that many of the City's fleets are going to move to electric vehicles, in partnership with Mountain Line that utilizes electric vehicles. Keene said Mountain Line is well on their way to doing that. The City is still exploring that and there is an opportunity with some of the smaller fleet vehicles to start to convert to electric. They haven't seen that technology available for diesel yet. The large, diesel heavy equipment is still a ways out before it can be electrified. The City will continue to look at that opportunity. Reineking asked if the City will plan ahead to have sufficient charging for the vehicles as they come on line. Keene said having charging stations for smaller fleet vehicles makes a lot of sense and is something that is easy to work into a project like this. Reineking said the replacements for diesel trucks might come sooner than they think with Europe's banning them. They will create a market. Keene said he hopes so and it's all about battery technology. The reason the buses work so well is because they run a fixed route that has

charging on a regular basis, whereas the equipment the City runs doesn't have as many opportunities for charging so they have to have a bigger battery to have the capacity.

Englund thanked Keene for his presentation. He said MRA funds studies and sometimes never hear what happens, so it was great to hear about the work that has been done and appreciates there is still a lot more to be done. Englund invited Keene to come back when they have more of the development figured out. Keene said he appreciates MRA's help to this point and will keep them in the loop as they move forward.

Buchanan added that one of the biggest challenges as they look at developing the Ravara property is how to balance all of the regulatory issues around parking, greenspace and wanting to maximize the housing in an appropriate way. This whole Public Works complex gives them an opportunity to be creative in terms of how the two projects together can begin to have some synergy, particularly around parking and the notion of a ground source grid. Having a project of this scale and size going on at the same time MRA is trying to develop housing on adjacent and nearby parcels really presents some opportunities we don't usually have. Englund said it is nice to know there are people thinking about this.

MRA Communications Plan & Recommendations – Presentation by Spider McKnight, Six Pony Hitch, LLC

Spider McKnight, Six Pony Hitch, gave a high-level presentation on her findings in the MRA Communications Plan. She thanked the Board for talking with her about her doing additional interviews and said they were super helpful and informative with great ideas. McKnight said they did a full audit of public documents and secondary research, but the core of the report is really the interviews. With close to 50 interviews she feels they achieved a diverse set of viewpoints. They talked to critics, supporters, developers, bankers, community members and activists, city officials, and city council. She noted they do have BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) representation in the interviews, but not as much as she would like. When she reached out to the BIPOC community they said they really didn't know much about TIF and didn't feel they would be a good interviewee.

McKnight said it is really clear that most people who were interviewed see the MRA and its use of TIF as critical to the future of Missoula and to addressing some of the big issues that exist right now and will exist in the future. It is also clear that everyone feels like they are not getting enough information and they want more information. Many of the issues that came up, even issues related to process, actually can be addressed with better communication which is good news.

McKnight said it is important to note that this is not a stand-alone issue for MRA. The biggest thing that came through for her was that this community has a lot of fear and anxiety happening right now around change and growth, and the issues that come with it including housing, income gap, climate change, and diversity/lack of diversity, political divisions and a general mistrust of government. She also noted that MRA and the City are not considered separate. It's basically as one goes, so goes the other. A lot of the recommendations in the Plan also apply to the City. McKnight said people don't separate them and a lot of the issues that people have spill onto all of the City if they have trouble with one department.

McKnight said she provided a summary of the interviews in the Plan. There is also a longer version in the appendix. In primary research, her goal is to stop when she finds consistency. She said for this, she could have gone on and on listening to people's different perspectives. In terms of solutions, four areas came up consistently. Some of them are within McKnight's purview and expertise and some of them aren't.

The first area is clear goals, priorities and metrics. Everyone felt like even if MRA is relating to plans, people aren't connecting the dots and seeing that. Even the critics want a yardstick to measure things by. She said if MRA can select four or five clear goals (such as housing or sustainability) then people would see that and it would start to dispel the myth that MRA is randomly choosing projects because they're friends of MRA or something like that. All of those misconceptions could be cleared away if there were clear goals and they were referred to frequently. Her recommendations section is detailed on how to reference that. McKnight added that she refers to Prosper Portland in the Communications Plan as a great model for MRA.

The second recommendation is transparent, accessible and comprehensive communication. McKnight said initially when people hear the word communication, a lot of them think you're going to do some flashy public relations campaign. She said that was frustrating, but once people realized that communication is actually public information, it is something that people really, really want. She gave MRA some foundational work that includes ways of reframing how you think about it and then she goes into messaging. Right now she thinks MRA needs to message the messaging to let people know what is happening and take ownership of the fact that MRA hasn't been the best at communicating but are working on it.

The next item is tactics. McKnight gives an order of things to do and where possible, gave specific examples. There are two levels, the first is things that are urgent and the second is things that are also important but can wait. Part of the first level is having somebody that is dedicated to communications. Social media is in the second level because McKnight doesn't think you can do social media until you have a dedicated communications person. McKnight recommends that the City look at having a larger Communications Department. Right now one person can't do all the things necessary to be done and it is important that the City have a more robust Communications Department. Ideally the City department could support the MRA. Until that happens, MRA may want to look at finding a dedicated communications person who can keep on top of this, gather the information and do the outreach/press/social media. It is quite a lot of work.

McKnight said people really want authentic community engagement. The number one thing is that people want to be heard and feel like they want to have a voice in this and they're not necessarily seeing where they're having a voice. She said this is also a bigger, City-wide issue of community engagement and how to do it and how to improve it. There is a large section on that in the Plan.

The final suggestion from what McKnight heard from the community is they want a more inclusive process in governance. This is not in McKnight's purview and area of expertise, but she gave a lot of examples and resources about that. She said there is a notion of MRA as a "club" and they are trying to dispel that to show that is not what's happening.

McKnight said process came up a lot for people and that is not something she was tasked to change or give information about. Since it came up a lot, she created a section on process with ideas from the community. As people mentioned things or had problems, McKnight would go back with her secondary research and look for models around the country that supported it.

Englund said at this point the MRA Board and staff need to digest this. He suggested doing a workshop or special meeting in the future. As a Board, it may be that their main focus be how to hire a person dedicated to this and then turn it back over to staff to use the Plan as a roadmap for what to do.

Jones thanked McKnight for her work on this project and said it is a very meaningful work product that can be used by MRA, but more importantly can be used more broadly for the City of Missoula. The big question is what's next. From her perspective MRA needs to step back and collaborate with other members of the City of Missoula in order to determine what those next steps may be because there is so much overlap and broader application to other City agencies and bodies. Any dollars taken away from MRA, or any agency of the City, may take away from other important work and the only way we can tackle this problem is collaboratively with other City agencies, in her opinion, to make it cost-effective to both do the good work that needs to be done and also communicate effectively with members of our community. Jones said she sees this as two steps forward, but now we need to take a step back and bring in others to assist on deciding what it is we do next.

Reineking said she wasn't entirely sure she shared Jones' perspective. She said there are a lot of things in the report that MRA can do immediately, even without hiring somebody, and maybe MRA should look at prioritizing that and see what can be done right away. She said McKnight rightly pointed out that having our own dedicated communications person could achieve great things for the MRA and serve as a model for the City. She said she isn't sure she would wait for the City to create a department when there could be benefits to MRA and the City if MRA hired somebody. She said she hasn't read the report completely and isn't necessarily recommending that at this time, but thinks MRA should consider it. Jones said she agreed with Reineking and that there is some low hanging fruit that should be adopted. She looked to staff to give the Board some recommendations on what recommendations from McKnight can be implemented immediately. Englund said the critical thing they all agree on is that they need to think about what's next. That will not be decided today and they would be better off having a special meeting for it. The kind of discussion that Jones and Reineking just had is what MRA needs to do.

McKnight said there are some things with the website too. She said it is the main place people go and is the biggest decision of how to move forward with that website because there are limitations. It is important that the City is involved in that. There is a big issue about transparency, and not that the MRA isn't transparent, it's just that people don't get the information and they don't get it in context. She tried to put a content strategy in there with general ideas of what the home page could look like. For example, McKnight said she heard frequently that it's great MRA is spending \$1 million on housing, but they don't know what percent of the budget that is. People feel like information is not complete, so the website is where a lot of that can be remedied.

Englund said this kind of stuff is what Reineking is referring to as low-hanging fruit. Not that it doesn't take a lot of time which staff may not have at this point. He asked if there were any other questions for McKnight today and then wanted to have a discussion on where to go from here. Buchanan said she sent the report to Mayor Engen and Dale Bickell, Chief Administrative Officer, and to Ginny Merriam, Communications Director. She said the ramifications of the Plan are maybe even greater for the City than for MRA. There's this give and take there that if the City's going to do A, then MRA should do B; or if the City's not going to do anything for a year and MRA wants to move forward with certain aspects of this then maybe MRA does C. Discussions need some input from the Administration about what their path forward might be because she doesn't think you can separate the two. If the City had a robust Communications Department would MRA need a person solely dedicated to communications for MRA and the answer is probably not. There would be a system that MRA fits into and right now we don't have that. She said there needs to be some discussion with the Mayor's office and with the Communications Office that exists today and then the City, as a body, decides how MRA moves forward most efficiently. Englund suggested following up with the City to see where that is and once staff has a sense of that they can bring it back to the Board for discussion. Englund asked if it was possible to have everyone in the same room for that discussion. Buchanan said the City has not reached a point yet where City Council can have hybrid meetings, which will lead the charge. Merriam said Bickell told her in the last couple of days that the Information Technologies (IT) Dept. is ready to start testing a hybrid solution and will test it on Committees in the next couple of weeks, so they are very close.

The decision was made to let Administration have an opportunity to go through the Plan and see where they're going with this. Once staff has a sense from them, they can sit down with the Board and start talking about MRA's slice of it. Buchanan said once the Administration has had time to read through and digest the Plan, she will sit down with them and do some strategizing, look at timelines and that sort of thing. She said the City is in the midst of Budget presentations right now, so it is certain they're not going to create a robust Office of Communications in FY22. Englund said that doesn't mean MRA can't do a bunch of stuff that then morphs into that. Buchanan agreed.

STAFF REPORTS

Director's Report

Buchanan said in the time since she wrote her memo, with respect to the West Broadway Master Plan, they are feeling like there may be the need for additional public input, probably in the form of a focus group. The focus group would focus on the neighborhood input. The neighborhood has made input and there have been a lot of public forums, but they are sensing some frustration that could be addressed through something that is really geared to the Westside neighborhood. Staff will talk with Dover, Kohl & Partners (DKP) about putting together one last focus group before they have to get all of their comments on the draft Master Plan and have them ready to come back with a final set of recommendations.

Buchanan said Gass is moving forward with the Request for Proposals (RFP) on the water infrastructure and sidewalk projects that were approved as part of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Once staff has firms and scope of services it will come back to the Board for approval before moving forward with any design.

Budget Reports

Dunn said MRA's expenditures and revenues will continue to come in and will be accrued to the appropriate period. She attached last year's preliminary budget to the agenda for reference, and hopefully will have an updated version of that for the August meeting because the taxable values from the DOR should come in on August 2nd.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Buchanan noted they had their first public meeting on the Ravara project at the Scott Street property. It was amazing, there were about 50-70 citizens there in addition to the team that has been working on it. They got great feedback, input and exchange of information.

OTHER ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lesley Pugh