

University Neighborhood Council Leadership Team Minutes

November 1, 2022
6:30 PM
UM, University Center

1. **Introductions, Welcome to New Members, Roll Call**
 - a. Darcy Caron (Chairperson), Rick Caron, Brandon McMahon, Hayden Whipple, Herman Haw, Allison Wilson, Emily Ferguson-Steger, Kalina Pritchard, Vickie Watson, and Jennifer Copley (Secretary) answered roll call.
2. **Approval of Minutes for September 6, October 4, October 11, 2022**
 - a. Rick moved, Brandon seconded, and all approved the minutes from previous meetings.
3. **Program Presentation: Local Government Study – John Fletcher**
 - a. John reported that our 1972 Constitution requires that voters should be offered a local government review every ten years. Such a review potentially involves three votes: (a) A 2024 decision in every county about whether to consider changes to local government; (b) For counties voting “yes,” the formation of a 7-member elected study commission to do the 18-month long study voters approved; (c) A community vote in 2026 to approve or disapprove any suggested changes. The studies must be funded by the level of government voting to complete a study. Missoula last did a study 20 years ago.

Rick asked if there is a website/information source for interested parties. John, who can be reached at (406) 721-4269 or fletcher@montana.com or P.O. Box 8381, reported that the League of Women Voters is working on creating such a source available statewide in 2023. The League will also hold public forums.

4. **Discussion Items**

Review of Comments/Ideas from General Meeting

- a. Jennifer categorized the general concerns as threefold: (a) parking, (b) building plans of the former Missoulain site, and (c) consequences of the inflatable winter practice “field.” Darcy added that some residents complained about bicyclists using sidewalks rather than streets.
- **Parking**

Rick Caron was approached by one of the area residents concerned about parking issues. Hayden asked what the Neighborhood Council could do about parking, and Kalina responded that there will be public commentary as part of the study planned by the City. After conferring and walking the neighborhood with a City official, Rick reported there are many areas where

people cannot park because the areas are not up to code. However, Rick believes that Gwen Jones is now on notice that neighbors are concerned about parking issues and willing to organize.

- **Missoulain Site**

The former Missoulain site is operating within legal codes so opportunities for discussion are limited.

- **U District Social Gatherings**

Some area residents asked for more community gatherings, but the ASUM ice cream social drew few participants, and the Neighborhood Ambassadors feel the activity has run its course. Rick suggested that such activities need to build up momentum over time. John Fletcher added that he was involved years ago when U District gatherings were more popular but remembered that such area parties were costly and challenging to run. Kalina reported that some districts have had large gatherings, but Darcy reminded members that the U District spring clean-up drew few volunteers.

Kalina suggested we could host a pickleball competition to initiate the pickleball courts. Members suggested inviting well-known performers who live locally. Darcy explained how hard it is hard to get information out to the community. Perhaps, suggested by Kalina, we could partner with Greek Life rather than Neighborhood Ambassadors. Emily and Herman concurred that partnerships might work well in future ventures.

Rick commented that the unique student-elder mix in the U District may require creative planning for events. Emily offered her experience, saying that outdoor movies combined with food seemed to encourage people to congregate. The oval, added Vicki, is a great place to hold a gathering.

After listening to commentary and suggestions, Darcy suggested that over the next months we should begin to plan an activity for our neighborhood. Then Vicki Watson shared mini posters that might draw people to a “Town and Gown Dance” at the U Ballroom on November 19, and community contra dances held bimonthly at the neighborhood Senior Center.

- **Animal and Human Waste Issues**

Darcy reminded those present of U District concerns about safety and waste on the trails like the Kim Williams trail. Kalina mentioned that the City has a Crime Prevention Officer who will come to homes and groups to talk about safety. Vicki told the leadership team of the cleanup on Jacob’s Island and the large amounts of trash removed. She explained that volunteers used gloves and special containers for needles. Kalina promised to get a specialized volunteer group to help with needle disposal for future cleanups.

Rick reviewed the history of Jacob's Island for new members. Hayden suggested and Jennifer supported the suggestion that this group could urge the City to do some renovation of the native habitat of the dog park area. Hayden said that as City pays attention to the pedestrian bridges, it could expand its attention to the condition of Jacob's Island. Jennifer reminded the members that leadership teams can lobby to awaken the City Council to the needs of their neighborhoods. Hayden expressed concern about the unhoused people's encampments on the river's edge resultant traffic into and out of the riverbank areas. Allison said the City may create a wheel-chair access to the river. Vicki reminded us of City Parks and Recreation plans to make environmentally safe "hard" access points along the river. Hayden voiced objection to a rigidly fenced area. Rick said, we have to rein in the Bark Park dog use in order to save the area. Emily reasoned that limiting one kind of use will inevitably increase other uses. Kalina reminded us of the interest of the Three Rivers Collaborative in preserving the environment along the river.

Neighborhood Grant Application Ideas

Kalina announced that there will a workshop Monday by Microsoft Teams about how to write and win Neighborhood grants. Applications will be due Friday, December 15. A committee of Community Forum members evaluated the grants, and the full Community Forum must approve awards.

Vicki suggested seeking more bicycle racks for Bonner Park. Allison said that we should look for other partners to support any projects chosen, and when Rick urged writing a grant to add elder exercise equipment, Jennifer and Vicki added that our grant proposal might emphasize that elder exercise equipment could be useful to all age groups.

Darcy suggested we might sponsor a mural for the backside of the bandshell. Haydn encouraged effort could improve the baseball site. City Parks and Rec, said Jennifer, had also urged us to consider improvements to the volleyball pit. Darcy and Allison suggested that in making improvements, we might partner with fraternities represented by Hayden and Herman. Again, Darcy reminded members that we might have more neighborhood interest if we created one big event to both work on a project and share treats.

Kalina reminded the leadership team that the grant application has recently been simplified. When discussion arose about last years' rejected proposal for a study of adding elder exercise equipment, Kalina explained that Neighborhood Grants will now focus on proposals that create tangible results. As City Parks and Rec do their yearlong planning

in January-February, we will be able to better align our grant proposals with the city's goals.

(c) Action Plans Arising from Citizen Concerns and Leadership Team

Discussion

Darcy led members in formulating an action plan to prepare for the December meeting at which members will finalize plans for the 2022 grant proposal.

- Darcy will invite a City Parks and Recreation official to address the U District Leadership Team about (1) the City's plans for the riverfront area; (2) the City's plans for elder exercise equipment; (3) City plans to improve the volleyball pit at Bonner Park; (4) City plans to improve the T-ball area at Bonner Park; (5) the addition of bike racks at Bonner Park.
- Allison will search for grants to help fund the projects and assist Darcy and Jennifer in writing this year's grant proposal.
- Jennifer will research AARP elder rants and again assist Darcy in writing the grant proposal.
- Hayden will go to Bonner Park to assess needs for the T-ball area.
- Vicki will make campus inquiries seeking help for decorating the Bonner band shell and finding support in the Health and Human Performance to support the addition of elder exercise equipment.
- Via email, all members will keep others informed of their progress in preparing for the December meeting.

5. Community Forum Report

- a. Prior to the meeting, Jennifer emailed each member a summary of the October Community Forum meeting. Paper copies of that report were also made available at the meeting. No questions were raised.

6. UM Representatives Reports

- a. Kat Cowley was unable to attend, but Emily Steger reported on the ongoing "Can the Cats" competition. She said that Clearwater Credit Unit has offered \$1000 to the Greek Chapter that bringing in the most food. The chapter will then sign over the check to a favored charity.

7. Leaf Raking Report

- a. Rick Caron explained that the City will be picking up leaves in the U District on November 7, so this year's raking project will begin on November 8. Rick and the UM Athletic Department have recruited more than 30 athlete-volunteers. A local composting company has donated bags and pick-up service. This year, Rick reported, any group breaking a rake will have to pay for it.

8. Neighborhood Budgets

- a. Information was not made available to the Office of Neighborhoods.

9. **Missoula Neighborhoods Report**

- a. Having made clarifying remarks throughout the meeting, Kalina added that to talk about local mental health issues, the National Alliance on Mental Illness wants to provide speakers for Neighborhood Councils.

10. **Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items**

- a. Vicki noted that Trout Unlimited volunteers cleaned out trash and rescued fish in the neighborhood's irrigation district.

11. **Announcements**

- a. Hearing no further announcements, Darcy adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM.