

MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

CONDENSED BOARD MEETING MINUTES

April 15, 2009

FINAL

A meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency was held at MRA Conference Room, 140 W. Pine, Missoula, MT 59802 at 12:00 PM. Those in attendance were as follows:

Board: Hal Fraser, Rosalie Cates, Karl Englund, Daniel Kemmis

Staff: Ellen Buchanan, Chris Behan, Kari Nelson, Tod Gass, Jilayne Lee, Lesley Pugh

Public: Kathy Olsen, Public Art Committee; Joan Jonkel, Public Art Committee; Jamie Lockman, MRA Rep to the HPC

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 18, 2009 Regular Board Meeting Minutes were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lee announced that the City of Missoula is undergoing development of a new website and it should be up and running May 8.

Cates said the North Higgins Street improvements are going to get funded and said Buchanan played a key role in keeping that project alive. Kathy Olsen, Public Art Committee, also gave accolades to Buchanan for spearheading the River City Roots Festival which received a major tourism award.

Historic Preservation Update from Jamie Lockman

Jamie Lockman said the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) passed their Historic Preservation Ordinance. Lockman also announced the HPC has three new members and there is still an opening for a University member. Lockman said the Preservation Awards will be announced on May 8 as part of the Preservation Conference that's taking place.

Buchanan asked how the historic overlay works with the zoning code rewrite. Lockman said there's still work to be done on it and right now it's getting the pieces in place so that more work can be done with it and the historic overlay can be developed. Buchanan asked if changes anything on the ground if the Council passes the rewrite. Lockman said she believes there are a few things that it still could change as far as historic preservation.

STAFF REPORTS

Director's Report

East Front St. Parking Structure

Buchanan said there should be a signed Buy-Sell on the Macy's property. However, they lost their access to New Markets Tax Credits due to timing issues.

Greater Downtown Master Plan

Buchanan said the City Council seems supportive of this Plan and they're okay with letting Broadway be neutral at this point. It won't go before the Planning Board until June because of the zoning code rewrite. Therefore, it won't be adopted as part of the Growth Policy until sometime this summer or fall. Cates commended Linda McCarthy and Rod Austin for doing great work with the Greater Downtown Master Plan.

FY09 Budget Status Reports – URD II, URD III

Lee reviewed the reports.

ACTION ITEMS

Traffic Signal Box Public Art Project – URD II & URD III Request for Approval

Lee reviewed her memo regarding the proposed Public Art Project involving traffic signal boxes at different locations throughout Missoula. She said the Public Art Committee's request to MRA is for \$6,000 total including \$3,000 in URD II and \$3,000 in URD III.

Kathy Olsen gave a presentation of the Public Art Committee's proposed project. Kemmis said he noticed it varies from city to city on whether or not the base gets treated in any way. He asked what the plan for Missoula is. Olsen replied that right now they're concentrating on the signal boxes themselves and leaving the bases up to the artist's discretion on whether or not they want to include it. Kemmis said he wanted to see the base incorporated or at the least treated in some way so that it's not such a sharp contrast. Olsen said neither the State nor the City have objection to that so they can include the base.

Fraser said the Committee has 110 good reasons to do this project and encouraged them to prepare themselves for pushback in today's economy for painting power boxes versus some of the other things going on economically. On a positive note, he said he thinks it's a great project that gives MRA visibility in the Districts. Olsen said their plan is to have a brick around the base that denotes the sponsors.

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Cates suggested extending an invitation to a high school artist.

Nelson said the Missoula Midtown Association (MMA) has been talking about doing some entrance areas and/or banners to have a branding for Midtown and would probably be interested in this project. Buchanan said the BID Streetscapes Committee is very excited about the project and want to help get some painted Downtown.

MOTION

KEMMIS: I MOVE APPROVAL OF TAX INCREMENT ASSISTANCE IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$3,000 FOR URD II AND \$3,000 FOR URD III TO FUND THE CANVASSING OF SIX TRAFFIC SIGNAL BOXES AS PRESENTED IN THE MEMORANDUM. Cates seconded the motion. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Motion passed unanimously. Moe absent.

Jonkel thanked the MRA Board and said the public art in Missoula is largely attributed to the support of the Board members of the MRA.

FY10 PRELIMINARY BUDGET – REQUEST FOR APPROVAL

Lee pointed out one error with the amount of a transfer that goes into the Safeway/St. Patrick Hospital project. She said that changes the contingency in URD II by \$446,884 less. Lee reviewed the preliminary budget with the Board. She said the City is moving away from a lengthy budget document and the narratives will become obsolete. She said they will be maintained by MRA for internal purposes.

Cates asked if the City is only doing COLAs this year. Buchanan replied employees will be lucky to get COLAs. She said it is built into the budget right now.

Lee said the City is moving away from replacing computers every four years and has moved towards a green approach where the warranty insurance will be kept up and computers will be kept until there's a problem with them or they stop working.

Buchanan and Behan discussed what's going on in this legislative session. Buchanan said the bill that affects MRA is how they're going to mitigate the reappraisal. She said there was an amendment approved in the Senate to the reappraisal bill that will exempt new construction from the phase-in. Buchanan said with the way the reappraisal bill is, it's not revenue neutral and the Cities, Counties and State will lose revenue. She said as the bill stands right now, Safeway no longer will generate enough money to service the debt and Safeway Corp. will have to make up the deficiency. She said First Interstate Bank loses \$100,000 a year with the way it's currently structured versus what's in place today. Behan said his question is who benefits. Cates asked what "new construction" is. Buchanan replied it would be First Interstate Bank, the new Safeway, anything built at the Millsite, etc. Behan added that it also includes anything that's newly taxable. Buchanan said the other bill they're monitoring closely is the stimulus bill. Discussion ensued.

Cates said it seemed to her that MRA should devote some Staff time to policy work to protect itself. She said some of that needs to occur between sessions. Cates said as a Board member, she would be open to putting some Staff time toward interim policy work. Buchanan said Staff does do that and there was a network established as a result of the last session that involved all the cities with tax increment districts and some of the counties. She said she thought the network kind of collapsed and there wasn't the leadership in place that's needed. Englund said he's willing to have something in place and thinks the Mayor needs to tell MRA that he's willing to lead or find someone to lead. Cates asked Staff to update the Board at the next meeting about what happens.

Lee noticed the preliminary budget was missing a couple of pages to go with the chart on page 18.

Change tape 1/tape 2

Kemmis asked how Staff decides which district carries how much of the administrative services. Lee replied that Staff tracks project time on timesheets.

Fraser asked what's been discussed about Tremper's since they brought their project in. Nelson replied she and Buchanan met with Jeremy Keene from WGM Group. Keene said they have been negotiating with Northwestern Energy. Nelson said it sounded like they are willing to participate but it's going to be very expensive to put everything underground so they've been talking about different options. Nelson said there will be a revised proposal coming to MRA in the next month or so. Buchanan said the project will be scaled back.

Englund asked if the money in the contingency accounts can be moved from one contingency account to another. Lee replied yes.

MOTION

ENGLUND: I MOVE WE APPROVE THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET SUBJECT TO UPDATES AND FINAL NUMBERS COMING TO THE STAFF. Cates seconded the motion. 4 ayes, 0 nays. Motion passed unanimously. Moe absent.

NON-ACTION ITEMS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

OTHER ITEMS

Fraser said Larry Swanson is heading up a seminar on April 28th regarding the economy. Fraser said he is on the panel and asked if he could get numbers on the history of money spent in the Districts.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lesley Pugh

Lesley Pugh
Secretary II