

The Grant Creek Neighborhood Council General Meeting
Wednesday, May 25, 2011, 7–9:15 p.m.
Grant Creek Inn, 5280 Grant Creek Road, Missoula, MT

Katie Deuel, Moderator

Agenda

1. **Welcome**- Brian Walter welcomed and thanked all participants.
2. Lori Morin will take minutes of the meeting and counted about 120 people in the audience. 130 individuals signed in on sign-in sheets.
3. Katie Deuel was introduced as a volunteer moderator and she then covered the ground rules for the meeting. The meeting needs to be civil and respectful.
4. **Approval of Minutes—April 15, 2008 General Meeting** (Posted at <http://mt-missoula.civicplus.com/archives/116/Minutes%204-15-08%20gen%20mtg.pdf>). Passed with no negative votes.
5. **Updates on the status of neighborhood initiatives**
 - a. Beetles, Bears, Firewise, Elk Update (2 minutes)

Presenter:

Bert Lindler, Grant Creek resident: Robert Dillon was here to talk about pine beetles. Bert reminded everyone to create a defensible space around your home in case of wildfire. DNRC will send someone out to evaluate your fire-readiness on request (contact Eric Norris of the DNRC Forestry Division at 542-4313 or by email at enorris@mt.gov). A bear kit on how to live with bears effectively is available. Do not leave out your trash the night before. The Elk herd is more plentiful (470) than the land can accommodate. The Elk will go home to the Rattlesnake for the summer, but may need some encouragement to leave the Butler Creek pastures.

- b. Recap of outstanding Neighborhood Council Capital Improvement Requests (CIP)

Presenter:

Brian Walter, Grant Creek resident (3 minutes)

1. 2004 request to have a right turn lane on I-90 (again in 2007 and 2008)
2. Park and ride, bus stop & trailhead parking close to Sevenar - multiple requests (2006,07,08)
3. Median Landscaping at I-90 and Grant Creek road (2006), also recommended by Community Forum
4. Grant Creek Trail, 2006 initiative, resubmitted in 07 and 08.

All but # 4 has been removed by the city from their agenda. The city needs to take us seriously on these issues. The I-90 lane configuration design has been prepared by the State and the State will pay part of the costs. The city part of the trail is scheduled to begin 2012. A park and ride is needed to facilitate this project.

- 4. Snowbowl Expansion and effect of resultant traffic increase**

Presenter:

Paul Matter, Missoula District Ranger (10 minutes)

Snowbowl expansion is reviewed. A mid- 90s master plan with roadwork was approved. This project is close to being done. Improvements in 1996 expansion will be done. In 2005, an expansion plan was presented to Forest Service. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was contracted to PBS&J as this is a Forest Service project. It was open for public comment until mid-March. The Neighborhood Council and about 60 individuals submitted comments. The comments will be reviewed, and incorporated into the Final EIS. Paul thinks it is a good plan. Final EIS is coming along, and is expected in late summer. A lot of work yet to be done. The decision will come at the end of the year. Paul referred to the map (blue is existing ski terrain, purple is new)

Question: Where is access to the expansion? Answer: No additional parking is proposed. The existing road is the only access. Most additional parking will be down here and Snowbowl will run "nonstop shuttles" periodically throughout the day.

Brad Morris, Montana Snowbowl, deferred his allotted time to the question period. (5 minutes)

5. Remarks by Steve King, City Public Works Director Re: outstanding capital requests and means to mitigate effects of Snowbowl traffic increase. (5 minutes)

Car pooling and the use of a shuttle will be essential to deal with increased traffic. All residents – and professional shuttlebus drivers - need to set the pace of travel to enhance safety on Grant Creek Road. Both will be essential for Snowbowl expansion.

The other problem is the mixed traffic. Grant Creek Road is not a "complete street" for multiple users. There is no shoulder, drainage, etc. for multiple uses. He applauds the trail project for addressing multiple uses.

Capital projects: Lots of ideas, not a lot of money. The trail is successful because of a good idea and a money match. Again, there are no grant funds for capital improvements, such as a landscaping project. Park and ride is ongoing seasonally for skiers, but a community park and ride (with bus stop) is not planned as there is no funding.

Right turn lane on I-90 is a known congestion problem and a funding challenge. State has acknowledged responsibility for a multi-lane traffic signal. City is trying to fund the non-traffic signal portion. It is not in the CIP now, but may come back into funding cycle in the near future.

Enhancing Mullan and Reserve intersection. County created a concept for a Northbound dual left turn lane. State has picked up funding and it will happen this summer. The rest of the signals on North Reserve will be re-timed for better coordination with this intersection's signal.

Public comments from the floor on Topics 3, 4, and 5 (15 minutes total, comments limited to 3 minutes Items of concern raised during the Q&A period were added to a list on an easel for later consideration.

Question: Safety at Mullan and Reserve is an issue. Will the refuge island be removed?
Answer: Yes, the NW refuge island will go, but the timing for crosswalks will increase and the dedicated left hand turn will be safer to cross than the present left-optional lane. Both will help with safety. The refuge island on SE will stay. Work will be done at night and off-hours.

Question: Is there a plan to pave lower part of Snowbowl road? Answer: No plans at present, was not part of 1996 EA. It could be looked at in the 2011 EIS.

Comment: Please pave just past the 180 degree switchback turn on Snowbowl road.

Question: (to S. King) Have you considered a three lane option at the I-90 intersection for southbound Grant Creek Road traffic? Answer: All options will be considered.

Question: What can be done about the totally dead Ponderosa pine tree along Grant Creek Road? Answer: it is really not a public works issue but the urban forester can deal with it if it is in the public right-of-way. (If on private property, the owner is responsible.) Jackie Corday asked to be called so she can figure out where it is in order to determine what to do. Could the questioner please give her name to Jackie so she can follow-up.

Comment: **The need for paving on Snowbowl road underscored** (by Joe DeGraw). The potholes and ruts are a hazard, and residents have been complaining for 30 years. It's time to start accumulating funds to pave this 1/4 mile stretch.

Comment: Since 80% of the traffic at the I-90 interchange is turning left onto I-90 or going straight, why would you made a dedicated right turn lane? You can make the right hand lane be an "option lane" – for vehicles turning right and going straight at I-90.

Question: When will the pot holes be fixed on Grant Creek road? King answers: Call in big pot holes or use the web to notify public works. And public works will take care of them if they are a hazard. Call 552-6345. (City only)
For county potholes, call the county public works. Otherwise, drive slowly.

Comment: Pine beetle. Some folks have beetle-infested pine trees on their property, while others have worked hard to remove their dying trees. Please take care of your own trees, so others' efforts aren't wasted. (DNRC can send a forester to evaluate your trees – Eric Norris, contact info as listed above)

Question: Why don't we have a park and ride? Answer: No funding.

Question: Why don't we have mass transit? Answer: Mountain Line operates on 2 principles –Is the area in a transit district (i.e. paying taxes into the transit system) and 2, what is the demand?

Comment- EIS review –only about 10% of skiers on a post-expansion peak day can be shuttled from existing park and ride lot. Cars will double with no additional parking. We need a major road improvement. City transportation board needs to work with

Snowbowl for more parking at bottom of the road, or find another site, which could also include a city transit stop. Also, a skier shuttle pickup near the University should be considered.

Update Grant Creek Trail Project (planned for construction during 2012 in the city & scheduled for 2015 in the county)

- a. Update on City portion of project (15 minutes)

Presenters:

David Shaw and Jacquelyn Corday, Missoula Parks and Recreation Department
Nathan Lucke from Territorial Landworks is also available.

Dave Shaw shows a Power Point presentation that will be available on the Parks website for further review. Hold questions and comments. There are really 2 projects, 2 miles in the city, 1.3 miles in the county. A map on the wall shows the route as determined by the easements on private property and Grant Creek Road right of way.

The trail will be an 8' wide paved trail, essentially parallel to the road in most places, running from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to Snowbowl Road. All 8 of the needed easements have been granted and recorded in Missoula County records. Safety is the main issue. There is a real need for the project, with Grant Creek Road's speed, curves, sight-distance issues and lack of shoulder. And there is no other way for Grant Creek residents to have an active means to get up and down the valley. It's about the health of the community, safe transportation and active recreation.

The city will maintain the entire trail and the city ordinances will apply. Evaluation of a possible route on the east side of the road was done by Territorial Landworks and they recommended a west side trail. Cost of west side is about the same as east; however, because the utilities will have to be worked around on east side it would have been a very unpredictable and steep cost. Also, switching sides of the road would have required multiple trail crossings, which is a major safety concern. Another option that was considered and rejected would have been to incorporate wider shoulders onto the road for use as bike lanes, but with the 45 mph speed limit this option would serve very few users (adults who are comfortable riding close to 45+ mph traffic).

This has been a grass roots effort of at least 15 years' duration with community folks coming to city and county. All 8 easements were donated by private landowners and homeowners' associations, not purchased. The county and city just did a county-wide survey and trails are on the top of the list - paved commuter trails are ranked as the 2nd highest need in the city (70% of respondents in the city and 64% combining both city and county).

A match will be needed (about: \$216,000 City and \$107,000 County). CTEP funds are handled differently by city and county. City moved their CTEP funds up and will start construction in spring of 2012. County will be ready in 2015. The 2 miles in the city will serve 73% of residents. The Grant Creek Trail Association is made up of valley residents who are volunteers and have incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit to assist in fundraising and other support for the trail.

Jackie Corday: Jackie reviewed the requirement of The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970. Contrary to the direction they had been given by Montana DOT at the start of the process, they were informed 2 years after beginning the process of obtaining the easements, that in order to use federal CTEP funds, they also had to

get waivers from those 8 easement grantors acknowledging the donation of said easement. To date, 7 of 8 waivers have been signed.

Based upon public comments received, the Parks Dept can see that it will be awkward to stop the trail at city/county line until the county portion can be completed. Parks is on record to address this issue. They would like to end at Old Grant Creek Road but there is not enough money to include this portion of the county segment.

b. Update on County portion of project (10 minutes)

Presenter: Jean Curtiss, Chair, Missoula County Commission and Jeff Seaton, Assistant Director County Public Works

Jean Curtis: The county has an informal way of putting projects on their list. They will be more formal as the County Parks & Trails Plan is now in place. Two projects are ahead of the Grant Creek Trail on the county list. Frenchtown folks brought the issue of their trail to the county as a result of an accident. Lolo trail in the works as there is no bus for kids to get to school. When these 2 projects are completed, all county CTEP funds for the next 4 years will be dedicated to the Grant Creek Trail, along with any monies left from the other projects. She reminds everyone to lobby our federal officials to support keeping funding for bike/ped infrastructure in the next federal transportation bill.

Jeff Seaton (county public works): The county has been trying to come up with solutions to the trail funding as this is a rare project with both city and county jurisdiction. They are limited because they are asking for federal money. Cost is significant and more expensive than the average trail. It is a very long process. The county receives approx. \$200,000 per year in CTEP funds. They need to pool money for next 4 years to get sufficient funds for their portion of the Grant Creek Trail. They are not taking any new nominations for projects until the Grant Creek Trail project is done.

c. Matching funds (5 minutes)

Presenter:

John Beighle, President, Grant Creek Trail Association

John Beighle thanked everyone for coming. He explained the trail effort has been a grassroots effort and the 501c3 non-profit association has 7 board members. The association is coordinating a lot of the effort and wants to make sure everyone's needs are met. We have received \$30,000 in donations. We applied for 2 Fish, Wildlife and Parks grants to fill a ravine and help with the trail on Dirk and Kim Visser's property. He also extended thanks to all 8 easement donators but most especially Washington Corporation as the majority of the trail is on Washington ranch property.

d. Public comments from the floor (20 minutes total, comments limited to 3 minutes)

Question: Will the county portion of the trail when completed connect to the Ravine Trail?

Answer: John Beighle said that effort will be phase II, along with possible connections to the trail system in the Rattlesnake.

Question: Why can't deer and elk crossing signs be posted? Answer: Because signs get stolen. The Ninemile has warning signs stenciled on the road so this may be an option.

Question: Will the city maintain the entire trail once the trail is done? Answer: Yes.

Question: Will there be snow removal? Answer: Yes, it is top priority and trails are often plowed before roads.

Question: Has inflation for the county portion been considered? Yes and if there is inflation the trail will wait a little longer as there is no way to plan to pay for inflation. However, there are low construction costs right now.

Comment: The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Mueller family are on the record in support of the trail. The trail won't fix all the safety issues as elk and deer are everywhere. Please clear the trees, etc. back from the right of way in order to improve visibility and reaction time.

Reminder: There is a North Hills elk herd meeting at the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Thursday at 7 p.m.

Question: How many people and/or houses are in Grant Creek? Answer: 730 addresses are used in the association mailings.

Comment: Wendell Beardsley bought his lot in 1977 with the promise from Reed Marbut that there would be a trail, so the notion has been around for over 30 years. He wants county to get their part done sooner rather than later and before someone gets killed.

Comment: Kristi Dubois says the area needs connectivity for our kids.

Question: Can the last part of the trail be left unpaved if money is an issue? Answer: We need creative solutions to this problem. The trail might be able to be graveled, but CTEP requires ADA accessibility so we would need to pave if we used CTEP funding. Gravel is less expensive, but not that much less. And the cost in this section is high due to topographical challenges.

Question: The RMEF trail is not plowed now so will it get plowed when the rest of the trail is complete? Answer: The RMEF is a private trail and is not connected, but after it is connected, it will be maintained, as it will then be cost-effective to plow a longer trail.

Question: Can you build the last section of the trail from the city to the county line with private funds? Answer: Sure, but it will still need to meet standards.

Paul Keiper (representing both the Washingtons and himself) The Washingtons have donated their easement primarily out of a concern for safety. The fence on the ranch portion will have gates for the elk and deer in the winter. He encourages everyone to get it done. He appreciates the city, GCTA and county working on this issue together.

Question: Mike Frelick asked about the trail easement from NWF and if all trail easements have been granted. Answer: All 8 easements have been granted, and 7 of 8 Uniform Act waivers have been received. There is, however, a concern raised by the prior owners of the NWF property about the trail being located on the NWF property. The mayor is meeting with the prior owners and NWF staff to talk about their issues.

6. Comments from Ward 2 City Council Representatives

a. Pam Walzer (3 minutes)

She indicated this is largest neighborhood council meeting she has ever attended (except one). She is really excited about trying to move things forward. Sightline issues, wildlife crossings, etc. are on their radar screen. She also mentioned that Allied Waste has said they would unlock bear-resistant containers, so you can put out refuse the night before if you have a bear-resistant can.

b. Cynthia Wolken (3 minutes):

Cynthia just came on board Jan 2011. Her cell phone number is 465-3376 and anyone call her if they have any questions or concerns. Her top priorities are the Grant Creek Trail and the I-90 interchange.

7. Election of Leadership Team Members, Community Forum Representative and Alternate* (10 minutes)

The bylaws with regard to elections are read to the audience. The bylaws had to be waived to allow individuals to serve more than 2 consecutive terms. Motion was made, seconded and approved by voice vote. Nominations from the floor were solicited and none were received. A motion to affirm all uncontested candidates was made and seconded. All candidates stood when their name was called. A city-county specific vote was taken.

The city residents affirm the slate unanimously and the county residents affirm the slate unanimously. The following are thus duly elected:

Prospect Meadows-Bert Lindler

Prospect-Dennis Muth

Grantland Landowners-Brian Walter

Grantland-Colorado Gulch-Mike hall

Lime Springs-Jon Barlow

Grantland 1-10 Kim Birck

Gen Eagle-Simone Musco

Cottonwoods-Greg Larson

Area Outside the Association-John Langstaff

Community Forum Representatives-John Paoli and Bert Lindler-alternate

South of the Interstate-no candidate

A city-county specific vote is taken on the four at-large positions and is reported as follows:

Kevin Davis (16 city and 19 county), Ron Larson (14 city and 17 county), Pat Beatty (10 city and 7 county) and Russ Read (6 city and 12 county). Thus Kevin Davis and Ron Larson are elected.

A discussion ensued about adding more team members at the next opportunity.

Public comment on items not on the agenda (5 minutes total)

This coming weekend is Veterans Memorial Weekend. Please remember all Veterans.

There will be a “Celebration of Neighborhood” at the art museum. Photos were submitted which reflects what is so great about each neighborhoods.

8. Neighborhood Anniversary Celebration Announcement

Presenter:

Jane Kelly, Neighborhood Liaison, Office of Neighborhoods (5 minutes)

Photographs from all neighborhoods were solicited for the celebration. Everyone will be represented whether they submitted or not. The exhibit will be available from 6/3 to 8/28 at museum. There will also be a celebration of the 15 years of neighborhood councils on 6/15 at the red Xs on North Higgins around noon.

9. Adjournment right on time (or close). Meeting adjourned 5 minutes late.

*Denotes an action item and a vote will be taken

Respectfully submitted by Lori Morin as edited by Kim Birck