

# MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

## CONDENSED BOARD MEETING MINUTES

May 14, 2014

FINAL

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

**Board:** Karl Englund, Daniel Kemmis, Nancy Moe, Ruth Reineking

**Staff:** Ellen Buchanan, Chris Behan, Jilayne Lee, Tod Gass, Juli Devlin

**Public:** Chris Anderson, DJ&A; Peter Walker-Keleher, DJ&A; Jessica Morriss, Development Services/Transportation; Matthew Smith, PCI; Ginny Merriam, City of Missoula Communications Officer; Neil Miner, City of Missoula Parks & Recreation; Michael Tree, Missoula Urban Transportation District; Bob Giordano, MIST

### **CALL TO ORDER**

12:00 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

March 25, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes approved as submitted.  
April 10, 2014 Special Meeting Minutes approved as submitted.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Reineking said she rode her bike through Silver Park and said the park is beautiful. Behan said staff was planning a ribbon cutting for Silver Park, Wyoming Street and the Trestle for Friday, June 6 at noon.

### **NON ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Missoula Urban Transportation District**

Buchanan said a couple years ago the Missoula Urban Transportation District (MUTD) Board expressed to MRA an interest for higher density development with a more transit friendly network in District III. The MUTD Board met again a couple months ago and

would like to have a joint working session with MRA Board and staff to talk about different ideas to accomplish those goals.

Michael Tree, MUTD Director, said in 2011 and 2012 the MUTD Board worked with the community to establish a primary transit network in the city to allow good quality and frequent routes over the next 20 years. He said land use is a key component and said land use and transit must work together. Tree said the next full day service route will run along the Brooks Street corridor. He said the MUTD Board would like a long range vision of redevelopment along the Brooks Street corridor and to perhaps work together to come up with funding opportunities with MRA, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), housing grants, and grants from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to complete mixed use projects and infrastructure in that area.

A time frame for a working session was discussed. Tree said it would be nice to meet sometime this summer.

Kemmis said to help maximize the benefit of the working session, he was curious to know whether or not there is any evidence available about the effectiveness of transit in other cities comparable to Missoula in size. Tree said he and Buchanan have discussed some of the benefits of transit oriented development and how it influences public transit, mode shift, and ridership. Buchanan said one of the ideas is to work with Development Services to create an overlay through the Brooks Street corridor to maintain good development. Jessica Morris, Development Services/Transportation, said she thought this was a great idea and would like to be involved. She said this is great timing with the kick off to the new growth policy and the recent climate summit.

Moe suggested looking at other districts rather than just focusing on District III. She said the 20 year transit plan should be beneficial to the other areas as well.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **South Reserve Street Trail Crossing (URD III) – Request for Approval (Buchanan)**

Buchanan said the Board authorized staff to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a consulting team to complete a feasibility study to determine the best route across South Reserve Street to connect the future Missoula to Lolo Trail with the Bitterroot Branch Trail. The Board also authorized the same consulting team to move forward with engineering if the feasibility study determined a grade separated crossing would be the best route across South Reserve Street. At the February 11, 2014 Board meeting, DJ&A was selected to perform the feasibility study for the South Reserve Trail Crossing.

Chris Anderson and Peter Walker-Keleher, DJ&A, were at the meeting and presented the results of the feasibility study. Walker-Keleher said the trail from Missoula to Lolo is a \$5.5 million, eight mile trail connecting the Bitterroot Branch Trail in Missoula to the trail from Lolo to Hamilton. The construction of this trail is being funded by a federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary

Grant. He said the connection of these two trails will be at South Reserve Street and the results of the feasibility study determined that a grade separated crossing is the best route to pursue. Anderson said a timeline is associated with the TIGER funds and 95% of the design is being finished. He said the project will then move to an approval phase which takes about 2-3 months and will be ready to bid by September 2014. Anderson said Missoula County can either bid the project at that time or wait until winter depending on the bidding environment. Either way, Anderson said the project will be constructed in 2015 with an expected completion date of fall 2015. He said if the grade separated crossing is approved by the Board and the notice to proceed is given to a contractor prior to the completion date of the Missoula to Lolo trail, then the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) needs are satisfied in terms of the TIGER Grant. Englund asked if the decision to construct an at grade crossing or a grade separated crossing is not made by fall of 2015, then would an at grade crossing be built. Anderson said correct. Kemmis asked what the normal process is for issuing the notice to proceed to a contractor if MRA were to bond for such a project. Anderson said if the Board approves the grade separated crossing then the next step would be to develop a conceptual design with different concepts to be discussed and approved by the Board. He said once the final design is complete then the project will go out for bid. Once the project is awarded to a contractor, the notice to proceed can be given at that time.

Moe said if the at grade crossing is chosen, how much of the TIGER Grant will be allocated. Anderson said \$150,000 would be allocated for the at grade crossing if that becomes the final decision. He said if the at grade crossing is chosen, it would be built very similar to the crossing near CS Porter Middle School where a traffic signal would be implemented to allow pedestrians to cross. Anderson said the \$150,000 is the average cost for the traffic signal and does not include any sort of traffic calming mechanisms.

Moe asked what the deadline is for MRA. Buchanan said District III sunsets in December 2015. She said if the decision is to build a grade separated crossing, then the project needs to be awarded to a contractor by October 2015. Buchanan said timing for bond purposes depends on whether the Board decides to do a public issuing of bonds or place it with a local lending institution, but it usually takes about six months.

Moe said the meeting materials provided, talked about TIGER Grant funds as well as City and County matching funds and asked for clarification. Anderson said the TIGER Grant is made up of federal funds totaling \$4.6 million. He said this is a rural TIGER grant, which does not require matching funds, however, because the City and County are providing local funds, the grant and project as a whole became more competitive and was ultimately awarded the federal funds. Anderson said the funds pledged by the City, the County, and Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is about a 13% match. He said the total project cost is about \$5.5 million which includes design, construction, and construction administration. Moe asked if MRA is being asked to fund the entire crossing if a grade separated crossing is approved. Buchanan said the City is responsible for building the trail from the Miller Creek entrance to the Bitterroot Branch Trail, which will be funded with park impact fees and Community Transportation

Enhancement Program (CTEP) funds. Buchanan said MRA is being asked to fund the crossing if a grade separated crossing is determined to be the best route across South Reserve Street. She said the design options of the crossing, the materials needed, etc. become more complicated if federal funds are used for the grade separated crossing. Anderson said right-of-way (ROW) acquisition is also impacted if, not made impossible if federal funds are used. He said if the grade separated crossing is approved the \$150,000 for the at grade crossing could be used for trail enhancements from Miller Creek to the Bitterroot Branch Trail. Buchanan said the \$150,000 could also be used for enhancements for the Blue Mountain Trail or even a trail from behind Larchmont Golf Course to Fort Missoula. She said if the grade separated crossing is approved it is staff's recommendation to pay for the entire crossing from tax increment funds.

Walker-Keleher continued with the presentation and said one of the first steps was to convene a focus group including key stakeholders such as Larchmont Golf Course, City Council, MRA, Development Services, Parks Department, and MDT.

Under the Evaluation Criteria section of the presentation, Moe asked what User Experience/Level of Service meant. Walker-Keleher said User Experience/Level of Service is the perspective of the trail user and motorist. Examples of questions are is the trail convenient, are users comfortable, are motorists having to stop which causes traffic build-up, etc.

Walker-Keleher talked about the two proposed locations for a grade separated crossing. He said the crossing at Old US 93 is more feasible because it is closer in distance to the current Bitterroot Branch Trail. Anderson said if an at grade crossing is chosen, the proposed crossing would be mid-block between Ernest Avenue and Dixon Avenue (technically between Ernest Avenue and the alley) and the trail would follow Reserve Street (north) to Ernest Avenue. The trail would then head east on Ernest Avenue and would connect to the Bitterroot Branch Trail. He said on street parking on Ernest would be eliminated if this option is selected.

Moe asked if an at grade crossing could be located at the intersection of Old US 93 and Reserve Street. Anderson said an at grade crossing is not feasible at that intersection because traffic levels are very heavy and without a full build out of the intersection, with proper timing, etc. traffic could potentially back up on Reserve Street and on Brooks Street.

Moe asked about the Miller Creek Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Anderson said the Miller Creek EIS would require a full build out of Old US 93 with a four lane option. He said DJ&A has completed a 30% design. Moe asked how this is different from Dore Lane where a light is being put in and there is a full build out but Dore Lane is still only two lanes. Anderson said the signal being discussed for the at grade crossing at Old US 93 and Reserve Street is a pedestrian activated signal to facilitate pedestrian travel only. He said the intersection could be built out to accommodate four lanes which would then require vehicular traffic signals to allow the traffic models and volumes to work in this corridor. Buchanan said the traffic volumes are different at Old US 93 and

Reserve Street compared to Brooks Street and Dore Lane. She said the Miller Creek EIS anticipated shifting a percentage of traffic volume from Brooks Street intersection to Old US 93 and Reserve Street intersection by diverting some of the traffic from US 93 to Old US 93.. Buchanan said funding is not available to implement a pedestrian activated signal at this point in time nor is there funding to rebuild Old US 93. She said the trail will be implemented in a way so that if, or when, Old US 93 is built out to four lanes, the trail will not have to be rebuilt.

Englund said the focus group's recommendation is an overhead, grade separated crossing at Old US 93 and Reserve Street; he asked how the potential four lanes on Old US 93 would affect a bridge. Anderson said DJ&A will come up with a design that will allow the lights to be connected to the structure which in turn will help with future costs.

Walker-Keleher continued with the presentation and reviewed the four types of transportation cyclists. He said 60% of the population would be interested in cycling but have concerns and 33% of the population fall under the "no way, no how" category. Walker-Keleher said these two typologies should be the main focus when determining a crossing. How can we eliminate the "fear", he asked. Anderson said a grade separated crossing essentially removes the element of fear from using these types of facilities.

Anderson said one of the challenges with this feasibility study was how to quantify the use of the crossing based on a trail that currently does not exist.

Jessica Morriss, Development Services-Transportation, said the discussion thus far has been about mode shift but this trail will also be used for recreational purposes. She said the trail from Missoula to Hamilton will be a world class trail that will bring people to our community from all over the country. She said she believes that an at grade crossing or even a low end separated crossing is not the best solution for crossing at South Reserve Street.

Walker-Keleher showed photos of examples of bridges and tunnels. He also showed photos of at grade crossings and grade separated crossings currently in Missoula. Walker-Keleher gave a brief summary of their analysis and said the recommendation is for a grade separated crossing. He said an overhead grade separated crossing would not only positively affect the user experience but would be a great gateway into Missoula. The Milwaukee Trail tunnel under Reserve Street was discussed and the positive impact it has on people getting to and from Hawthorne School and to and from the Orchard Homes area. Being able to see light through the tunnel was also a positive element.

Morriss asked what the impacts were to an overhead crossing with regards to mega loads or oversized loads. Walker-Keleher said the bridge would have to be removable for those vehicles and would be removed at the expense of the carrier.

Discussion ensued about the safety of having a tunnel and the need of gating the tunnel at night. Englund asked if the Police Department had been involved. Buchanan said

the Parks and Recreation Department works closely with the Police Department since one of the challenges with tunnels is the safety aspect and daily management.

Reineking said it was mentioned earlier in the meeting that 30% of the design for the Miller Creek EIS was completed and asked for clarification. Anderson said the 30% design was completed so that the trail could be located so Old US 93 could potentially be built out in the future without having to rebuild the trail. Reineking asked if there's a proposed date for the build out of Old US 93. Anderson said the estimated timeframe is ten years. Reineking asked if after the build out and traffic light installation whether the bridge would still be used. Anderson said yes, because the pedestrian or cyclist will not have to wait for the traffic light to change.

Moe asked about the District III boundaries and said whether the decision is to go under or over Reserve Street; it appears that a portion of the structure would end up being outside of the district. Buchanan said there's a section of state law that recognizes that infrastructure crosses district boundaries and allows for tax increment to be used to complete such projects. i.e the Northside Railroad Crossing.

Englund asked what the recommendation is. Walker-Keleher said the recommendation is to do an overhead crossing at Old US 93 and Reserve Street. Buchanan said staff extends that recommendation to approve DJ&A to proceed with the design of an overhead crossing and MRA staff to begin the ground work necessary for the issuance of a tax increment revenue bond once final design is completed and costs have been established. She said the annual tax increment revenue is approximately \$1.8 million and MRA is not obligated to any debt service in District III as of now.

Englund asked DJ&A how comfortable they are with the estimated cost figures. Anderson said they are very comfortable and provided high end (\$4 million range) and low end (\$2 million range) bridge examples. Discussion ensued.

Reineking asked if the next step would be to look at different designs. Walker-Keleher said yes the next step would be to move forward with a 30% conceptual design to explore three concepts that would come back to the Board for approval.

Kemmis said he appreciates the staff and professional work done thus far but said he would like to express his reservations. He said the decision to do a grade separated crossing would be a major expenditure of public funds. He said if MRA was not under pressure with the TIGER Grant, he wouldn't have been willing to act on the level of feasibility work that had already been done. Kemmis said he would like to see a more rigorous analysis of the likely growth and use of the trail before moving forward with a trail crossing. He said the feasibility study presented today provides a lot of "what if" examples. He said MRA is being asked to invest almost \$5 million in public funds based on not much more than intuition.

Buchanan said DJ&A attempted to provide potential trail use information by looking at other trails and trail crossings but the information available was data produced after

those trails were built. Anderson said there is a lack of evidence or data of preconstruction verses post construction. He said without the Missoula to Lolo trail, it's almost impossible to predict with empirical data but the Bitterroot Branch Trail and Lolo to Hamilton trail are being used extensively. Anderson said there will be a huge increase of traffic use on this trail when the Bitterroot Branch Trail is connected to the Lolo to Hamilton trail. Buchanan said if a safe trail crossing is not provided then parking will be an issue especially for those "interested but concerned" users. Walker-Keleher said one of DJ&A's team members is Alta Planning and Design who specialize in bike systems and even though the hard data was not present, they too recommended an overhead trail crossing.

Moe said perhaps the Board should be discussing whether this is a bonding issue or if the grade separated crossing, if approved, should be funded by the district. She said the budget status report for District III shows ample funds. She suggested having a discussion with staff to see what future projects may be present in District III. Moe said she too is not convinced about the overhead trail crossing and asked if the Board would be willing to postpone this action item until the next Board meeting.

Kemmis said there are opportunity costs associated with any project and said we can all probably agree that we would like to bond for something in District III but bonding imposes opportunity costs in other taxing jurisdictions. He said if MRA decides to bond, then it needs to be for a project that the other taxing jurisdictions feel good about. Kemmis said the grade separated crossing may not be the leading project for those terms.

Englund asked if MRA needs to commit to the 30% conceptual design to answer some of the Board's questions. Kemmis said he would like to have a thorough discussion about a bridge verses a tunnel because he's not sold on the decision to build a bridge mostly because of the cost associated with a bridge. Kemmis said he doesn't want the visibility of a bridge to be publically perceived as being negative.

Neil Miner, Parks and Recreation, said if a tunnel was built, then the tunnel would need to close before dark every night which means in the winter months the tunnel could essentially close near 5:00 p.m. and not open until almost 8:00 a.m. Morriss felt the bridge would be a better option so if MRA had concerns with cost, she asked if seeking other funding sources could be an option.

Englund said the Board would like more time to make this decision and suggested the Board filter questions to Buchanan before the next Board meeting. Buchanan said she could provide an URD III financial analysis for the next meeting and asked if MRA should be reaching out to the county commissioners and school district superintendent to get feedback on bonding in District III.

Moe said MRA could either pay for this trail crossing out of cash or as another alternate, bond for a shorter period of time so when the district sunsets the taxing jurisdictions

receive the increased value of the district. She said this will also allow for funds and time for other potential projects within the district.

Anderson asked the Board for suggestions as to what DJ&A could provide for the next meeting. Moe asked if they could get feedback from the bicycling community concerning an overhead design with circular access to the bridge.

Bob Giordano, MIST, said he was glad to hear so many questions and the willingness to wait on this decision. Giordano asked a few questions: what is the length of the bridge ramps verses the length of the tunnel ramps; what would the very best at grade crossing include; and what traffic calming features might be incorporated.

Moe suggested staff also contact Adventure Cycling to utilize their resources.

The Board thanked DJ&A for their great presentation.

No motion. Action on the agenda item was postponed.

**Silver Park – Haul and Dispose of Materials (URD II) – TIF Request (Behan)**

Behan said the soil used in Silver Park came from screening the soils that overlayed a deposit of wood waste that was creating methane as it decomposed. The wood waste was removed and hauled to Eco Compost to be made into soils for parks and landscaped right-of-ways (ROW). He said the screened smaller rock was used for a structural base under a parking lot and as a base layer under the all-abilities playground at McCormick Park. Behan said the larger rock was intended to be used by the City's Street Department for sumps and drains but was found to have too much wood waste and asphalt to be used for that purpose. He said the amount of wood waste and asphalt content is large enough to preclude it from most common uses as fill or drainage. Behan said Knife River has provided a price of \$6,901.46 to haul the material to the Republic Services landfill. Through this process it was also found that an additional reduction to the overall cost will be provided if the landfill disposal is billed directly to the City rather than being passed through a private hauling contractor.

**Behan said staff recommends the MRA Board approve entering into a contract with Knife River for hauling the stockpile in an amount not to exceed \$6,901.46 and authorize to reimburse the City for disposal costs not to exceed \$30,000.**

Kemmis asked if there was any feasible way to screen the rocks. Behan said they've researched ways to screen the large (6" plus) rocks but there is no feasible or efficient mechanism to do so.

**MOE: I MOVE TO ACCEPT THE STAFF RECOMMENDATION.**

**Reineking seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously. (5 ayes, 0 nays)**

**Grant Street Sidewalk Project (URD III) – Request to Award Construction Contract (Gass)**

Gass said the Grant Street Sidewalk Project was introduced at the regular August 2013 Board meeting and the Board directed staff to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to select an engineer for the project. He said in September 2013, MRA entered into a professional services agreement with Professional Consultants Incorporated (PCI) for design, engineering and contract administration services. Gass said MRA advertised an Invitation to Bid and four bids were received. Knife River provided the lowest bid which was \$178,612.40 lower than what the engineer estimated.

Kemmis said the memo mentioned an underestimated cost for asphalt removal which increased the project cost by \$3,300. He asked if Knife River would have still been the lowest bidder if that cost would have been included in the bid documents. Gass said Knife River would have still been the lowest bidder by a large amount.

**KEMMIS: I MOVE THE BOARD AWARD THE CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT FOR THE GRANT STREET CURB AND SIDEWALK PROJECT TO KNIFE RIVER, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$396,996.10, AUTHORIZE THE MRA BOARD CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE CONTRACT, AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO SIGN THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS TO EXECUTE THE CONTRACT.**

**Moe seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously. (5 ayes, 0 nays)**

**Audit Contract Extension for FY14 – Request for Approval (Lee)**

Lee said the FY13 audit report presentation will be scheduled for the June Board meeting. She said the FY13 audit was completed by Anderson Zurmuehlen, P.C. (AZ). In April 2012, the Board approved a two-year extension of the existing audit contract with AZ. She said the City had intended to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for audit services this year but because the City Finance Director, Brentt Ramhaber, retired and there were other staff changes it was decided to do another one-year extension with AZ. Lee said she recommends MRA use the same auditing services as the City because there is a cost savings associated with using the same vendor as the City and AZ provides excellent service and guidance to the City and MRA. Englund asked if the City plans on advertising a RFP in 2015. Lee said a new RFP is the City's intention but nothing is in writing yet.

**REINEKING: I MOVE THE BOARD APPROVE A ONE-YEAR EXTENSION TO THE CONTRACT BETWEEN MRA AND ANDERSON ZURMUEHLEN, P.C. FOR AUDIT SERVICES FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2014 IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$11,000.**

Kemmis seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously. (5 ayes, 0 nays)

**NON-ACTION ITEMS – Cont.**

**Summer Board Meeting Dates**

Discussion on meeting dates that work best for Board and staff.

Tuesday, June 17, 2014 at Noon

Tuesday, July 15, 2014 at Noon

Tuesday, August 19, 2014 at Noon

Moe asked about the West Broadway Island Trail. Buchanan said that topic will be discussed in conjunction with the One Nation Brewery project at a special meeting to be scheduled the end of May.

**STAFF REPORTS**

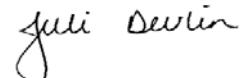
**Budget Reports**

**Staff Activity Reports**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Juli Devlin