

## Grant Creek Neighborhood Council General Meeting Minutes

7 to 9 p.m. December 6, 2018

### Grant Creek Inn

**Attending**—About 50 (46 signed in), including City Council members Mirtha Becerra and Jordan Hess

**Wildfire Preparedness**—Max Rebholz, Missoula County’s Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator; Ken Parks, Deputy Director of Missoula County’s Office of Emergency Management; Chris Newman, chief of the Missoula Rural Fire District; and Jordan Koppen, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation discussed wildfire preparedness in Grant Creek. The most important steps of preparedness take place long before fire season, Rebholz said. Those steps include cleaning up the house and immediate surroundings so they’re not as likely to be ignited by embers, gathering materials that will need to be taken during an evacuation, signing up for and keeping information up-to-date on Missoula County’s Smart 911 system (<https://www.smart911.com/>), and considering alternatives if fire is below you in Grant Creek.

Fleeing fire by driving up a drainage is usually not a good idea because fire generally burns uphill more quickly than it burns downhill. Grant Creek has some large open areas that won’t burn hot or long, such as the grassy meadows along Grant Creek Road, Rebholz said. Generally, it would be better to wait out a fire in such an area than to try to drive up Snowbowl Road with hopes of escaping down Butler Creek, he said.

All of the fire officials stressed the importance of working together to prepare for wildfire. Landowners or neighbors who don’t prepare can put others at risk. Homeowners can request that their property be assessed for wildfire risk by sending an email message to: [livingwithwildfiremt@gmail.com](mailto:livingwithwildfiremt@gmail.com).

Some homes in Grant Creek have already had a wildfire risk assessment completed. Low risk homes are represented on the map by green circles, moderate risk homes are yellow squares, and high risk homes are red triangles: <https://apps.intterragroup.com/pro/?group=MtState&#/WildfireRisk/46.967/-114.0117/15>

Brian Walter made a motion that the Grant Creek Neighborhood Council form a committee to prepare Grant Creek—not just a home here or there—for wildfire. The motion was seconded and approved by voice acclamation. Seven persons signed up to serve on the committee. Anyone else interested in serving on the committee can send an email to: [grantcreek@missoula-neighborhoods.org](mailto:grantcreek@missoula-neighborhoods.org)

**Additional Southbound Lane on Grant Creek Road north of the I-90 Interchange**—An additional southbound lane, right-turn lane, and bike lane should be ready for construction north of the interchange in 2020, said Shane Stack, Missoula preconstruction engineer for the Montana Department of Transportation.

The median between the southbound and northbound lanes will be smaller to create room for the new lanes. The budget will include some money for landscaping the median. Brian Walter brought up his past efforts to beautify the existing median. The Grant Creek Neighborhood Council can work with the city council to suggest possibilities for landscaping the median.

**Planning for Additional Development and Traffic on North Reserve**—Mirtha Becerra, Ward 2 city council member, explained that Missoula will be updating its Growth Plan and its Long Range Transportation Plan in 2020. Because the plans are related, it's ideal when they're both being updated at the same time. The area by the airport that was recently annexed by the city is 98 percent developed and should not be adding vehicles to Reserve Street, Becerra said.

**Updates on the Grant Creek Trail**—Kevin Davis, president of the Grant Creek Trails Association, said the association had been working with the city to spray weeds along the trail and to plow snow on the trail this winter. The Grant Creek Trails Association donated \$2,000 to the city which will cover the cost of six plowings this winter. The trail will only be plowed at the end of storms or after significant snowfalls to keep the number of plowings within the budget. Bert Lindler added that someone had plowed the trail twice this winter. Although volunteer work of that nature is commendable, it would be best to let the city's contractor plow the trail. The contractor is required to have liability insurance that a volunteer might not have.

**Leadership Team Vacancy Election**—Lee Clemmensen, who has filled the At Large No. 2 seat on the Grant Creek Neighborhood Council Leadership Team for the past two years was willing to run for reelection. No one else wished to run for the seat. She was reelected by unanimous voice vote.

**Comments by City Council Members**—Mirtha Becerra said that the Downtown Master Action Plan is being updated with public planning sessions January 14, 15, and 18 (<https://www.missouladowntown.com/downtown-master-plan/>).

**Public Comment on Non-agenda Items**—Two traffic issues were discussed. The first was the challenge of figuring out who is turning left, who is going straight, and who is turning right when traveling north from the I-90 interchange on Grant Creek Road. The other was the lack of a left-turn lane on Grant Creek Road at the entrance to the Prospect subdivision.

**Announcements**—Karen Gasvoda from the Office of Neighborhoods discussed the Local Government Citizens Academy, which has a limited number of openings. The academy will meet every week for eight weeks to help citizens learn more about Missoula's city government. The application deadline is Dec. 28. Contact Karen ([kgasvoda@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:kgasvoda@ci.missoula.mt.us)) for details.

**Adjournment**—The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m. Bert Lindler will be reporting on the meeting to City Council early next year.