

Riverfront Neighborhood Council General Neighborhood Meeting

Thursday, March 30, 2023

5:30 PM

Missoula International School, 808 S. 3rd St. W.

Members present: Christine Littig, Kalina Pritchard, John Qualben, Eva Dunn-Froebig, Tristan Hustler, Tyler Horne, and Deb Bonk. The meeting was well attended with an estimate of 60 or more citizens from the neighborhood in attendance.

Business Conducted:

(1) Christine opened the meeting at 5:40 PM and provided an update on how the RLT is reconstituting and getting back to business post-COVID. RLT members introduced themselves.

(2) A motion was made by Chester to accept the minutes from the July general meeting and was seconded by Deb Bonk.

(3) Our Ward 3 Council Members, Daniel Carlino and Gwen Jones, attended the meeting and had an opportunity to briefly talk about their areas of focus and priorities for the neighborhood.

- Daniel noted his priorities were environmental issues, affordable housing, and transportation. He was asked a question about plans for adding additional park space in the neighborhood, especially in area surrounding 2nd Street. Another attendee raised concerns about homeless encampments around 2nd Street and an accumulation of trash that needed to be addressed.
- Gwen highlighted how to report potholes to the City of Missoula for repair, the timeline for spring leaf clean-up, the closing of the Johnson Street Shelter on April 10, and the implications for the neighborhood, and concerns about the Montana Legislature's focus on extending control over what she believes should be municipality decisions on taxes, revenues, and expenditures. She received questions on prospects for increased trash collection and an update on development spending that is not covered by urban renewal district levies.

(4) Christine introduced a team from Opportunity Resources, Inc, to brief the neighborhood on their proposal to transform their commercial location at 3rd and Ash Street into a mixed commercial/affordable housing complex. Kurt Main kicked off the presentation, focusing on the project's goal of supporting people with disabilities and providing affordable housing. Mike Boucher followed, with a more detailed explanation of their vision for the project and a need to get Montana affordable housing tax credits to move forward. The project envisions a business and 24 affordable housing units that will be rent and income restricted. The units will include off-street parking and will be designed to fit into the neighborhood. Of these 24 units, between 6-8 will be designed to better than ADA compliant standards. The team received questions about what is eligible to live here and plans to ensure the building is energy efficient. The proposal was well-supported by those in attendance, with it being described by one attendee in her remarks as a "great" idea.

(5) Christine talked about how residents in the Riverfront neighborhood can engage on

issues of concern. She noted the RLT's monthly meetings, the two general meetings that we hold each year, ways to reach out to the RLT and the neighborhood council leads, and the importance of staying up-to-date on developments via www.engagemissoula.com.

(6) Christine reviewed input on neighborhood priorities from the July general meeting, noting a focus on the importance of parks/green spaces, accessibility, and bike paths, affordability, and an economically diverse neighborhood. She asked attendees for input on whether the RLT was focusing on the right things. Attendees generally agreed with these priorities, but also highlighted the importance of bring attention to and finding solutions for traffic issues in several areas of the neighborhood, including traffic patterns at Hickory and Walnut (it is being used as a thru street and has an issue with speeding in an area with many children) and a particularly congested area that is posing a safety hazard on 1st Street. Christine noted that the RLT has discussed a meeting with the Missoula Transportation Department and that we would make this a priority for an upcoming meeting dedicated solely to this topic.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items:

An attendee highlighted the upcoming Montana International Choral Festival, noting opportunities from Missoula residents to provide housing and meals for attendees arriving from international destinations.

The meeting concluded at about 7:15 PM and several attendees took a tour of the International School that was led by their Director.