

Riverfront Leadership Team Meeting

The Riverfront Leadership Team met on 21 September at Bernice's Bakery from approximately 3:30PM - 5:00PM. Team members in attendance included: Christine Littig, Tyler Warren, Tristan Hustler, Danny Gundlach, Deb Bonk, Karina Wickman, and Melissa.

Introductions and Roll Call: The RLT had a sufficient quorum to conduct business. Christine introduced Melissa, our new Neighborhood Leadership Specialist. Other attendees included Ed Whetherbee and Kyara Kuizenga, representing the Old Sawmill District, and Jeremy Keene, representing The City of Missoula Public Works Department.

Approval of Minutes: RLT members had reviewed the notes from our last meeting. A motion was made, and seconded, to approve the minutes.

New Business:

Intersection of Orange Street and Cregg Lane: The RLT invited Ed Whetherbee and Jeremy Keene to discuss the status of approval and timeline for the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Orange Street and Cregg Lane. This has been an issue of neighborhood concern and resurfaced again following the death of a motorist at this intersection on 1 September 2023. The RLT met with representatives of the City of Missoula last Spring to discuss our concerns about this intersection.

Ed Whetherbee provided an update on the status as the Old Sawmill District developer. He noted that a light is being considered and they will not be able to move to the next stage of platting for the development without the light's installation. He noted that it could take several years to get approval for a light at this intersection to be approved through the Missoula Department of Transportation process. (Note: The State of Montana, not the City of Missoula, is the final decision-making authority for this intersection.) The developer and the City have been negotiating cost sharing and a traffic study that was completed about 9 months ago highlighted that the intersection did not yet meet the warrant requirements to move forward with approval.

Jeremy Keene commented that the Missoula Public Works Department has been following this issue closely. He noted that while traffic volume might not yet be sufficient to meet the State requirement, we might be able to do so by pursuing a network or crash warrant. The State of Montana seemed to be receptive to the idea of a network warrant for this intersection this past Spring. Jeremy noted that the City would be cost-sharing on this project with the OSD Developer and they have funding programmed for this project for the 2025 Fiscal Year (starting in July 2024).

Update on Old Sawmill District Development: Ed Whetherbee also provided an update on the next step in development in the neighborhood, including efforts to create additional parking and efforts to identify potential investors for this improvement.

Leadership Team Roles: Christine led a discussion of roles, noting that Tristan was stepping down as Treasurer. She also noted that she and Jonathan would likely move on from their Chair and Co-Chair roles in the coming months. Team members had an initial discussion of who might be interested in these roles. This will be the subject for a follow-on discussion and decisions at a future meeting.

Riverfront Neighborhood Budget: Kalina noted that we began our new fiscal year in July and she expected to have our final budget amount for us in the coming weeks.

Community Forum: Tyler provided a readout of the last meeting, which focused on a discussion of Electrify Missoula. Grants and money will be available associated with this project as it moves forward. Kalina highlight two recent contracts that will assist the Leadership Teams with updating their strategic plans and improving engagements within their neighborhoods. The RLT noted that the current Riverfront strategic plan is rather outdated. We committed to review it and discuss a way forward at an upcoming meeting.

Kalina also noted that the neighborhood grant process would be kicking off soon and highlighted plans for candidate forums for city council and mayor.

Old Business: The RLT continues to search for a viable meeting location. Danny provided a status report on his outreach to several local places that might meet our needs. We will work to nail down the most promising of these, with the goal of having a regular meeting location starting with our next meeting.

The RLT wrapped up it's meeting by discussing potential agenda topics for our October meeting.