

## October 18, 2008 Meeting Notes

Hey folks! Christian here, blogging the highlights from tonight's Emma Dickinson Neighborhood Meeting tonight!

First and foremost, a huge thanks to all of you who joined us! We had over 25 people from our neighborhood come out to share some fantastic Biga pizza and figure out how to make our neighborhood better!

Here's what we talked about during the course of the evening:

1. **A new NAME for our neighborhood!** - Over the years "Emma Dickinson / Orchard Homes" has been less and less meaningful as a name for our neighborhood: the Emma Dickinson school is now called the Lifelong Learning Center, and the 'Orchard Homes' part of our neighborhood (to the west of Reserve) is being split off into its own neighborhood. So we talked about a name which might be more meaningful! Most of those who were present really liked the idea of "River Road Neighborhood" for our new name! We'll vote on this at our spring meeting...
2. **A new TRAIL for our neighborhood** - Dave Shaw (from the Parks & Rec department) explained how the city is working on creating a new trail through our neighborhood. This path runs from east to west and lies (roughly) along the lines of the Old Milwaukee Trail. This trail will be significant - a 10 foot wide paved trail that will allow pedestrians, bicyclists, and joggers to safely access the Missoula trail systems which lie to the east of Russell and the west of Reserve.

Imagine being able to hop on your bike with your kids and ride safely downtown to Caras Park or all the way out to Kelley Island! At this point, Parks & Rec hopes to complete negotiations on the easements by the end of this year. Once this is finalized, construction could begin as early as next summer!

3. **A new PARK for our neighborhood** - As you've probably noticed, our neighborhood doesn't have many parks. That's starting to change with the addition of Lafray Park (just off of River Road on Lafray Lane). If you've driven by and taken a look, you've seen that much of the construction is already completed - the only thing that's missing now is a play structure. So tonight we solicited input for what kind of structure we'd like to build!

Jeremy has done a lot of research on options for play structures. Here's the biggest challenge we face: COST. We currently have about \$30k to work with. The fall zone area (which is mandated by the city) underneath the structure consists of wood fiber that is hammered down and compressed to cushion against falls. It will cost \$13-17k alone. The play structures themselves typically cost around \$30k. And installation is roughly 30% of the cost of the unit.

Which means... we're short.

There was a lot of discussion about how to work around this:

- we might be able to do some of the installation ourselves under the supervision of a certified foreman (lots of support for this)
- we might also be able to do some fundraising and look for grants (we could really use some help with this - please [contact Jeremy](#) for details)

Cross your fingers as we move forward with this! If all goes well, it'll be ready to use by Spring / Summer of 2009.

4. **A new ZONING CODE for our neighborhood** - Laval Means from the Office of Planning and Grants talked about how the city is working to revamp the current zoning policies (they haven't really been overhauled since the 1980s and they're basically a mess). Laval was here to explain how the process is going (a little more than halfway).

There was a pretty detailed handout available - I'm not entirely sure how to digest it here (Jeremy, any ideas?). As I'm typing notes, here's what stands out to me:

- most of our neighborhood is residential, but there's a lot of mixed use area (commercial along the 3rd Street and Russell Street corridors).
- none of the boundaries will change, but a lot of the different zone types will be combined and modified.
- there will be some broadening some of the housing types allowed (and revamping the cluster option).
- there will be some changes to setback (decreasing), minimum lot size (decreasing)
- at this point my vision blurs and I stop typing...

Bottom line: the zoning regulations are complex, which means revamping/simplifying them is complex. If you care about these types of things, you need to get involved in the process.

There's going to be a public workshop on the progress in early December. For details, contact [Laval](#) at 258-3797 or visit <http://zoningmissoula.com>

5. **A new BOND ISSUE on the ballot** - This November, there's going to be a county wide bond issue on the ballot for an Emergency Operations Center (911 calls) and Secure Storage (for evidence, records, etc). Larry Farnes made the pitch.

In a nutshell, the city is running out of space at the court house - they need a place to move the 911 call center, store search and rescue equipment, and archive evidence.

What's it going to cost? \$24 million dollars. As a taxpayer, this means if you own a \$200k house, this bond will cost you \$27 bucks/year over the next 20 years.

Wow. That's a whole lotta "New!" going on. Pretty exciting stuff, and we deeply appreciate you being a part of it.

As a final note, we asked for input on where people would like to see improvements in our

neighborhood. The biggest complaints: no sidewalks, few parks, and people drive too fast on David & Curtis. There are also concerns about the Russell / 3rd Street revamp.

If you missed this meeting and would like us to remind you before the next one, [email us](#) and say "Hey, add me to your mailing list!" We'll do our part and keep you posted!

Lots of great stuff happening these days. If you'd like to pitch in and get involved, please let us know!