

**Business Improvement District
318 Central Avenue**

**Via ZOOM – Recording available via the City of Great Falls records request
August 13, 2020**

Board Present: Max Grebe, Jason Kunz, Sherrie Arey
Board Present via Zoom: Alison Fried, Trista Besich, Neal DuBois
Staff Present: Joan Redeen
Guests: Christian Leinhauser, Jolene Schalper, Matthias Schalper

- I. **Call to order & Roll Call:** Jason called the meeting to order at 9:04am; roll call of all present, a quorum was established.
- II. **Guests:** No guests present wished to address the Board, at this time.
- III. **BID Board: Conflict of Interest:** No board members had a conflict of interest, at this time.
Joan reported that she has letters for everyone present to sign.
Joan added that the City has sent an email in regard to receipts for the City's Boards and Commissions Handbook and also the Conflict of Interest Statement; several BID Board members need to complete these forms.
Board Vacancies: Joan reported that Neal DuBois was appointed to the Board. We have one remaining vacancy on the Board. Joan provided a copy of the two applications the City has received for John Barnes and Karen Reiff, which had been provided to the Board for review via email. Max inquired about representation; both John and Karen are owners in their respective parcels. He also noted the BID's new resolution in regard to our grant programs; both John and Karen noted they have no plans to apply for BID grants in the near future. The Board discussed the two applicants, noting that John Barnes and Neal DuBois would be representing the same parcel. Joan reported that she inquired about this with the City and the City Attorney noted that this would not be an issue except it may affect a quorum at some point in the future if both John and Neal had a need to abstain from voting on something. The Board decided to let the City Commission make the final decision on who to appoint to the Board; Joan will notify the City of the Board's decision. Joan added that there are two other property owners who have expressed interest, so we are not lacking for interest. Joan informed Neal that she has a board orientation packet for him.
- IV. **Approval of minutes from 7-9-20 Board meeting:** Jason motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 7/9/20 Board meeting, as presented. Trista seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Financials:**
Monthly Financials: The Board received the June financials via e-mail. There being no further discussion on the financials, Trista motioned to approve the 6/30/20 financial statements which include the Balance Sheet, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Jason seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
Budget FY2021: Joan reported that the Budget for FY2021 was approved by the City Commission on August 4th. She added that she'd emailed her report to the Commission to the Board, this report is made once a year when the budget and work plan are being approved.
Joan provided the BID Budget versus Actual as of 8/12/20. Discussion followed on BID assessment income and whether or not our income has been impacted by COVID-19. Joan noted that our May distribution normally would have been between \$95-110K and was only \$65K. Discussion followed on the fact that taxes are due and have to be paid, eventually, but in the meantime we may receive lesser amounts than we have in recent years.
Joan informed the Board that once our final board member is appointed, we will get new signature cards from the bank. She reminded the Board that every board member is a signer except the treasurer, as the treasurer volunteers to do the monthly bank reconciliation. She added that every check, except payroll checks, require two signatures and with COVID-19 payroll has recently been set up as direct deposit.
- VI. **Grant Program Committee:**

The grant schedule for FY 2021 was provided to the board and explained to new board members. Current grants approved remaining to still be paid out total \$329,214.00.

Joan updated the Board on grant updates: Context/Kellergeist submitted an update on their project. Matthias reported that they have their financing lined up, he informed the Board of all that they have done so far, added that they will be meeting with their architect and contractor and once they do will have a firmer completion date but are targeting completion in the next 6-8 months. Matthias added that the taxable valuable of the property in 2018 was \$69K and is now \$240K. He added that their building is one of the featured buildings in the micro-visioning process as well. Joan informed the Board of how the grant update letter was changed, after last month's discussion on grant status. She noted that grant criteria #9 was added to the letter to remind grant recipients of the fact that the BID can rescind grants if construction has not commenced within six months of approval of a grant. The next grant sent an update letter was Big Sky Selects in regard to their interior grant; it was noted that they are under active construction. Max added that it is his understanding that project will wrap up before the end of the year. Joan noted that she sent the update letter and will send a second request in two weeks if there is no response. She added that the next grant due for an update is DSB Tower with their façade grant that was approved in August 2019, an update request similar to the one sent to Context will be sent out as there is no obvious construction in regard to their façade as they were due to replace windows. Joan reported that the grant program committee consists of Jason, Trista, Alison, and Travis Neil. A meeting was held with Jason, Travis, and Joan. This will be a process; the committee will be meeting over the next several months and once they've come to some consensus, they will present their recommendations to the Board.

VII. **Old Business:**

Beautification: ArtsFest MONTANA 2020: Joan reported that ArtsFest is happening next week; it officially launches 8/21. Cameron arrives next week, and all artists arrive on 8/20. Most locations have been identified but we are still working on a few other locations. Miss Linda's is one of the locations and is located outside of the BID. NWGF offered to donate up to \$5,000, provided the BID could find matching funds. At this time, we have \$4,000 in matching funds thanks to the property owners who are going to be recipients of murals. ArtsFest will be many muralists installing murals throughout downtown; an interactive community chalk art component; and an interactive component in the alley behind Dragonfly. The mural being installed at Miss Linda's will be a community installation; AARP is contributing \$5,000 toward ArtsFest so this mural must be a community project. Cameron has a great deal of experience doing these types of collaborative murals. The interactive opportunities are open to all members of the community, all ages.

Flowers: Joan reported that we are struggling with our flowers this summer; she added that it is not just the new self-watering flowerpots as our rock planters and the flowers at Mighty Mo are all lacking.

Banners: Joan reported that she and Jason will be discussing banners. The senior's banners will remain out until September.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan reported that DGFA is still planning some events for beer week; they are planning a golf tournament and a beer mile. They continue to host Brothel Tours and they sell out quickly; they are scheduled on 8/22 and another in September. She added that in conjunction with ArtsFest DGFA is hosting their Night Market from 5pm to 9pm; Central Ave will be closed.

Downtown Partnership: Calvary Chapel: Joan reported on Calvary Chapel, providing some history, and noting that they are looking to move to Central Ave and 5th, where Cascade Opticians used to be located. The issue is that Montana code will not allow churches and bars to be in the same vicinity; so, it could hinder new development, all existing bars are grandfathered in. If the City approves Calvary Chapel's code change request so they can move into that location, under current code, would prohibit the Newberry project. The City has found an ordinance they are working to pass, city-wide, that would allow for a church and a bar to be in the same vicinity, so assuming the City Commission passes this new ordinance Newberry would not be hindered by Calvary Chapel moving in downtown. Joan noted

that the DDP is in favor of Calvary Chapel only if the City Commission approves the new ordinance allowing for bars and churches. She inquired what the BID Board's stance would be on all of this. Max noted that the new ordinance could potentially be challenged and found unconstitutional; Joan noted that there are other cities in the state that have this ordinance, we are not setting precedent. The City is supposed to be approving both the new ordinance and Calvary Chapel's code change concurrently. Max noted that he has no problem with religious organizations but does not feel this is a good fit for downtown; Neal noted that he doesn't believe that Central Ave is a fit for a church, we want the type of business for profit, we want the type of business that will drive folks to spend money and lend to other businesses; Alison noted that she has an empty restaurant space that she is hoping to fill and she hopes to rent it out with an alcohol permit so the Church could hinder those options if the ordinance is not enacted, she has sent a letter to City Commission noting this; Sherrie noted that anything that could jeopardize building owners if the ordinance doesn't change we should not support, there is so much energy and potential that this could have a negative effect. She added that is why the zoning exists for the downtown corridor. Discussion on the Rescue Mission and how they don't fall under the zoning requirements of the central business core and they have a conditional use permit, which is what Calvary Chapel has applied for. The Board instructed Joan to write a letter to City Commission that reminds the Commission of the purpose of the commercial zoning district.

TIF: Joan informed the Board of the City proceeding forward with the Civic Center façade project utilizing downtown TIF funds. The Planning Board met on Tuesday and approved the amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan, now the amendment goes before the City Commission. The City plans to sell bonds, which is a great advantage as the TIF district sunset date will be extended out based on the bonds. The City then plans to use TIF increment annually to pay those bonds. It is estimated the TIF increment will be between \$1-\$1.5M annually; the City will use approximately \$400-\$500K to cover the bond expense, annually. The City Commission is on board with this option as they believe that the community would not approve a bond if it went to a ballot issue. The simple issue is that public buildings do not contribute to TIF, so the tax increment will not increase due to improvements made to the Civic Center. Joan noted that several DDP members met with Janet Cornish, a TIF expert in the state, last week and discussed options. The DDP would like to see the City approve the use of TIF funding for public safety issues for private development. In meeting with Janet, we believe we can set up a program as it has been done in other communities. Sherrie noted that the City Commission, during their work session, did not appear to address the issue that they realize the hit the TIF will take and the reality that public buildings do not contribute to the TIF district. She noted that they were very silent on that glaring issue. Joan noted that the City appears to be adamant this is the route to take to restore the Civic Center. The BID Board supports the use of TIF funds for public safety for private development.

Traffic Signal Box: The TSB was installed last weekend. It was due to be installed on the corner of 9th Street and 2nd Ave South and it was installed on 9th Street and 2nd Ave North. Next years box will be 9th Street and 2nd Ave South; some bushes will need to be trimmed before that box can be done.

Wayfinding: Joan reported that the application for the West Bank Landing TIF for \$5,050 to cover our short was approved by the Planning Board on Tuesday. She added that GFDA and the Chamber have each contributed \$1,000 and she asked DGFA to contribute to the Plan. The DGFA Board approved \$500 in downtown gift certificates for prizes for the public event and \$500 in cash toward the Plan. Cushing Terrell is planning a scavenger hunt and it will launch in the next week and run over two weekends. Joan asked that the Board support the Scavenger Hunt, when it is officially announced; she informed the Board of the prizes – there will be a grand prize of outdoor items, downtown gift certificates and memberships to museums. Max inquired about the feedback on the survey; Joan noted that the response was good. Joan added that there was nothing planned beyond creating this Wayfinding Plan, at this time.

Downtown Safety Alliance: Joan reported that the Safety Alliance met in August. GFD has been dealing with COVID, no officers have tested positive, but some have been quarantined due to potential exposure. She added that she'd been asked to attend a meeting with Chief Bowen and some community

members, the discussion revolved around the topic of whether or not GFPD was guilty of racial profiling. She noted that the end result of the data and the conversation shows that GFPD, overall, is not. It was an informative meeting, both for the attendees and GFPD – GFPD plans to work on some internal things to adjust their statistics. GFPD provided their annual report to the community to review. Max noted that he has seen the UTV patrolling; Joan added that the volunteer foot patrol has been very visible and is a great addition. Joan informed the Board that the Safety Alliance is looking for actual tasks so we can go back to being task oriented.

Great Falls Development Authority: Christian introduced himself to the new board members and reminded the Board that his position is a joint position between GFDA and the BID. He noted that he was out of the office for two weeks serving his active duty term in the National Guard. An announcement will be made this afternoon at 2pm for The Crossing, on-site at the Milwaukee Depot in regard to their proposed project. They have four (4) business expansions; four (4) new SBDC clients; one (1) new client working with their food & ag development center; they have identified 21 businesses in their target outreach efforts, this is their business attraction efforts, they have reached out to three (3) of these businesses so far. They have joined the Montana High Tech Business Alliance. They have started to develop their online content for downtown. The Invest Downtown was supposed to be an in-person event, they are working on moving this to a virtual event.

One-Ways: Joan reported that Scott Reasoner sent an email inquiring if it was time to address this topic again. Joan noted that we've reviewed this multiple times. The idea has not been well received, in the past. It has not been discussed in quite some time and Scott feels it's a great time to bring it up again. Joan noted that the biggest hurdle in previous discussions was MDT. Discussion followed on funding this transition if it were to move forward. Joan noted that would definitely fall under TIF. The Board recommended moving forward on starting this conversation again.

Parking Commission: Joan reported that the lost parking meter key, that disappeared when the parking garage was broken into back in March, has been found. Parking Commission meets next week so Joan will learn more about this. She informed the Board that at the last Parking Commission the discussion was about how to get parking spaces back to being paid for by the hour. The options presented were pay stations or use of an app. Joan noted that she was in favor of 100% app, and avoiding the expense of pay stations as the parking experts were noting that they believe within five years all machinery will be obsolete and everyone will be paying for parking via app. The Commission voted to approve the expense and installation of pay stations. But she added that next week all of this may change with the finding of the parking meter key.

Personnel: Joan reported that she did not go to California, due to the pandemic; she added that she is taking tomorrow off.

Work Plan - FY 2021: Joan reported that the Work Plan was approved by the City Commission.

VIII. **New Business: Johnson Hotel:** The 100th Anniversary celebration is this afternoon at 4pm. She reminded the Board of the BID's involvement in that building. She encouraged the Board to stop by.

Tax Abatements: Joan reported that Big Sky and Newberry both had their tax abatement applications approved by the City Commission. She noted that the BID has supported tax abatement applications, in the past, but has never taken a formal stance on the topic. She asked for the Board's approval of the BID supporting applications of this type when presented to City Commission in the future. Jolene explained how tax abatements work; it is similar to TIF. The Board was in support of tax abatements as it is a valuable tool for development.

IX. **Public Comment:** No public comment, at this time.

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 10:53am.

Max Grebe, Chair

Joan Redeem, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____