

**Downtown Business Improvement District  
Board of Trustees  
Tuesday, January 15, 2012 from 3-5 pm**

**Attending:** Dan Cederberg, Charlie Beaton, Tim France, Ellen Buchanan, Alan Newell, Carma Gilligan

**Staff:** Rod Austin, Julie Walsh

**Absent:** Rich Huffman

**Guests:** Matt Ellis, Anne Guest

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm.

**Introduction of Guests and Public Comment**

Matt Ellis and Anne Guest were introduced to present an update on Wayfinding.

**Wayfinding Update (Ellis/Guest)**

Anne Guest and Matt Ellis of the Missoula Wayfinding steering committee presented a slideshow about the comprehensive planning process for a Wayfinding system in Missoula. Ellis mentioned Wayfinding is a tourism tool with five key components. Our city's greatest strength is the environment, which can be showcased in a Wayfinding design. There are even many residents who cannot find their way to different local attractions. Ellis continued, saying the future of Wayfinding is not signage; it is connecting people through technology like mobile apps, text maps and bar codes. Wayfinding is a priority city-wide, not just Downtown. Ellis said a goal of the Business Improvement District (BID) should be to stay educated on the process in case it chooses to become more involved. He also remarked Missoula is a great example of why Wayfinding is important. There are many places of interest here, but also a lot of signage clutter. Proper signage can lead to economic development. However, signage is just one part of Wayfinding.

Ellis continued with the presentation, remarking there will be a public process to decide on an identity for Missoula's Wayfinding System. He remarked the first impression of Missoula is weak from a visitor's viewpoint. Some of Montana's other cities welcome visitors in a better way, which does not reflect the reality that Missoula is a gem in the region. Ellis said the steering committee has contacted other cities to ask how their Wayfinding system was done, and has asked public agencies for input in the planning portion. Implementing the project is where private investment will be useful. These include service clubs and business organizations, as they should be part of the process and contributors. Guest remarked this public process will be much like the public process for the Master Plan. Ellis mentioned Destination Missoula is the head agency of this process, with Barb Neilan as the director. Greg Oliver is the chair. The City of Missoula has agreed to own and maintain the signs once installed, and City Council was extremely supportive. The firm selected to design the system is called MERJE. Buchanan said this firm

was chosen out of seven submittals; it has done several projects in similar cities. MERJE did Asheville, NC, which is just like our quirky town. Secondary destinations benefit from these systems.

Ellis continued with his presentation, explaining the firm will provide an analysis, design, and implementation plan. Implementation will cost \$800,000-\$1 million. Guest remarked the Missoula Parking Commission (MPC) supports Wayfinding, as it will provide the means for seamless travel from the interstate to various destinations and parking areas. Ellis said more people will get involved in the public process and it will become easier to get people invested. Ellis asked the BID board to be leaders in this process. There is a lot more to get done than just fundraising and implementation. Ellis asked the group to tell him if they know anyone who would like to get involved. The steering committee is meeting twice per month right now. Austin remarked MERJE comes in late February. Ellis said he and Guest are on a speaking tour for the next few weeks until MERJE arrives. Buchanan added this project is valuable because it will remove signage clutter.

Ellis continued, saying the next series of donation asks will be when the plan is finished. Austin said his vision is that next money the BID contributes will be for the kiosk. Wayfinding will have a plan in fall, and Guest added implementation will take longer because it costs more. Newell added if the City is part of the process, it will make decisions consistent with the plan.

#### **Poverello Relocation Funding (Cederberg/Austin/France)**

Austin reported he, Dan and Tim have been engaged in the funding process of the new Poverello Center. Cederberg said there is agreement that the Poverello is a great improvement to the BID. The BID should be supportive in any way they can financially. Austin said Erin Fowler at the Poverello Center will go public with the campaign soon. The BID backing the Pov will show that others are in support of the new facilities. Beaton asked whether they have counted what they're selling the old building for in their fundraising goal. Austin said he does not believe so, but the building is going for about \$465,000. Cederberg agreed the building's cost is not part of fundraising income. France remarked the Pov won't have to come back to the community for money later. Cederberg said they can increase revenue without increasing expenses, and the new location will require less staffing. Buchanan said it would be important to educate the ratepayers on what is going on at the Pov. She suggested inviting Erin Folwer to the next meeting. Beaton asked whether there were a lot of available funds for this, and Austin replied there were some in the contingency budget. He emphasized the solution right now is money. The BID's participation shows the organization is trying to help fix the problem. Beaton agreed the board should give money, even if it is across two years. Cederberg said the advantage of giving now is the maximum PR; the Pov will make announcements and the BID will be named. Buchanan said she has a concern about process. She would rather this contribution be open for public process and be listed as an action item on the agenda. Beaton suggested putting it on the agenda for next month. France said he thinks \$2,500-3000 would be a good amount. Austin said he would rather space it over two years. Newell said it would work to give \$5,000 over two budget cycles. Austin said he would get this lined up.

#### **Ratepayer Breakfast (Austin/France)**

Austin said each year one item attracts people, but he has yet to arrange something this year. France suggested the Pov, and Gilligan and Beaton suggested Wayfinding. Beaton said people on the Hip Strip wouldn't get Wayfinding information otherwise. Attendance last year was mostly city officials, and it would be nice to have others there. Gilligan said they really like the update from the police officer. She said it would be great to see a presentation that is more comprehensive. Austin said the Pov plays right into that. Beaton said between the mayor's advisory committee, the Pov, and Wayfinding, those are good. Buchanan said friends of Downtown would also be good information to share, as well as the marketing brochure. Austin said the marketing brochure is almost done. The Foundation had a strategic meeting yesterday, and it wants to roll out a Friends of Downtown campaign to pay a grant writer and someday hire an Executive Director. Melanie wants to push the ratepayer's breakfast out to March, and Austin said he will try to time the breakfast well with the Friends of Downtown Campaign. Buchanan added she doesn't think they should make an ask at the breakfast.

### **Downtown Inventory (Austin/Newell)**

Austin said Ellen mentioned the Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA) has budgeted money for the Downtown Inventory. Newell said Bob Jaffe and two interns will meet so they can start collecting data. They will hand-pick a few property owners for the first few to get good practice. Martin was here for the first round, so he has experience. Austin also reported Martin can work more hours, so the project will only need two interns. Jaffe is making software that will make it possible for the interns to update on a tablet. Newell said the inventory is very important to update, and more uses will be found as time goes on. Austin said there are a lot of people who come into the office looking for advice on real estate. He said the online site selector is very dynamic, showing rent, etc. Newell remarked the information in the Downtown Inventory is useful now, even before there is not yet a plan to display the information. Gilligan said she is worried about going over budget, but Buchanan said it will get costly only when they figure out what to do with the information, when we will need multiple funding sources. Buchanan said she thinks realtors should buy-in as financial backers.

### **Director's Report (Austin)**

#### **Downtown Master Plan – Update**

Park Place Parking Structure: Austin said they are now in the process of making a list of minor issues. The grand opening is going to wait until the market is open, which means better weather too. Discussion ensued regarding the Holiday Inn sign next to the parking structure. Buchanan then mentioned Macey's has the right to 30 spaces in the parking garage, and Beaton said 35 spaces for the public seems like very few. Buchanan said that number can shift, as it is a judgment call of MPC.

#### **Committees**

Streetscapes: Austin reported Montana Rail Link has requested more lighting on the tree, and Shane from Liberty Electric is seeing how much it would cost to expand and upgrade the street holiday décor. Gilligan said there is \$10,000, and Austin said there

are four stages that will cost \$10,000 or more each. Austin said he would check in with Shane in the middle of March.

Marketing: Austin reported there was a joint meeting between business development and marketing to look at the Partner's Creative brochure. In this brochure are property and business owners and census data.

### **Other**

Austin reported John Tester came to the office that morning to discuss Downtown, and it was a good discussion. Buchanan mentioned Tester did not recognize the term Wayfinding. The discussion included talk about how to find a way that federal dollars can come directly to local government without going through Helena. Buchanan said they told him the stimulus was good for Missoula, and that there are efforts to grow downtown housing and apartments. Austin said the best thing someone can do is call elected officials as often as needed. France said Tester wants to come back at the end of the summer and look at the Higgins Bridge. Beaton said the bridge needs to stay four lanes. Buchanan said Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is not going to propose two lanes. Cederberg said he thinks it would increase bike and pedestrian safety to build a better barrier from cars on the bridge.

Austin reported Tony Hansen from Midas is in the process of sending letters to those who do not want to join the BID. Rick Stephens will be covering for Laurie Johnson. Austin added he will be gone January 16 through February 4.

Austin also reported he got a call from Laura Millen yesterday. The Missoula Art Museum and Adventure Cycling are working on an art park on a curb extension, and perhaps a permanently located restroom facility. A committee for this project is in formation stages.

### **Ambassador's Report**

There is not a lot going on; there was for a few days after MDT announced they were closing camps at Reserve.

### **Approval of November 20 and December 18 Minutes**

**Buchanan moved to approve the minutes, Cederberg seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

### **Financial Report**

Austin said workman's compensation was reclassified for facilities staff. The rate jumped up, so we will work and change what we can. Cederberg said there are safety programs that will help if you can't get them reclassified. He added the revenue for July through December is higher than originally budgeted. It is up \$6,000 from the same time period last year. He mentioned the BID did not receive proper billing from police officers, since more officers have been in school lately. Cederberg remarked the finance

committee meets every other month. They worked hard to get expense items accurate on amount and timing.

### **Trustee Comments**

Gilligan asked whether the BID sign has made any headway. Austin said that project is on hold while Linda is gone since she has specific ideas, and the MDA may add new signage.

Gilligan also asked whether Light Our Bridge is happened. Buchanan said yes, if the group is successful in raising the funds. Buchanan said it is front of the city conservation committee for approval.

Beaton asked when work on Wyoming Street would begin. Buchanan answered the bids open February 25 for Silver Park, Wyoming Street, and the trestle. They are trying to finish this before the Osprey games start.

### **Meeting Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:59 pm.