

Missoula City Council Committee of the Whole Minutes

September 18, 2019

8:00 AM

City Council Chambers

140 W. Pine Street, Missoula , MT

Members present: Stacie Anderson, Julie Armstrong, Mirtha Becerra, Michelle Cares, John DiBari, Heather Harp, Gwen Jones, Jesse Ramos, Heidi West

Members absent: Jordan Hess, Julie Merritt, Bryan von Lossberg

Others present: Missoula County Commissioners: David Strohmaier, Josh Slotnick
Missoula Downtown Partnership: Linda McCarthy, Jason King, Robert Piatkowski

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Acting Chair Gwen Jones called the meeting to order

1.1 Roll Call

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

1.2.1 Minutes from the July 24, 2019 meeting

The minutes were approved as submitted.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Missoula Downtown Master Plan Update

Gwen Jones - Linda McCarthy will giving the presentation with our consultants from Dover Kohl.

Linda McCarty - Missoula Downtown Partnership, she presented the Downtown Master Plan. This has been a public/private partnership. Close to 4,000 people participated in the process. The focus of the plan is land use and infrastructure, transportation and parking, housing, street design, retail and commercial business development, and our quality of life. We do have a few more stakeholder meetings.

Jason King - , We travel around the county working on plans like this. We have been working on this for a year. We have worked with many people around the community. We worked with many local consultants. We took ideas from the public and brought them to people who could shape and implement the plan. Participation was in-person and online. The big five ideas that came from this process are: downtown needs more than just one view, we need to improve mobility and health and safety, we need to stay original and authentic and be green, we need to enhance parks and public spaces, and downtown needs to be a place for everyone. Specific projects and ideas were discussed. From a policy standpoint, the plan talks about historical preservation as well

as redacting and renovation. Since last spring we made some changes to the plan based on feedback. The plan is not adopted yet but it is in the implementation phase. Thursday at 4:30 at Caras Park we will be showing the plan to the public and coming back to Council Chambers on Friday for more discussion.

Gwen Jones - Thank you very much. Stacy Anderson is here for the record. Questions?

Heather Harp - When you go through the planning process in other communities what type of participation do you get from the community and how does that compare to Missoula?

Jason King - The participation we had in Missoula was about the same as we get in other cities about 4 times the size of Missoula. This creates high expectations.

Heather Harp - What do you say to folks who weren't aware of this?

Jason King - Remind them that this is a living plan; it can be updated as conditions change.

John DiBari - There is a table in the plan that talks about housing units. You created a whole bunch of buildings, how did you envision creating these buildings?

Jason King - We did analysis of what could be expected with growth and made strategic insertions. There are more buildings than you might see, but this can inform growth.

Gwen Jones - Heidi West is present. When you look back at the original goals, is there anything that is an opportunity that we didn't delve into with this plan?

Jason King - It is all in the plan. The short plan is 200 pages, the mid-plan is 400 pages, the full plan is 1,200 pages. We have been updating this plan up to last week. I think we covered everything.

Linda McCarthy - Rail service to other places did not come up in this process as well as the concept of alley activation and big art.

Jason King - Do you have anything in mind?

Gwen Jones - I was just curious. I wonder if 50 years from now people will wonder what we were thinking.

Jason King - I think 50 years from now the focus is going to be on climate change, and we have addressed this in this plan although we don't understand every aspect of it.

Gwen Jones - I appreciate that.

Linda McCarthy - I think that has a lot to do with the City and County staff that have been involved.

John DiBari - With regard to the river, I feel that it has an anthropocentric approach. I hope 50 years from now that we have made decisions that respect, protect, restore the river.

Josh Slotnick - What piece of this vision are you most surprised about?

Jason King - I'm excited that the plan has the city moving forward. The hard part is to continue on the trend you are on while still staying affordable. Tech companies are

moving here. Missoulians mean it when they say inclusive and affordable. That is going to be the challenge. What about you? What do you see that you are excited about?

Josh Slotnick - I appreciate that this is continuing on the plan we are on. I'm excited about the development of the railroad yard if it happens. There is potential there.

Jason King - We have seen this happen before with cities taking back their rail yards.

Gwen Jones - Public comment?

John DeArment, Clark Fork Coalition - We agree that looking out 50 years people will wonder why we did what we did with the river. We have an opportunity to do it right. I want to say thank-you to the group that worked on this.

Stacie Anderson - I think we need to be intentional to have access to the river. We need to blend conservation with access.

Gwen Jones - In Iowa City there are pictures of people using the river from years ago, we would like to continue to use the river.

Heather Harp - Jason can you talk about the multi-mobile split?

Jason King - There are only so many cars you park, in order to get people around, it is going to be about walking, biking and transit. Right now, a high number of people 15 - 30% use your trails. Still in the winter, people are using bikes. The plan sets goals to continue that plan; more biking, walking etc. At the same time, some people need to drive in to town. The downtown is a smaller part of a larger system.

John DiBari - In order to implement the mode-split, can we do it by rearranging the money we are currently using for work in the city? Can you have mass transit come in first before building or vice versa?

Rob Piatkowski - The Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization has ambition goals. A lot will be reallocation of funds given limitations with federal funding. What comes first is a tough question. In downtown, they may happen at the same time. We tried to tie transportation together rather than putting them in silos.

Heidi West - Today is one less car day.

Dave Strohmaier - With what comes first, we talked yesterday about streetcars. Putting rail in the street prior to development was the catalyst for it happening. Do you see the same effect with a rubber tire streetcar system?

Jason King - People who love downtown areas build streetcars downtown. In other cities these were put in as an attractant to downtown that catalyzes development. Those are bigger cities than Missoula and streetcars are expensive. We talked about a circulator in Missoula. They look cool and run more often than Mountain Line. They are rubber tire vehicles that look like street cars. As programs grow, you may one day see an electric street car system in Missoula.

Dave Strohmaier - I had not given a whole lot of thought to a circulator as a proxy to streetcars, and how a circulator can precipitate development.

Gwen Jones - We are just about out of time.

Linda McCarthy - The input session this week will be 4:30 PM Thursday and noon on Friday. The rest of the schedule is on the website. We are seeking formal adoption in early October. We will be working on design work on the trails over the next nine months.

Gwen Jones - Thank you for coming.

4. ADJOURNMENT

9:00 AM