

**Missoula City Council Housing, Redevelopment, and Community Programs Committee Minutes**

**DRAFT**

**July 26, 2023**

**9:30 AM**

**Council Chambers (in person) or TEAMS (virtually)**

**Attend in person: City Council Chambers, 140 W Pine, Missoula MT**

**Members present:** Mirtha Becerra, Daniel Carlino, John P. Contos, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Mike Nugent, Jennifer Savage, Sandra Vasecka, Heidi West

**Members absent:** Stacie Anderson, Amber Sherrill

**1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

Committee Chair, Heidi West called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

**1.1 Roll Call**

Rhea Sanders called the roll.

**1.2 Approval of the Minutes**

**1.2.1 Approval of the Minutes From July 19th, 2023**

The minutes were approved as submitted.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Travis Matier, Missoula resident, commented on current and past violent events in the area and emphasized the necessity to have policies in place to access dangerous individuals that pose a risk to those living marginally and to the community. He also mentioned the need to respond to the drug crisis.

**3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

**3.1 Johnson Street Shelter Update**

Mayor Hess introduced the item regarding the reopening of the Johnson Street Shelter on a temporary basis (one year). He outlined the presentation and expressed the intent to provide a status update, to provide the opportunity to answer questions, and to understand any concerns regarding the topic. Emily Armstrong the Houseless Programs Manager, Ginny Merriam the Public Information/Communications Director, Eran Pehan the Director of Community Planning Development and Innovation presented the shelter background, the shelter location and timeline, the facility operations, the Health Department variance request, the options for hygiene facility access, the proposed renovation/construction options, the communications/outreach plan, community input opportunities as well as the funding plan for operations and construction. For more information, please see the attached video.

The committee, the Mayor, Ms. Armstrong, Ms. Pehan and Ms. Merriam discussed the following:

- The communications plan including community/neighborhood outreach and engagement as well as a plan to address conflict, receive feedback and take comments throughout the process and while the shelter is operating.
- They talked about the factors that led to the decision to open the Johnson Street Shelter as a temporary solution and the limited options immediately available. It was reiterated that the contract for opening the shelter would be for one year only and any extension would have to come before council.
- Established that MRA funds are a viable source for either bathroom option and whether the use of these funds is justifiable. The potential for additional renovations along with the proposed bathroom renovation. It was conveyed the city was working with community partners to achieve balance between making changes that are urgent and necessary for safe operation without investing a lot of public resources into a building that had not been identified as a long-term solution.
- Whether there were viable contingencies in place and resources available prevent the various partners from being overwhelmed regarding issues that arise. Locations were identified where conflict was noted included the adjacent park and trail system. Ms. Pehan highlighted the additional staff hired to specifically focus on urban camping. Ms. Armstrong conveyed plans to coordinate and communicating with partners to triage potential issues and respond more effectively. They discussed the potential need to set aside funds to address issues taking place outside the shelter.
- The metrics that validated the claim that the shelter ran successfully previously, and how that success is currently defined and will be in the future. The number of individuals that would still be in need after the Johnson Street shelter reaches capacity. Ms. Armstrong mentioned they should have a better idea of the number and needs of the unhoused after the upcoming survey is conducted.
- The neighborhood concerns that the temporary shelter will become a permanent feature in Ward 6 and the negative impacts the shelter has had on the area. The need for sanctioned camping with trash bins, sharp receptacles, and toilets. Mayor Hess addressed the age of the Johnson Street building, the logistical need for a permanent solution and that an appropriate facility location would be decided on through a community process.
- The need for a master planning process moving forward that involves a broader community discussion, the need for proactive measures instead of reactive measures and the timeline of this transition. The adoption of the Mid-Town Master Plan in relation to the planning and use of the MRL triangle site.
- Jill Bonney Executive Director of the Poverello Center provided input regarding the determination of success through different lenses and shelter capacity.
- The target opening date of the shelter and the factors that influence that date range.
- The neighborhood not being afforded the opportunity to express their concerns prior to the emergency declaration and that the Johnson Street Shelter was the only adequate option in a time sensitive situation. The plan to assist the neighborhoods in dealing with issues concerning the shelter including the potential implementation of buffer zones.

- Dale Bickle Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Missoula discussed the shelter and urban camping budget will be requested together at the upcoming budget meeting. He outlined the comprehensive security plan to provide a coordinated approach to increase the capacity to address neighborhood issues.
- The legalities and codes regarding the placement a temporary shelter in a residential zoned neighborhood.
- The anticipated Navigation center opening.
- The original intent of the Johnson Street Building at the time of purchase.

Committee Chair Heidi West requested additional questions be emailed to staff as they were out of time.

There was no public comment.

There was no vote, this was an information only item.

N/A – this is an informational item

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 a.m.