

Missoula City Council Administration and Finance Committee Minutes

February 17, 2021

2:45 PM

ZOOM Webinar

Members present: Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Heather Harp, Jordan Hess, Gwen Jones (chair), Julie Merritt, Jesse Ramos, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, Bryan von Lossberg, Heidi West

Members absent: John P. Contos

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1.1 Roll Call

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

Approved as presented. Public Comment Called for. None.

1.2.1 Minutes from the February 10, 2021 Meeting

The minutes were approved as submitted.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Missoula Housing Policy Implementation Update

Montana James and Emily Harris-Shears Presenting A Place to Call Home Implementation Update.

Happy to be here to present this informational update.

(See attached presentation.)

Ms. Jones - Tons of information out there and community has questions and it shows the complexity of the situation. The City is working on it, but it is hard to make a big dent right away.

Merritt - Thank you and for getting it onto the website to see what we are working on. I think we are doing a good job at meeting some of the goals around affordable properties. Typo possibly about getting the applications online. Should it be 2022 as it says, or 2021?

Montana James - Currently right now, due to how the fiscal year goes, the goal is to work through through this during the calendar year and then next year at this time, the application will be put up.

Ms. Anderson - Thank you for those great presentations. What kept coming to mind is the fact that Missoula is not an island. The money we allocated and investments made in

things we are doing at the City need to be matched at both the state and federal level. These issues don't seem to be addressed. I am curious to see if light could be shed on that, getting matching funds. We can't do it ourselves. We need a partnership with other entities, as we are a City within a State within a Country. I think it would be helpful to describe what "Leverage" means so people understand how it works. If this could be addressed as we continue to work on this and presentations are put together. Having that included would be very helpful.

Ms. Jones - This is an issue to start reviewing, but can't be answered today. A bit over time, but continue if people want to answer questions.

Ms. Sherrill - I have constituents asking all the time about affordable housing, as there isn't a very clear answer. It is very complex, as this presentation shows. We are making some serious progress toward it. Thank you for your work on it. I am going to share this with people when they ask. You had shown a vacancy rate for 2020 for the last quarter. Do you have any comparison for 2019 you could show, to show COVID's negative effect on that?

Montana James - Yes, we can pull some comparisons and send them to you.

Ms. Harp - Thanks for the presentation. I think this is very important. It seems like we are really making some good strides toward achieving our goals, but it is a drop in the bucket as for what our wards need. How do you plan to incentivize permanent home affordability going forward?

Mr. von Lossberg - Thank you. Montana, I think we talked about doing an update like this early in the calendar year, and then as a part of the budget process and then in the fall. I see you shaking your head, so I think I am remembering that correctly. This was intentional to set up a regular process for touching base on the policy and progress. I have used the material on the Engage Missoula website frequently for constituent communication and I really appreciate you all keeping things updated there. Just a thought for going forward, I like how you presented the funding and the leverage dollars. We might want to add some of the words that you said out loud about the Viallgio project and Trinity. They blend themselves to a rendering, maps, to think about where they sort of are in the community and then the amount. We are investing a sizeable amount of money in that partnership with the housing authority. It is a big, complex project. It would be nice to represent them both graphically and then I think the units we are representing in the table at the end...just spelling out the partnerships a bit more. But, I really like how you presented it so far.

Ms. Becerra - Thanks. To quote the Mayor, we are building the plane as we are flying it, and affordable housing is one of those. I appreciate all the work that has gone into this. While a drop in the bucket, a drop is more than what we may have anticipated we could do. Could you provide what bills at the legislature you are tracking? Good for public to know that what happens in Helena has a ripple effect here in Missoula. What can the community do to help participate in the legislative process to help facilitate things?

Montana James - I know that we have a regularly updated report on the website of all of the City's bills, but I would be happy to pull out specifically some of the housing bills for City Council.

Ms. Jones - This information was communicated well.

Ms. West - This is a great presentation. Thank you for the hard work. One more suggestion, with the Trinity project, there were the Public Works dollars that went into it. How those work together would be a good thing to add to the presentation, tracking what other "pots" of money the City is contributing toward affordable housing.

Ms. Jones - When I look back at City documents, we have been talking about affordable housing for years. The City created this department to help create a housing policy. We want to remind everyone that we were making progress and then the pandemic hit. Very difficult problems became exponentially more difficult. We just need to keep working forward on it. I don't know if our analysis needs to change or not, as we are still in this time of flux. Any other comments?

None.

Thank you for letting me go long. It was very good to have a discussion.

Moved by:

N/A – Informational Item Only

4. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 3:28