

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Council Chambers
March 18, 2013

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) x Hanel, x Ronquillo, x Cromley, Cimmino, Pitman,
x McFadden, x Bird, x Ulledalen, McCall, x Astle, x Crouch

Mayor: 3 Councilmembers are excused.

ADJOURN TIME: 6:15 PM

Agenda

TOPIC #1	Legislative Report
PRESENTER	Ed Bartlett, Lobbyist
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Ed Bartlett: House appropriations spent a great deal of time on HB2, the General Budget Bill. Good bipartisan support at the subcommittee level. When discussions lead to amendments, bipartisanship began to separate, but appears it will return. HB2 is about 40% of budget for the State. The Bonding Bill was heard last week and is a very important bill for MSU-B's science building and for 7 or 8 other university projects around the State and Helena's museum. No action was taken. House Appropriations Committee rejected the 5% / 5% proposal, but didn't take any other action on HB13 Pay Plan. Three different, conflicting bills were passed out by the Select Joint Committee, for House Appropriations Committee to consider and amend. Beginning to act on Pension Reform Bills. HB314, Special Districts Bill, was heard in Senate Local Government Committee. Bruce McCandless represented Billings at that hearing. Bill is satisfactory, not great. HB443, concerning TIF terms, was tabled, may be amended. HB542, Bill concerning charging up to \$5/night lodging tax to aid with city/county infrastructures affected by oil and gas boom, was too broad and was tabled. SB4 changes the property tax reappraisal cycle to 2 years, but cost to implement is the problem. Revised Bill states \$3 million to implement and that may be acceptable. SB239 would consolidate aerospace technology, technology and industrial tax increment into one finance district. Was heard in the House Taxation Committee and is getting a favorable response. Good bill and Billings supported.
- Public comments: None

TOPIC #2	Human Relations Commission Annual Report
PRESENTER	Kayla Corcoran, Chair
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Kayla Corcoran: Reviewed the HRC accomplishments for 2012. No discrimination reports received by HRC. Reviewed 2013 goals for more outreach and education.

Reviewed promotional efforts and social media efforts. New website is in development. Want to replace missing commission members. Presented a budget request of \$500. In-kind volunteer hours donations = 120 hours and \$960 value.

- Bird: Requested copies of new brochure for Council and distribution to the Self-Help Law Center.
- Kayla: Will get brochures to Council this week. Believe Self-Help Law Center has some. Will follow up.
- Astle: Not asking for much money for table favors.
- Kayla: Describes what the HRC did last year and low expenses.
- Tina: Requested this presentation be forwarded to Karla Stanton, Human Resources Director, to be included with minutes from the meeting and for inclusion in upcoming budget talks.
- Public comments: None.

TOPIC #3	Going Out of Business Ordinance Amendments
PRESENTER	Brent Brooks, City Attorney
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Brent Brooks: Reviewed PowerPoint presentation material, included in the Friday packet. Committee’s goal was to streamline procedures, clean up and update language. Ordinance was originally intended to protect consumers from false or misleading advertising. Outlined 3 options for Council action. Reviewed Committee’s recommended ordinance changes, i.e. limiting sale to 90 days with no extensions; remove the requirements for an inventory list; provide for a Municipal infraction if business is proven to be using false or misleading advertising. Code enforcement, with the assistance of the business license clerk, would be responsible for enforcement. Recommended proceeding with first reading and public hearing to amend the ordinance as presented. Also recommended developing a FAQs brochure to accompany permits/licenses.
- McFadden: Hopeful there aren’t too many of these sales. Met with Kucheras who said that keeping an inventory was too difficult and didn’t like having to pay the City for permit or license to go out of business. Hopeful changes to the ordinance will make the process easier for businesses while still protecting the public.
- Cromley: How many licenses per year and over the years? What enforcement has occurred? Would it be bad if Council repealed this?
- Brent: Haven’t had a license for 2-3 years. Procedure is to check for a license, does application indicate what business will do and are they doing it and at the location identified in the application. Saw a lot of activity in late 90’s and around last recession. Episodic in nature and becomes a “front-burner” issue when the issue arises.
- Astle: Carrie’s Quilts was the most recent example of controversial sales. Reopened in the mini-mall right next to the original building. May have been more of a moving sale.
- Tina: Advantage to public is to protect from deceptive practices.
- Brent: If the ordinance doesn’t fit the next time it is needed, it can always be amended again.

- Mayor: Council consensus to move forward with first reading and public hearing.
- Public comments: None.

TOPIC #4	Sustainable Strategies Workshop Report
PRESENTER	Candi Beaudry, Planning Director
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Candi Beaudry: Billings Livability Partnership was formed about 2 years ago. A website has been created under www.livablebillings.com. First formed after East Billings Urban Renewal District to implement the plan there. Was largely headed by Big Sky Economic Development Authority. TID formed. Applied for grants to seed a revolving loan fund for small businesses, housing, etc., aimed at revitalization efforts. Lots of private and public participants, usually about 30 people who attend in person or by phone. Can react quickly. The group received an email on Feb 25 from President Obama’s office concerning the “Connecting your Community” initiative. Funds available to put on workshop, but had to write letter of intent on 2 days’ notice. Will request Council approval for grant if it is awarded.
- Bird: When will grant be awarded? Will grant send someone to the area to conduct the workshop?
- Candi: Don’t know the timeline. Will send someone from “Sustainable Strategies, D.C.” which provides local governments, nonprofits, coalitions and green technology firms with strategic consulting, federal advocacy, funding . . . focus on sustainable revitalization groups.
- McFadden: Website difficult to use on tablet.
- Public comments: None.

TOPIC #5	Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- None.

Additional Information:
