

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Council Chambers
August 5, 2013

ATTENDANCE:

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

ADJOURN TIME: 6:52 p.m. – go to exec session for litigation review.

Agenda

TOPIC #1	Swords Park Update
PRESENTER	John Brewer, Billings Chamber of Commerce; Bill Cole
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- John Brewer, Billings Chamber of Commerce, CVB: Partnered with many groups for trail improvements. Raised money for trailhead improvements, signage and amenities. Part of the plan is to emphasize heritage of community and the heritage route. Next project is restoration of Yellowstone Kelly’s gravesite, which is under City Park control. Obligated to maintain the area. Has been wrought with vandalism. Want to add seating, and defined parking; landscaping and interpretive signage; wheelchair accessibility and rock monument.
- Bill Cole: Gave a history of Luther Sage Kelly a/k/a Yellowstone Kelly; born in 1849 and died in 1929 at the age of 79. He was a veteran that served in 3 wars. He was an explorer, trapper, trader, guide and small scale rancher. He was a well-read, tenderfoot son of a middle-class merchant from upstate New York. He found his way to Montana at the age of 16 years old during his military service. He became so renowned, that the City of Billings renamed the eastern crest of the Rimrocks, Kelly Mountain; Yale University Press published his memoirs in 1926; and Warner Brothers released a major motion picture called Yellowstone Kelly in 1959; in 2006 a biography, The Life of Yellowstone Kelly, was published by western historian, Jerry Keenan. (*Continued giving specifics about military service and his various explorations.*)
- Cimmino: When did Swords Park’s name change to Swords Rimrock Park?
- Mike Whitaker: About 2 years ago, started talking with John Brewer and the Chamber. Research found the original name was Swords Rimrock Park. It is now used whenever possible and is a better name because it gives the location of the park within its name.
- Mayor Hanel: What is the fundraising goal?
- John: Very early stages of fundraising. Start small with the restoration of the gravesite and expand as funds are available; will develop a better plan later as funds become available.
- Public comments: None.

TOPIC #2	Transportation Alternatives Program
PRESENTER	Lora Mattox, AICP, Planner II, Transportation Planner
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Lora Mattox: Gave an update on new Transportation Alternatives Program which replaced the discontinued CTEP program. Funds can be used similarly to CTEP. States may use money for bridge and road projects or for alternative transportation projects. MT will allocate \$4 - \$6 million in a one-time grant application. Competitive application process. MDT manages all projects and determines what projects receive funding. There are no matching funds required from the City if the work is on an urban route. Must be sponsored by a local government agency, i.e. County, City Council, School Board. All can apply for the funds. All 3 recommended Billings projects are on-system.
- Bird: MDT dictates project scope?
- Lora: Yes. Local MDT district provided input on projects. Worked with stakeholder groups to develop project ideas. Landscaping, beautification used to be allowed under the old CTEP program, but is no longer allowed. Landscaping can only be used if for storm water and erosion control, but not for beautification only projects. Projects identified were: Broadwater Trail from Zimmerman to Shiloh that is the missing 1 mile link – approximately \$422,000; Laurel Road from King Ave. W. to 6th Street Underpass, is a separated, 5’ wide multi-use path on the north of Laurel Road, with crossings and refuge islands – \$1.4 million; a trail system from Hwy. 3 and N. 27th St. approximately 3,000 ft. of 8’ wide ADA pathway, west of Swords Rimrock Park eventually extending to Zimmerman Park. This would be 5 phase project. Phase 1 would almost reach to Cactus Drive - \$607,000.
- McCall: What are the anticipated average award amounts? Limited to number of projects? Was the School District informed?
- Lora: Don’t know, but intention is to submit 3 good projects and hope to get at least 1 funded. There are different funding tiers – 1) communities with less than population of 5,000; 2) communities with greater than 5,000; and 3) a generic pot. Geography of projects will be considered, too, in the selection process. School District was involved from the outset to include Safe Routes to School plan identifying missing sidewalks, etc. Asked Council to sponsor and take action at August 12th regular business meeting.
- Ulledalen: What other projects were considered?
- Lora: There was a list of about 15 projects. Judged all using State criteria. Looked at everything from extending a pathway from S. Billings Blvd. to Riverfront Park, making the connection from King Ave. W. to a great park. Engineering provided numerous on-system bike lanes, etc., however, through the Paver Program, bike lanes will be included as streets are overlaid, so didn’t want to use this grant opportunity for those. Many other projects were considered, too.

Public comments: None.

TOPIC #3	Priority Based Budgeting / Strategic Planning
PRESENTER	Tina Volek, City Administrator
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Tina Volek: Distributed a proposed timetable for strategic planning. On Sept. 23rd agenda for consultant contract approval; start planning in October; include new Councilmembers after election; conclude the process at the end of January or early February 2014 in time to prepare for the FY 14-15 budget. Gave a list of 15 professionals who will receive RFP. Can add to list if Council suggests. Good representation of potential companies to do the work.
- McCall: Work group did a good job. Tina and Liz Kampa-Weatherwax were well-prepared.
- Public comments: None.

TOPIC #4	Quarterly Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ BIRD, Inc. ➤ Downtown Billings Partnership ➤ Initiatives ➤ Cell Phone Statistics ➤ New Library Construction Project ➤ City-Wide Park District 1 Projects
PRESENTERS	Steve Zier and Marty Connell, BIRD; Greg Krueger, DBP; Tina Volek, City Administrator; Bill Cochran, Library Director; Mike Whitaker, Parks and Recreation Director
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Steve Zier, BIRD: Provided quarterly report in Friday packet.
- Ronquillo: Will Underriner dispose of 4th Ave. property?
- Steve: Don't know their plans.
- Mayor Hanel: EBURD variance defense?
- Tina: Will be addressed in executive session later this evening.
- Cimmino: Added to staff?
- Steve: Patty Nordlund started work today, part-time 4 days/week.
- Public comments: None.
- Greg Krueger, DBP: Quarterly report submitted in Friday packet. Thanked EBURD for working together with downtown. Northern Hotel project running at projections; valet parking working well; calculating the public improvements grant. Working with railroad traffic committee (Ronquillo volunteered to serve on the committee as a representative of the South Side). DBP allocated up to \$2,000 of operating budget for retail recruitments/public art on traffic signal box wraps. Parking forum, lunch on Tuesday, Sept. 24th. Nationally recognized parking experts will participate.

- Mayor Hanel: Noticed some cleanup at Congregational Church pocket park.
- Tina: Mr. Prill paid a visit to her about the condition of the pocket park. He arranged a meeting with Tina and church board members. Church will remove the trees. Legal Department is working on giving back the easement. Mr. Whitaker and staff cleaned up the area. Tina pledged to do it again as an interim measure later this fall.
- Public comments: None.
- Tina: Initiatives - completed ones will be removed.
- Pitman: Inner belt loop, phase 1 has been completed, but phase 2 will begin and it needs to remain on the list.
- Tina: Can keep it on the list.
- Ulledalen: What is the status of inner belt loop route immediately west of airport?
- Tom Binford: Airport submitted plans and info to PW. Engineering's involvement is necessary; land acquisition, etc. before submitting to FFA.
- Tina: Will ask for update from Director Mumford.
- McFadden: What would the FFA's object to?
- Tom: A significant area that the loop would cross was purchased using federal funds. Funds were used to protect airport from streets and buildings. So, the City will ask to put things in that area that the FFA doesn't want there. FFA can grant permission, but have to consider many factors.
- Cimmino: Who came up with concept?
- Tom: PW and Airport discussed and developed.
- Mayor Hanel: What were the circumstances for the mishap last Wednesday? Update on runway work?
- Tom: A twin-engine private plane, left-side gear buckled, rested on its belly. No injuries. Runway work - weekend 4 completed. Will complete project on time.
- Pitman: Hydrant fee to be implemented can be removed from list as completed.
- Public comments: None.
- Tina: Cell phone statistics were in the Friday packet. Note increase in number of contacts and percentage of citations vs. warnings has increased.
- Pitman: A lot of warnings given to out-of-state or out-of-area people. Signs are not very visible. Need more or bigger?
- Astle: Would like to consider increasing fines. \$100 too low--\$125 first offense - \$500 for second.
- Brooks: Ordinance sets fines, but Council can change it.
- Bird: If fines are increased, could some of the money be used for signage? Any City employees excluded from ordinance?
- Tina: Court fines are General Fund, so it could be done. Emergency services personnel are excluded.
- Public comments: None.

- Bill Cochran: Update given concerning new Library construction. Information submitted in Friday packet, but 2 new items since then. Started installing scrim on south side and the Foundation brought \$300,000 check to Finance.
- Pitman: Scrim going to be low maintenance?
- Bill: Contractor wanted to polish after installation – one-time, should be extremely low maintenance.
- Mayor Hanel: Any more comments about color?
- Bill: None.
- McFadden: When is new library opening?
- Bill: December, 2013.
- Cimmino: What was the pole barn reference?
- Bill: Architects used it as one of several references to describe the building's relationship to the community and the building's shape. Advised to stop using the reference as it does not resonate well with many people. It's really about the simplicity of the building's shape.
- McCall: Was raised on a ranch. It is perfect.
- Ulledalen: A very knowledgeable person involved in agriculture in the state stated it looks very similar to someone's lambing sheds around White Sulphur Springs, MT.
- Ronquillo: When the architect made his presentation about the design of the building, he showed pictures of old barns and pole barns and sheds throughout the country.
- Bill: The architect has visited Montana a number of times. He had his own set of photos. Displays go back to when the Montana State University in Bozeman, the students from the architectural school came and he asked them to document what was essential to the region and the City. They actually placed a lot of the photographs of agricultural buildings and industrial buildings along the railroad tracks.
- Cimmino: Dedication ceremony will not be until February, 2014?
- Bill: Committee handling the donor recognition event and the public dedication ceremony on February 1, wanted to make certain travel arrangements and weather events wouldn't start domino-ing with other library business. It is expected that famous authors and other dignitaries will attend the ceremony. Will be a soft opening over the holidays.
- Bird: What will happen to the old bricks from the old library building?
- Bill: Demolition contractor under a lot of pressure once the new library opens. Several suggestions for using some of them. A lot of materials in the building are worth recycling. Working with non-profits to remove some things from the building. Will auction furniture and shelving.
- Pitman: Will the 6th Avenue lane closure be over soon?
- Bill: May last for the remainder of the project.
- Public comments: None.
- Mike Whitaker: Reviewed status of projects. Received second installment of funding in June so were able to move forward with many projects. All deferred maintenance projects for 2013 are underway or completed, except upgrading fall protection at the playgrounds.

New volunteer coordinator started on May 6th and has coordinated approximately 390 volunteers. Number of hours donated is over 1400 since May 6th, a \$12,000 value.

- Ronquillo: Boys and Girls Club worked in South Park – did a great job.
- Mike: Arborist started this past spring. Manages over 9,000 trees in the developed parks. Ninety new commercial-grade picnic tables are in the parks now. Have been spraying weeds – a little over 300 acres. Will spray more this fall.
- Tina: Spraying had not been done since the early 1990s. Will make a major change. Noted the new gazebo at the South Park is being well used.
- Mike: Two of the three water slides opened on July 25th at Rose Park. New speed slide is scheduled to open this weekend. Restroom projects will begin at the end of August.
- Bird: Skate park restroom going to be the model for other new ones?
- Mike: Yes, but without the stone fascia.
- McCall: How is skate park restroom working out?
- Mike: Only damage was accidental and person admitted it and paid for it. Some graffiti, but nothing serious.
- Bird: Easy maintenance?
- Mike: Yes, we use a power washer.
- McFadden: Describe fall protection material?
- Mike: Fibar – engineered clean woodchip, no bark, 8” deep. Will meet all current consumer product safety commission standards and all ADA standards. Like wood chips better than rubber products.
- Bird: Will the fall protection at the 36 playground sites be completed by end of this fiscal year?
- Mike: Yes, but late fall. RFP will be out later in August. Will begin FY14 when the money comes in this December.
- Ronquillo: South Park has some sidewalks covered by sand – will new fall protection material be used there?
- Mike: Yes. It will be completely redone.
- Cromley: Other cities have benches in parks, why doesn't Billings?
- Mike: No knowledge of history, take donations for benches and install them around playgrounds. The City buys benches and installs where there is a need. They are usually placed around playgrounds.
- McFadden: Benches and picnic tables still in short supply in Terry Park.
- Pitman: Updated revenue info for slides at Rose Park; less monies due to delays.
- Mike: Yes, will provide that information to Council. Have budget to purchase 90 more picnic tables, but it will take a while to catch up with replacement.
- Bird: Speed slide ticket price?
- Mike: Prices will remain the same. During the coming budget cycle, will propose fee increases.
- Ulledalen: What does the new sprayground cost, annually?

- Mike: Depends on whether water is reused in park or filtered and reused at sprayground. So just the cost of pumping the water. Water is free.
- Bird: Do you know where the South Park sprayground will be located?
- Mike: No, FY14 projects not yet identified.
- Cimmino: Are the picnic tables purchased new? Didn't we reuse some of the material from the old Cobb Field to make other benches and tables?
- Mike: Yes, in both cases. Have both styles of picnic tables. Will not repair damaged wooden tables.
- Tina: Announced Recreation Superintendent, Joe Fedin's, retirement on Nov 1. He has been with the City since 1985.
- Bird: Dress code for temporary workers? Saw a temp working in a park with flip-flops on. Does not seem appropriate.
- Mike: Parks supervisor will be informed.
- Public comments: None.

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

- None.

TOPIC #6	Pending Litigation (Executive Session)
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

Additional Information:
