

North Elevation Task Force

July 17, 2018

7:00 pm

In Attendance:

Jerry Kessler (Chair), Maggie Zaback (Co-Secretary), Tamara Roche (Co-Secretary), Mary Matthews, Lue Ponich, Cody Kraske, Linda and Perry Moler, Shauna Kerr, Joe Keepers, Steve and Kathie Shandera, Brent Cromley, Mary McNally, Zach Benoit

Introduction of Guests:

Tanya Punt- City of Billings Code Enforcement Division

Sargeant Nate West- Crime Report

Steve Shandera-Report on the Historical District Banner Project

Zach Benoit- Billings Clinic

Current Business:

- May minutes approved unanimously.
- TrailNet's Annual Meeting is tomorrow night at 6:00 at the library.
- Neighborhood picnic- Email Perry if you'd like to help.

Tanya Punt- City of Billings Code Enforcement Officer

- There are 2 residential code officers in Billings.
 - Tanya supervises Heights, Southside, North Side, and one other region.
 - They have over 3,364 cases already this year.
 - They are super busy, but are doing a great job responding to complains
- All of the actions that come from code enforcement must come from a complaint, they cannot initiate an action of their own, despite their own observed violations.
- Some violations are:
 - Open storage. Storing debris, junk vehicles, trash, etc. Everything must be stored within a structure. Temporary projects are fine, but several years of junk is a problem.
 - Weeds. They went from 20 complaints per week to 20 per hour. Those get called in, they let owners know they have 10 days to fix it, otherwise parks department will come out and charge it to the resident.
 - Trailers. Trailers cannot be stored on the street, if they are on the street they must be attached to a vehicle. They just directly ticket them, 3 tickets then the car gets towed.
 - Cars. Cars can be parked on the street indefinitely as long as their car is registered and operable. Another issue is parking in the alley because solid waste can't make it through.
 - RVs. RV camper living is illegal in town. People may not allow others to stay in an RV on their property for more than 5 days.

- VRBO and AirBnB. AirBnB's are illegal in city limits. It is changing the zone from residential to commercial if people are coming on a nightly basis.
- Complaints can be issued online, you can call the office, leave a voicemail, or come in person.

Brent Cromley-Billings City Council

- City Council meets every Monday evening and will now start meetings at 5:30.
- Last night they talked about the airport improvements that will cost \$40million, most of that coming from federal funds. The new improvements will greatly increase the capacity. Our airport was not built to handle security after 9/11.
- Some folks with the City want to spend \$3 million on a new evidence center.
- They are also looking at \$2 million for One Big Sky Center.
- The City is still searching for a new City Administrator.
- Zimmerman trail is closed and will be closed for several more months.
 - There's not a lot they can change in their rebuilding effort, but they will build a roundabout at the top and try to widen some areas.
 - North 27th Street will also be having some work done.
- August 15 at the library at 6:00 will be a large meeting of community members and organizations to discuss what to do about the transient population issues in the City.

Sargeant Nate West- Billings Police Department

May 16 to July 13

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|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ○ 189 calls for service | ○ 57 suspicious activity calls |
| ○ 34 welfare checks | ○ 5 abandoned vehicle reports |
| ○ 21 suicide threats | ○ 5 parking complaints |
| ○ 5 sick/injured reports | ○ 4 traffic complaints |
| ○ 8 reports of threats or harassment | ○ 7 traffic stops |
| ○ 30 reports of disturbances | |

Case highlights

- Robberies-
 - Two unknown subjects asked a woman near the hospital for a cigarette, they knocked her out and took her cigarettes and lighter.
 - \$5,000 ring missing while woman was on vacation, although she did have contractors working in her house while she was gone.
- Traffic concerns: there are four full time officers specifically doing traffic enforcement. 3rd St West from Parkhill to Grand has traffic coming down at 50 mph most days, so he will ask officers to monitor that area.

Steve Shandera- Historic District

- Steve and his wife talked about the banners being a great idea, came to task force to get support, and by April they signed with the Billings Community Foundation to help take care of finances and accounting. The Billings Community Foundation was very helpful in this project.
- Steve started raising money and had a tremendous response from the neighborhood.
 - 34 individuals and organizations have combined to contribute just over \$7,000.
 - They were able to get up 16 banners and have 8 more to be put up this week, and there was a celebration on May 19.
- St. Vincent Healthcare and Billings Clinic each sponsored the cost of a banner in order to be good neighbors, which deserves a special thanks.
- The banners should be good for 18-36 months so upkeep will be ongoing.
- Steve requested that the task force approve the creation of a “sub task force” to formalize the relationship between the historic banners efforts and the task force. The immediate function would be to make decisions about how to manage the banners, fundraise, maintain, and discuss other historic district projects.

Perry moved that the task force create a Historical District Committee, Steve seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Tamara will help to call for volunteers on NextDoor.

Mary McNally- State Senator

- There is no special session. Mary is on the Energy Telecommunications Interim Committee but there is not a lot going on that is important to bring to the committee.

Zach Benoit- Billings Clinic

- They have a full-time hospital campus police officer that can deal with matters that are above security teams’ capacity to deal with disturbances.
- They are getting one more officer soon, the Clinic is paying for those officers.
- It is not patients that are causing problems, it is usually different visitors from around town, usually just passing by.
- The Crisis Center is poorly marked and often hospital discharges are wondering around the neighborhood looking for it. Zach will make an effort to get the hospital staff to be better about directions, or even help walk people to the edge of campus to point them in the right direction.

Closing:

- The approved minutes will be sent to the City of Billings in .pdf for the website. The draft minutes will be posted on NextDoor .
- The next meeting will be September 18. Perry and Jerry will be gone for the September meeting. Brent Cromley volunteered to run the next meeting.

-Respectfully submitted by Maggie Zaback