

<b>Downtown Billings Partnership At Large Members</b>		
<b>PRESENT:</b> Marguerite Jodry	James “Andy” Patten	Joni Harman (via phone)
Chris Montague		
<b>ABSENT:</b> Steve Tostenrud	Steve Wahrlich	Sam Merrick
Ethan Kanning		
<b>Partners</b>		
<b>PRESENT:</b> Jock West	Janna Hafer	Wyeth Friday
Katy Easton (via phone)	Sean Lynch	Matt Blakeslee
<b>ABSENT:</b> David Fishbaugh	Ignacio Barron Viela	<a href="#">Steve Arveschoug</a>
Commissioner Dennis Pitman	James Chandler	
<b>Staff and Guests</b>		
Mehmet Casey	Max Griffin	Janine Griffin
Jenny Ross	Laura Morledge	

**1) Call to Order – Introductions, Courtesies, and Public Comments (3 min. limit)** Mr. Patten called the meeting to order at 7:45 AM.

**2) Regular Agenda:**

**a. Minutes – October 22, 2021 meeting minutes, vote to approve minutes:** Sean Lynch made a motion to approve the October 22, 2021 Meeting Minutes which was seconded by Chris Montague. All were in favor and none opposed.

**b. Presentations:**

**i. 2316 1st Ave N Apartments -** Max and Janine Griffin - Mr. Griffin provided an overview of both phase one and phase two. Phase one will include a five story structure, with a minimum of 32 residential units; they plan to have 22 private garages with a total of 37 parking spaces available. He shared an overview of the intention to build the new facilities with minimal resources for cost effectiveness and an overview of the multi-use area with hopes to have smaller events. They shared that the projected rental price range is from \$1,800 to \$2,300. Mr. Griffin expressed the significance of adding more residential units downtown but that when a developer is not rehabilitating an existing structure, the cost of land downtown is challenging for a new development.

Mr. Lynch is a strong believer in such projects and thought these projects ought to be considered for TIF funding because of the return into the TIF District and the additional benefits a property of this caliber will bring to downtown. Mr. Lynch also believed this site is currently blighted and that this new development will drive further investments in the surrounding area. He admired the risk they are taking by bringing new development downtown.

Ms. Hafer inquired about how the two phases will work and the presenters confirmed that at this time, they were only asking for assistance with Phase One. Mr. Griffin confirmed that they currently did not have additional public dollars in this project. Mr. Griffin shared that if there is approval from City Council, they will start construction next summer with completion in 2024. The Board asked about the

qualified expenses listed on the financial budget. Mr Griffin explained that this budget is based on historical projections but that they are planning to fund an engineering design that will provide accurate bids. Mr. & Ms Griffin departed.

### 3) Action Items

- a. **2316 1st Ave N Apartments:** Mr. Lynch made a motion to recommend a grant not to exceed \$1,693,050. Mr. Montage seconded. The Board discussed the project's merits, the TIF Fund's capacity, the disbursements term, and qualified expenses to focus on. A discussion ensued about how this is a first of its kind in terms of new developments in general or a housing project in particular. While it is a larger request than usual, it complies with the City's TIF Resolution in regards to the preferred threshold of private to public dollars as well as having a compelling amount of qualified expenses. Not to mention that this is a private project so a development of this size will contribute tremendously to the District's health especially with recent acquisitions of buildings by nonprofits and the public sector. Furthermore, it lines up with the Urban Renewal Plan and DBA's Strategic Plan. Moreover, the DBP Board had prioritized multi use developments that include housing, business activity, enhance safety and offer connectivity to the surrounding neighborhood. This development will energize 1st Ave N, Montana Ave, and other nearby streets east of N 27th St. Mr. Lynch was hopeful that this project is accepted because the Griffins are local and continue to invest in this community. The Board was hopeful that this project will encourage and spur other similar projects.

All were in favor; none were opposed and the motion carried.

- b. Mr. Casey presented on behalf of the Historic Montana Avenue Association (HMAA) because this request is unusual but qualified. HMAA is a group of business and property owners located on Montana Avenue. They meet monthly and discuss among themselves ways to improve safety, beautification, and accessibility. Mr Casey reported they have engaged with MDT and City staff and have received approval to install one couplet of pedestrian activated flashing beacons on the intersection of N 25th Street and MT Avenue. Mr. Casey shared an overview of other projects that this group plans to accomplish in the near future. MDT also plans to do some improvements to Montana Ave by the end of 2023. He shared that the estimated cost for the flashing beacons is \$15,000. Because this is purely an infrastructure improvement of street signage designed to offer a safer pedestrian experience, the request is for a 100% reimbursement. Mr. Lynch supported this but asked if this is something that the DBP or the City can receive a reimbursement of from the State at a later date since this is a State highway. Ms. Hafer made a motion to approve and to ask the State for reimbursement if this is something feasible. Mr. West seconded.

All were in favor and none were opposed. Motion carried.

### 4) Staff Update/Financials - Mr. Casey shared an update on a couple of TIF applications

that have not been executed yet being the Burger Dive and Montana Rescue Mission. They were supposed to be signed 90 days after City Council approval but due to a multitude of sources of funding that are each contingent upon each other, we were not able to settle on completion dates to be stated in the agreements, which in turn trigger when reimbursements take place. He believed that these will likely need to go back to City Council to be at least on the Consent Agenda to extend the execution deadlines.

Mr. Casey also shared an overview of the TIF Forecast and discussion was had about buildings that will no longer contribute to the TIF Fund and the importance of projects such as The Griffin Apartments Development located at 2316 1st Ave N and other future buildings that will add back to the TIF District and ultimately the City when the District sunsets.

**5) Old Business/New Business** - None was discussed at this time.

#### **6) Partner reports**

- a. **City of Billings** - Mr. Friday reported that the Public Safety Mill Levy passed and that they are currently working on the allocation of the funds which is being led by Mr. Kukulski. They are also working on scheduling orientation for new and current Council. In addition, the CIP is scheduled to go to Council on 12/13/21.
- b. **Downtown Billings Association** - There is a DBA board meeting next week.
- c. Yellowstone County
- d. **Business Improvement District** - Mr. Casey shared that the Holiday parade is next week, and the DBA is implementing the free parking downtown on Thanksgiving Day through the end of the calendar year. He also shared an overview of Holiday Stroll on 12/3/21, he shared that the BID is still working with the city on securing a location for The Portland Loo.
- e. **School District 2** - They are hoping they can lift the mask mandate for the second semester of school provided the trends continue to go down and the vaccination rates continue to go up for ages 5-11 knowing that they will never be at 100%.
- f. **Billings Cultural Partners** - Mr. Blakeslee shared that they are hosting a holiday gathering.
- g. Big Sky Economic Development
- h. Billings Parking Board
- i. **Downtown Billings Property Owners Association** - They have to have their annual meeting and they need to send a notice out still.

7) Adjourn by 9:00 a.m. - Mr. Patten Adjourned the meeting at 9:05 AM