

**CITY OF BILLINGS**  
**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION SUMMARY**  
**December 1, 2025 5:30 P.M.**  
**Council Chambers – City Hall, 316 N. 26th St.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Bill Cole called the Work Session to order at 5:30 P.M.

**Council Present:**

Councilmember Gulick, Ward I  
Councilmember Owen, Ward II  
Councilmember Neese, Ward II  
Councilmember Rogers, Ward III  
Councilmember Tidswell, Ward IV  
Councilmember Aspenlieder, Ward IV  
Councilmember Boyett, Ward V  
Councilmember Rupsis, Ward V  
Councilmember Shaw, Ward I  
Mayor William Cole

Absent/Excused:

**Staff Present:**

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator  
Gina Dahl, City Attorney  
Debi Meling, Public Works Director  
Wyeth Friday, Planning & Community Services Director  
Tina Hoeger, Code Enforcement Manager  
Gavin Woltjer, Parks and Recreation Director  
Rich St. John, Police Chief

**Council Update on Mary Street and Bitterroot Street**

Debi Meling, Public Works Director, indicated the State said the intersection does not warrant a 4 way stop. Working with County – will implement edge lit stop signs, flashing and bright light. Paint new stop bars and add reflective tape. Discussed various options to increase safety.

Council discussion.

Chris Kukulski – upcoming items for Mayor and Council.

**Public Comment:**

Paul Clark – parking issues downtown with new bike lanes and water billing concerns.

**1. Redevelopment Opportunities for 802 Yellowstone Avenue**

Presented by: Wyeth Friday, Planning & Community Development Director

- Reviewed the long history of code enforcement actions, environmental contamination, and eventual City acquisition of the property following district court proceedings.
- Summarized asbestos abatement, demolition, and recycling efforts completed in September 2025 using EPA Brownfields Program funding.
- Neighborhood outreach included a public meeting and survey distributed primarily within a ten-block radius of the site. Survey results indicated strong support for open space or community garden uses, moderate support for single-family housing, and limited support for commercial development.
- Outlined redevelopment scenarios including City-led housing development, private development through an RFP, and open space/community garden options, noting funding availability and constraints associated with each approach.

**Council Discussion:**

- Councilmembers expressed appreciation for staff’s work resolving a long-standing nuisance property and acknowledged neighborhood relief following demolition.
- Several Councilmembers emphasized the City’s need to prioritize housing and questioned whether the parcel’s size truly prevented residential development, citing nearby examples of successful infill housing on similar lots.
- Concerns were raised regarding long-term maintenance obligations if the site were developed as a park or community garden, including irrigation, fencing, volunteer reliability, and future costs to the Parks Department.
- Gavin Woltjer, Parks and Recreation Director, clarified that community garden models rely primarily on nonprofit or volunteer management with minimal ongoing Parks Department involvement, similar to the Amend Park garden model.
- Council discussed the financial implications of the EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund, noting that disposal of the property without qualifying public benefit conditions could require repayment of cleanup costs.
- Councilmembers debated whether to issue an RFP prioritizing housing or public benefit uses versus offering the property for sale to return it to private ownership and the tax rolls.

**Public Comment:**

Amy Aguirre - suggested contacting Habitat for Humanity about purchasing property.

Council Action:

Motion by Councilmember Boyett to direct staff to offer the property for sale to highest bidder and return with information on responses and next steps if the property does not sell within a reasonable timeframe. CM Neese seconded.

APPROVED 7-4, Shaw, Gulick, Rupsis, and Mayor Cole opposed

## **2. Follow-up on Aggressive Traffic and Excessive Noise Initiative**

Presented by: Chief Rich St. John and Debi Meling, Public Works Director

- Presented speed study data from multiple corridors, noise monitoring results, and enforcement statistics. Discussed cameras and the need for Legislative changes.
- Chief St. John outlined current enforcement strategies, staffing limitations, and proposed amendments to the City's noise ordinance to allow officer judgment without specialized equipment.
- Debi Meling discussed roadway design considerations, traffic calming measures, and ongoing transportation corridor planning efforts.

Council Discussion:

- Councilmembers emphasized that the initiative should focus on extreme behaviors such as street racing, excessive speeding, and modified vehicle noise rather than routine speeding.
- Discussion highlighted the importance of combining enforcement, education, and engineering solutions to address quality-of-life impacts.
- Councilmembers discussed definition of disturbing the peace, distance limits, fees, etc.

St. John – continue to gather data of problem areas, will bring back ordinance with amendments.

- Council not opposed to ordinance amendment.

Council continued discussion.

### **Public Comment:**

The following constituents spoke of noise and traffic concerns:

Tony O'Donnell.

Kevin Nelson.

Paul Clark.

**ADJOURN: 8:41 PM**