

**Lower Rattlesnake  
Neighborhood Council General Meeting  
Minutes**

Wednesday, December 7, 2011  
Missoula International School (Prescott St)  
6:00-8:30pm

**6:00-7:00 Social and Information about the projects**

**7:00 Meeting**

**✚ Julie Maddox- from the Missoula International School**

Welcomed the neighbors to the International School

**✚ Doug Harby- Public Works: Van Buren Sidewalks**

- Mr. Harby discussed the city plans for Van Buren, a unique and problematic street. He was excited to be working on improvements, as this street is highly used for access to many residences and recreation in the Rattlesnake. Mr. Harby has completed a survey with cross sections to see how everything relates to the position of the street. He found that in many places the street's center line was indeed higher than the curbs and sidewalks, typically the street should be lower.
- He determined that Van Buren needs curbs and sidewalks and that the transitions to driveways must be smoothed out. In addition the street could use boulevards that are not accessible by car. Along the ditches, parking should continue to be prohibited.
- To fund this project, the property owners must pay for the sidewalks and curbs and the city street department will pay for the sumps and asphalt. Mr. Harby hopes to have the city also participate in the sidewalk removal to cut costs to the property owners. Also a subcommittee of the City Council is assigned to find subsidies for the neighborhood sidewalk projects.
- Questions followed. Here is a summary of answers:
  - o There will not be a storm drain system put in, though sumps will be in place every 300-400ft. Drainage is one of the main reasons why this project is in the works. Due to the fact that many of the residences are lower than the street, there may be some pooling in yards as a result of this project after freeze thaw events, though not more than usual.
  - o This project is not funded through a SID, simply the adjacent property owners. The city will pay for the handicap ramps. For the neighbors that have recently paid for sidewalks that are still in good condition, there will be some sort of subsidy for the new walks.
  - o The project will start in a little over 6 months, allowing for more planning, contracting and design. Work on Lolo St. may begin in July/Aug and Van Buren in late Aug/Sept on the south end. This is a best case scenario.
  - o There will not be a dedicated turn lane into Cherry St. or any of the alleys because there is no significant cuing at this point.

- The construction of sidewalks should not close down traffic, but if any water services are impacted then this may close the street. (Mountain Water has already surveyed and it appears there should be no problem).

#### **✚ Shane Stack – MDT: I-90 Interchanges and Noise Abatement**

- Mr. Stack explained the plans for the I-90/Van Buren Interchange, including a round-about in the shape of a dog bone.
- He spoke about the possibility of a noise barrier and other sound abatement from the interstate. They must go through the process to see if they are federally eligible for the sound barrier. There is the potential that a barrier could actually increase the noise, reflecting it off of Jumbo. Typically a barrier only protects the first and second tier (or row) of houses.
- Questions followed.
  - There were a couple of concerns about the amount of backup from left turns into alleyways and streets. Mr. Stack explained that they had completed a traffic survey and had not found this to be significant enough to call for a dedicated turn lane. MDT will take into consideration the public comment about the back up into the roundabout. There is not very much space to make a turn lane there, but they can look into it.
  - The final decisions about this project will be a collaboration of federal and state government employees. MDT wants to ensure that all voices are heard in this process.

#### **✚ Public comment on non-agenda items**

- A comment about placing more fire hydrants in the neighborhood was made. Neighbors wondered if it was possible to put these in during modifications of the water system during the sidewalk project.
- A neighbor who has been renting in the area for several years introduced himself and is looking to buy a house in the neighborhood.
- Also a discussion about the noise from the railroad followed. Several neighbors felt that they would rather make modifications to the crossing at Van Buren than put in a sound barrier for the interstate, as the train whistles are more disruptive. As there may be an increase in coal loads (50-80 trains a day, one neighbor said), this was a major concern. This project would cost several thousand dollars for the modification of the crossing arms, etc. There was a general consensus to form a committee to look into this so that the trains do not have to blow their whistles at to cross Van Buren Street.

### **8:20 Adjourned**

\*Jason Wiener and Dave Strohmaier, Ward 1 City Council Representatives were present.

(Minutes submitted by Erika Foster, Office of Neighborhoods Assistant, Dec 14, 2011)