

A Meeting of the  
**MONTANA HERITAGE COMMISSION**

September 8, 2017

Rehearsal Hall

115 Idaho Street, Virginia City

Helena, MT

MISSION

*The Montana Heritage commission preserves and manages historic resources in Virginia City, Nevada City and Reeder's Alley and promotes the appreciation of history through quality visitor experiences.*

**Commissioners Present**

Marilyn Ross, Philip Maechling, Andy Poole, Shera Konen, Bill Beck, David Hoffman, Bill Howell, Marty Tuttle\*<sup>1</sup>

**Commissioners Absent**

Bruce Whittenberg, Matthew Marcinek, Stan Ozark, Barbie Durham, Timothy Lehman

**Staff Members Present**

Elijah Allen, Business Development Manager; Amy Barnes, Attorney; Bonnie Martello, Paralegal

**Interested Persons**

Harlan Olson, Joelle Olson, John Ellingsen, Lynn Milliken, Bill Koch, Stephano and Cindy Sutherlin, Bill Bennett, Bruce Parker

**Call to Order**

The Montana Heritage Commission was called to order by Chair Ross at 9:03 am.

**Approval of June 9, 2017 Minutes**

Corrections to the June minutes were requested. Commissioner Maechling requested that Commissioner Haxby-Cote be changed to read Director Haxby-Cote. **Commissioner Howell made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections. Commissioner Maechling seconded. Motion carried.**

**Public Comment**

Lynn Milliken, Nacho Mamas thanked Elijah for helping her get the restaurant up and running and for helping with getting through the process with the signs issues with the city. Lynn, stated that everything went well this season. Lynn also stated that when there are activities going on during the weekend she finds that things

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<sup>1</sup> Marty Tuttle is the newly appointed proxy for the Director of Commerce, Pam Haxby-Cote.

are good, and the town is going strong. Lynn said she is excited to be back next year and will try and get more involved with the community to help promote events during the season.

Commissioner Ross, shared with the Commission that Director Haxby-Cote secured a \$15,000 grant for the purchase of clothing, fabric or period necessities for the Living History Program to start the Pioneer Experience where you can apply to live in Nevada City for a weekend. The Pioneer Experience was a great success.

Bill Koch, Opera House stated that there was not a down day. The season was very successful. Bill stated that they were sold out for the last showing of the season. Bill also stated that his mission was to get the local's back, and he feels that he was successful getting them back.

Stephano and Cindy Sutherlin, Fine Art Gallery, Stephano stated that they had a very good response this year. Cindy also stated that they would like to see additional night time events, but is excited to be back next year.

Bill Bennett stated that he mostly hears from word of mouth from around town and he continually is hearing that Virginia City and Nevada City is affordable for families to come and spend their time. He expressed that he would like to continue to see the families enjoy Virginia and Nevada City.

John Ellingson, thanked the Commission for their hard work and for being on the Commission. He stated that he is very pleased with the living history program and the wagon shop. It's been a great year.

Harlan and Joelle Olson oversee the wagon shop. Harlan shared with the Commission that the National Stage Coach Museum had a small gathering in Virginia City over the summer and now is pushing to see the National Western Conference to be held in Virginia City.

### **Director's Report**

Elijah stated that projections are starting to level out. The Commission is starting to work well with community members, the City and Concessionaires. Elijah said the Vigilante Family Pass that could be purchased at Costco was a huge success. Elijah stated that there were 592,617 tourists that came through Virginia and Nevada city, with over 100 volunteers. All Concessionaire spots are rented, with 100 percent occupancy in Virginia City, Nevada City, and Reeder's Alley. Elijah said the only way to continue to grow is business ventures. He stated that during the tour he will show the Commission some projects that can bring in revenue.

Elijah also stated that he is working with Madison County to bring a tourism bus that will transport visitors from West Yellowstone.

### **Legislative Report**

Elijah updated the Commission on the Legislative Audit Report. Elijah stated that the report was a positive report with some helpful recommendations that he will work on completing.

### **Evalyn Johnson Land Donation**

Elijah stated that the hazmat study is the only thing outstanding. Elijah has a meeting setup with Emily Cooper from DNRC and Amy Barnes at Commerce to review the documents and make sure that there isn't anything else that needs to be completed. Elijah will request to get on the agenda for the Land Board.

### **Boundary Line Adjustment- Central City L.L.C.**

Elijah provided an overview of the Boundary Line Adjustment that is located at the fishing pond. The Montana Heritage Commission owns 5/6<sup>th</sup> and Central City owns 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the land. Elijah stated that Central City L.L.C. proposed a land boundary adjustment. Commissioner Poole would be interested in seeing what Central City's interest would be in purchasing the rest of the land once the Commission procured the land on the rail road tracks and stated that it makes sense to have clean ownership of the land. Commissioner Maechling expressed that he would like some additional information on the land transfer before he makes any decisions. Chair Ross requested Commissioner Maechling draft a letter with specifics of what the Montana Heritage Commission would like to investigate. **Deputy Director Tuttle moved to proceed with gathering additional information and Commissioner Maechling will produce a letter with specifics of what the Montana Heritage Commission would like to investigate. Commissioner Konen seconded. Motion carried. Commissioner Poole followed up with a request that exploration of the mineral rights be explored on the land.**

### **McFarland Center Donation**

Elijah discussed with the Commission the proposal to move forward of the donation of the McFarland Center to the Montana Heritage Commission from the Montana History Foundation. **Commissioner Maechling moved to move forward of the donation of the McFarland Center from the Montana History Foundation. Commissioner Hoffman seconded. Motion carried.**

The Commission discussed options of transferring deeds and titles of MHC property from the Montana Historical Society. Deputy Director Tuttle stated it may be as simple as a statute change.

### **Financial Report**

Elijah reviewed the Commission's Financial statement with the Commission. Elijah stated that the season ended in the positive with \$56,813.00 in revenue and \$1,211,515 in expenses for FY17. Rentals were up by 9% this year and he see this percentage going up with the all concessionaires being rented. Elijah explained that the bulk of the donations come from the History Foundation though endowments. Elijah has submitted a request for any funds that are available. Elijah stated that the estimated revenue for next fiscal year is \$2,175,240. **Commissioner Hoffman motioned for approval of the financials as presented. Commissioner Konen seconded. Motion carried.**

### **Cultural Resource Manager**

Elijah asked for feedback on how the Commission would like him to proceed with the Cultural Resource Manager. Elijah would like to explore ways on streamlining the process. Elijah explained the duties of Cultural

Resource Manager to the Commission. Chair Ross expressed that she does not want to get sideways with the town counsel on this matter. Commissioner Poole would like to have Amy Barnes, Counsel for the Commission to review the MCA regarding zoning laws and signage, specifically the applicability of municipal zoning to the State and State owned property, and provide the Commission with an overview of the law. Chair Ross suggested that Mrs. Barnes communicate with the City's Attorney and see if this can be resolved.

**Commissioner Poole motioned to have legal counsel review the applicable authority that a community has relative to zoning. Commissioner Maechling seconded. Motion carried.**

#### **MHC Commissioner Comments**

The Commission set the following date for the upcoming meeting: December 8, 2017 with the Commission training retreat December 7, 2017 in Helena.

#### **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.