

**CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMITTEE MINUTES**

DATE: October 27, 2020

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Committee of the Whole

MEMBERS PRESENT: Council President Kemp, Councilors West, Bielski, Pruitt, Pogachar and Mitchell

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

NOTE TAKER: Cynthia Fleming, Deputy Clerk

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Donny Ramer, Public Works Director, Dominic Farrenkopf, Mayor

Public Comment

Katrina Mendrey, 803 S 3rd Street would like the City to be proactive in encouraging City residents to shovel their sidewalks after a snowstorm to help enable better mobility of citizens throughout the City.

Approval of Minutes from October 13, 2020

Councilor Kemp asked to amend meeting minutes to add that due to a power outage during the meeting some of the end of this discussion of the first agenda item was not recorded.

Councilor Pogachar moved to approve the minutes as amended. Councilor Pruitt seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

- **Bitterroot Public Library Proposal for Old Court Room/Offices and Future Consideration of Expanding the Library's Current Building Lease to Include the Fire Hall**

Bitterroot Public Library (BPL) Director, Mark Wetherington, explained that due to Covid 19 social distancing requirements the library has reduced its number of public access computers. He recognized that much of the first floor at City Hall is vacant after the new Justice Center opened and he is interested in exploring the possibility of using the old City Courtroom as a library tech center. The tech center would provide public access to computers, copiers, scanners and a fax machine. The center would be staffed by library personnel during City Hall open hours. There are 6 computers at the library that are not getting used. We have pressure from people needing quiet space to work. We would need to work out the fine details and he suggested a pilot project through 2021. Councilor Bielski asked if he was thinking short term, just through the Covid crisis. Mr. Wetherington said he would like to try it for 6 months to a year. If people like it and it is worthwhile he would like to it considered as a more permanent spot. He feels it is a worthwhile experiment.

Councilor Pruitt asked if staffing hours match up with City Hall hours. Mr. Wetherington responded that he was considering 10 to 4 pm for operating hours. She said that her only concern would be if it wasn't staffed the whole time and is curious how it would work with the public coming in. He replied that signage should help and library staff would be there. He hopes it wouldn't be too much of an inconvenience for City staff.

Councilor Pogachar commented that he doesn't see a problem with it for at least 6 months and after that maybe reevaluate. Councilor Mitchell asked how many user do you typically see in a day. We have seen less with COVID and Wi-Fi hotspots replied Mr. Wetherington. Pre-Covid probably 70 to 110 people a day. The Tech Center would be pitched as a longer use space with more space and quiet. If we saw 15 people come through that would be what I would consider a busy day. Councilor Mitchel would also like to know if the plan was for using the City's Wi-Fi. Mr. Wetherington responded that these are details that we would need to be figure out such as what we could do for an off-site phone without having to go through the city's systems.

Mayor Farrenkopf suggested that he might consider a cell phone for library staff to carry and offered that City staff seems willing to do this. It would be just one more thing to navigate with the public which they already do and do it well.

Councilor Pogachar moved to send the request to Council. Councilor Pruitt seconded. Councilor Mitchell voted Nay, all other members Aye. The motion passes.

Recommendation:

Move to Council after details have been agreed upon and a Memorandum of Understanding, (MOU) created between BPL and the City.

• **Revegetation Plan for Skalkaho Bend Park Discussion Continuation**

Councilor Kemp told the Committee that the Deputy Clerk received public comment via email from several residents. The comments had been forwarded to the Mayor and Committee members. It was requested that the comments be read aloud during the meeting. Normally we ask for public comment at the end of our discussion, however, to allow for a better discussion and as was requested, I will read the public comment now.

Public Comment:

Kathy Wehrly, Hamilton - The Forum's misguided "restoration" of the grasslands of Skalkaho Bend Park which is being represented as a done deal, has had no PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD. It was first presented at the Committee of the Whole on Oct. 13 and then publicized in the Ravalli Republic on Oct.16. This project which will impact the watershed, the viewshed, and the heavily utilized Park absolutely needs to be validated with scientific studies--hydrologic and others, and it needs time for public comment. The Forum should demonstrate that their proposal will accomplish their stated goals, and that they and the City have listened to the Park users. The Bitterroot River will continue to choose its meander and it is not to be tinkered with. Please contact me.

Since filing this complaint, the Ravalli Republic has published on their Opinion page, Oct. 25, section B4, a letter signed by me, Melissa Hughes, and Cheryl Waterworth. (It has a very specific and lengthy list of essential questions that need to be addressed, some crucial text:

What is the science behind this plan? Has stabilization of a notoriously meandering river as large and powerful as the Bitterroot ever been attempted before with just a row of willows? What information about the river and its past history is this based on? What are the statistical chances that it will work? What are the other alternatives? Have the various local, state and federal regulatory agencies been consulted for their expertise? Is bank stabilization even necessary when the river is already using a flood channel to the west? Who made the decision to go with this plan — the BWF? The parks director? Is this the best use of taxpayer dollars? We contend that these and many other questions need to be asked and answered before going ahead with this plan which will irrevocably degrade the natural beauty of the park.

Public Comment:

Kathy Wehrly, Melissa Hughes, Cheryl Watersworth, Hamilton - Our Skalkaho Bend Park – Will it remain...‘Natural and Undeveloped’??

TEN THOUSAND willows, aspens, serviceberry and dogwood shrubs, and cottonwoods planted the length of FIVE football fields, surrounded by EIGHT-FOOT-TALL FENCING, paralleling the river and bisecting the beautiful grassland and viewscape of Skalkaho Bend Park –REALLY??!! Well, that is exactly what will be coming to our new city Park in March of 2021, if the plan proposed by the Bitter Root Water Forum (BWF) is approved by the City Council in November.

The proposal was first presented to the Council’s ‘Committee of the Whole’ October 13th Zoom Meeting, with the only announcement of the plan being on their agenda, on the city’s websites. At that meeting, which was disrupted by a major power outage, a request was made by this Committee to the Parks Director to prepare a Memorandum of Understanding with the BWF; in other words, tacit approval of the plan.

On October 16th, in a Ravalli Republic article titled ‘Roots Against Erosion’, the BWF laid out their finalized plan for the Skalkaho Bend Park. We assume it is finalized because the article went on to furnish times and a drop-off point to leave truckloads of large, woody debris which will be needed for their erosion work. It also related that many volunteers will be needed to both cut and plant THOUSANDS of willow starts between January and March of the coming year....and solicits them to contact the BWF to sign up as volunteers.

How did a riverbank stabilization concept to plant some vegetation to slow down river erosion, as per the Bitter Root Land Trust (BLT), end up being a HUGE habitat ‘restoration’ project anyway? And ‘why’ is this happening so fast? What is the rush? From proposal of this plan to the council, to execution in barely 4 months!!

When the BLT acquired this property in order to give it to the city, we were told that the intent was to preserve it in its natural state. Director Gavin Ricklefs himself said in a Ravalli Republic article in 2018 that, “the city may put in a few trails, but for the most part, it will remain a quiet, undeveloped natural area”. Well, there is nothing ‘natural’ and ‘undeveloped’ about a dense row

of 10,000 willows and trees planted within an 8-foot tall fence over the length of 5 football fields!!
(Continued on next page)

This plan proposes huge changes to the current riparian grassland that is such a unique and cherished part of the park, and which adds much valued diversity and variety in contrast to the ubiquitous willow/cottonwood riparian habitats found immediately up and downstream. These changes will have lasting, irreversible impacts for wildlife movement and those bird species that prefer open grassy areas. Changes in floodplain dynamics, the need for increased weed management, no view of the river from the paved ADA trail, and no direct access to the river from the parking lot, are just some of the other unmentioned consequences.

What is the science behind this plan? Has stabilization of a notoriously and historically meandering river as large and powerful as the Bitterroot ever been attempted before with just a row of willows? What information about the river and its past history is this based on? What are the statistical chances that it will work? What are the other alternatives? Have the various local, state, and federal regulatory agencies been consulted for their expertise? Is bank stabilization even necessary when the river is already using a flood channel to the west? Who made the decision to go with this plan- the BWF? the Parks Director? Is this the best use of taxpayer dollars? We contend that these and many other questions need to be asked and answered before going ahead with this plan which will irrevocably degrade the natural beauty of the park.

It is disturbing that at no time has there been any mention of public input, comment, or review of this plan other than the usual opportunity to speak during a City Council Zoom meeting. Plan details have not been forthcoming, reports on which this plan was based have not been released to the public, and there has been absolutely no effort to involve citizens and users in any decision making process, in spite of the fact that this is a taxpayer funded project via the State Department of Environmental Quality.

And what is really ironic is that 95% of the published photos of this 70-plus acre park have been taken of the grassy river bank with the river and mountains in the background, a stupendous vista that will no longer exist if this “restoration” plan goes forward.

Here’s one agency that’s doing it right- In the same Ravalli Republic paper, an article titled ‘Fort Owen State Park closed for site planning and improvements’ states that the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks department is acquiring a mere ONE acre of private land to provide more room for the parking of visitor vehicles. It says that “... upon submittal of the final plan, the draft development proposal will be available for public review.” And this for a ONE acre PARKING LOT!

In short, we members of the public are expecting of the City and BWF that there will still be a formal, transparent process for public/peer review and input on this largely over-engineered project before it is ‘rubber-stamped’ for approval. Whether one agrees with the project or not, it is the conscionable thing to do. If you agree that the public should have input on such matters, please contact the mayor, members of the City Council, the Bitter Root Water Forum, and/or the Bitter Root Land Trust and let them know what you think!!!

Public Comment:

Hi, my name is Chris Clancy and I live at 620 South 3rd Street in Hamilton. I am writing to support the Bitterroot Water Forum project in the area known as Skalkaho Bend. I am a member of the projects committee of the Bitterroot Water Forum and I am very familiar with the proposed project. Before I retired in 2019, I was a fisheries biologist with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. A significant part of my duties was to be involved with streambank stabilization projects in streams in the valley, including the Bitterroot River. The river is naturally "unruly" and moves laterally as part of its normal processes. It confounds adjacent landowners who are often faced with valuable properties being jeopardized by streambank erosion. There was a popular paper written years ago, by a University of Montana geologist, entitled something like, "The Bitterroot River, the river that won't behave!" So true.

Many different techniques have been attempted to stop the lateral erosion of the river, from car bodies and rip rap to vegetated streambanks. Some have worked, but many have failed. The beauty of the project is that it will use naturally occurring materials, native vegetation and wood to build a natural looking vegetated swale some distance back from the streambank. The deep roots of the vegetation and the buried wood should help retard the lateral movement of the river. One only has to pull up Google Earth and look at many of these swales that have been formed by the river itself.

At this particular location the streambank has been eroding laterally for many years. A few years ago, I measured the lateral movement of the river at Skalkaho Bend and calculated that between 1995 and 2016 at the most active locations it was moving an average of about 4-8 feet a year. The idea of this project is to slow or stop that lateral migration if it reaches the swale. Is it foolproof? No. The river may not reach the swale for many years and if it does, it may continue to erode through it. But, it is a logical, ecologically friendly way to try and protect much of the property if the river continues its migration. I have seen many stream restoration projects. In the short term, they are a construction zone and not very pretty. But once the vegetation grows back and the fence is removed, it will look like a natural feature. This is about as ecologically sound a project as you can build along the river. Please support it! Thank you.

Donny Ramer, Public Works Director told the Committee that we have been working with the BRWF for quite a long time. The east boundary is defined by the river. James Bailey who originally owned the property told him that the river started to cut to the east in the 1940s. Mr. Ramer feels that we basically have three options. We can do nothing and let the river take 4 to 8ft. every year. Another option would be a hard bank stabilization, which is far more costly and causes more disturbance or we can try the proposed approach which is a light vegetation treatment and allow vegetation time to establish itself. He added that there are a lot of bank stabilization projects that have ended up in the river several years later. We have a little bit of time before the river moves even farther east. Mr. Ramer told the Committee that Heather Barber, BRWF and Marisa Sowles, GEUM consultant were here to talk more about the project and answer questions.

Ms. Barber began by saying we wanted to come back tonight and explain why we think this project should be done, why we proposed it and how we came to the current proposal. The plan did involve scientists, hydrologist and a geomorphologist. We looked at the river channels over time. In 1954 the river used the west boundary, but by 1995 the river had migrated to the east. What do we think might happen next? We worked with GEUM Environmental Consultants and also hired a

geomorphologist. What historically has happened at this river and at this site, upstream and downstream? What can we expect to happen next? Can we trust the projections? Looking at the data and after consultation with scientists, hydrologist and a geomorphologist we concluded that something would need to be done to slow the erosion and save the park. She said that they have respect for river processes. Since the park opening people have embraced it and love it. In order to protect the park for people to enjoy we began looking at different options. We know it is eroding. That is fact. Historical data tells us that. She said that the Bitterroot is a mighty stream and we weren't sure a vegetative barrier would be enough. We don't know if the plants will have enough time to establish themselves. We can just watch it erode or try to find a happy medium that will allow people to still enjoy it. She said that the plan incorporates the best science. It has been thoroughly thought out adjusted and then readjusted. The combination of a woody riparian defense strip and willows that provide an extensive root matrix will provide strength to the bank. We want to slow erosion rates. We will put a fence around the site to protect the plants from wildlife. We need to keep the fence up until the plants have a chance to withstand animals grazing. The fence is not contiguous. There will be areas left for paths. The paths in the City plan will still be there. The entire project footprint is 2 acres.

As far as the public process. We had a very extensive plan of outreach planned for this, however, external factors changed this approach. At the time, the Bitter Root Land Trust, (BRLT) was going through an extensive process with the City to transfer the property. She said she felt that it was important not to confuse or distract until the transfer to the City was finalized in July. With additional restrictions with Covid we haven't had time to make this happen. Public comment is opened and welcomed.

She said that we want to work with the City to have an adaptive process. We don't want to impede the view shed especially from the ADA trail. She said that it is a complex decision. When you find a crack in the foundation, you do what you can to protect your investment. We care about this place. No cash funds are being requested of the City. She feels that there are no guarantees that the project will work but also believes it has the best chance of slowing the erosion.

Councilor Pruitt asked what is the history of the property that it ended up without a riparian area. Marisa Sowles, GEUM responded that there is a drawing at the museum that shows this particular spot and it is covered with willows and timber. It was very likely logged. The re-introduction of this kind of willow band is based on historical data. Councilor Pogachar would like to know what historically has been tried. Ms. Barber responded that many approaches have been tried. Downstream at River Park, rip rap was put in to protect the paved trail. Sometimes hard rock is used and junked car bodies have also been used. Councilor West commented that it worries her that a part of the plan called for planting cottonwoods that have a very shallow root system and get taken out during high water every year. Marisa Sowles responded that the plan calls for a mix of trees. She said that the mix of vegetation provides many habitat benefits. Aspens have a pretty strong root system.

Councilor Bielski stated that she loves that park and would hate to see it go away. Anything that we can do that is natural and would help, I am for it. She suggested a walking tour and added that it would need to be done responsibly with Covid safety measures. Ms. Barber suggested that they might be able to offer it virtually. Councilor Pruitt is excited about the project and the volunteer

aspect. Councilor Mitchell thanked them for coming back. With all of the research that was done he suggested more information be shared in the paper.

Councilor West also feels that it is helpful to have more information from BRWF and asked what kind of fencing will be used to protect the new plants and what the time frame to break ground is. Ms. Barber responded that the fence is welded wire that is wildlife friendly. The BRWF's recommendation is that the project begin this spring and added that it is going to look messy for a while.

Councilor Pogachar would like to see another public meeting and hear from more professionals in the field.

Mayor Farrenkopf said he had received some emails about the public process. Councilor West believes we should leave this open for more public comment and public process and added that she feels badly that during the power outage we had unknowingly cut people off from commenting. She stated that the river is going to go towards Rocky Mountain Laboratory if nothing is done.

Public Comment:

Katrina Mendrey, 803 S 3rd Street, said she would like to provide some positive public comment. She is a soil scientist and serves on the open lands board. She said that as a board member one of her concerns about the Skalkaho Bend Park project and reviewing funds was the significant amount of invasive species on the property and the hope that the City could manage it in a way to improve the habitat and have less weeds such as houndstongue and thistle. She believes that the revegetation plan serves to address the issue in a science based way. As a user of the park, she feels that the vegetation will enhance the view shed and will increase wildlife habitat. There were a lot of people who worked hard to make Skalkaho Bend happen. She believes the land will continue to erode. We see it on a seasonal basis and it would be a shame for the City to lose this as an asset.

Public Comment:

Rob Harris, Good evening. My name is Rob Harris, and I'm a Bitterroot resident of 44 years, with the last ten of those being spent here in Hamilton at 719 Loma Lane. I am now retired after a thirty-five year career as a wildlife biologist, holding a degree in fisheries management as well. Over the latter half of those years, I worked for several state and federal agencies throughout Montana as an independent contracting biologist specializing in wetland and riparian ecosystems.

At the beginning of October, I was approached by Heather Barber, Director of the Bitterroot Water Forum, and Andrea Price, their Project Coordinator for an in-person meeting. The purpose, I assumed, was to introduce me to their preliminary "bank stabilization" plan for comment. Needing to ruminate on it a bit, I did not say too much that first day, yet I do remember stating that I thought the park's 70+ acres of riparian vegetation, with its preponderance of grassland and wetland habitats, was pretty functional 'just 'as is' – considering it underwent a prescription burn in 2019.

In fact, the ‘buzz’ word first used some two years ago by the Bitterroot Land Trust in ‘selling’ their concept to the public was the oft-repeated one of “preservation”. Back then, that was explained as requiring ‘little to no action’ other than the mentioned burn to address noxious weeds, the development of a minimal trail network, and the planting of a tree/shrub complex of some 500 foot length to ward off further erosion of the river’s east bank. Fast forwarding now to the mentioned introductory meeting, the project was then described to me as a “restoration” effort - with plantings being “just a mix of native willows not expected to exceed 10-12 feet in height”.

With that background in mind, I’d first like to comment on the plan’s vegetative prescription, and move on to address the matter of area hydrology. Roughly a week after our initial visit, I requested a field walkabout with Andrea to better understand the full scope of their project. We discussed a number of things most amicably, and foremost still in my mind, was the fact that the possible length of the reveg. work had increased from an earlier BRLT mention of 500 ft. ...to some 1,500 + feet (as per recent BWF mapping)..... for an increase of 300%. The plantings, I was told, would occur within an excavated ‘swale’ of some 2-3 ft. depth - and then all enclosed within an 8 ft. tall protective fence for a minimum of five years. I pointed out that day, that on those disturbed soils within that large enclosure, importation of unintended tree species such as black cottonwood, chokecherry, and possibly peach-leaved willows was likely occur via their seeds being transported by either wind or birds.and in doing so, produce mature tree canopies that would easily exceed 30 feet, versus the 10-12 feet first mentioned to me.

My next exposure to the Plan came with the Forum’s ‘Zoom’ presentation before the Council’s ‘Committee of the Whole’ on October 13th. Though the presentation was disrupted by a power outage here in much of Hamilton, we did see and hear enough to learn that the acquisition and planting of tree species such as black cottonwoods and quaking aspen were now being included as part of the design.

As simple as I can state it, tall-growing trees first planted in disturbed soils that will remain saturated for much of the year, tend not to put down very deep root systems. Rather, they put out root systems sufficient enough to reach water.....which will be very close at hand on this site throughout virtually every calendar year. Add to this a design that has them planted and growing in one extremely elongated, linear ‘footprint’ subject to the harsh winds that come off the Bitterroot’s frontand one can expect a short survivability for some of these once they attain a given height. If anyone doubts this, I’d encourage them to look beyond the park’s long eastern boundary fence and note the number of maturing, volunteer cottonwoods that have come down over the years due to high winds. These are ‘volunteer’, often stand-alone trees that begin from seed and are encouraged by water within the C&C ditch system. And while there, look both up and downriver to the west and note the large expansive communities of black cottonwoods that thrive -because they afford some wind protection for each other through their closeness within larger, much broader groves.

My prediction is that if the project is built to its current design, at some point you will have a number of trees coming down and in need of removal by park personnel. And that will be a matter of ‘when’ they come down..... rather than ‘if’. I see this as a major ‘flaw’ in the vegetative prescription, and one that needs further investigating.

Lastly, a much smaller point re: vegetation is the one of species suitability. The BWF also mentioned both quaking aspen and serviceberry as part of their preferred mix, neither of which occurs on site at present. Nor is either species very suitable for sites subjected to seasonal flooding or year-round saturation. This can be confirmed by referring to the 'National Wetland Plant Indicator' Index maintained by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.

On to the topic of area hydrology:

Shortly after my site visit with Andrea, I requested a copy of the independent hydrology report that they solicited from a well-respected Bozeman firm. She kindly allowed that- -with the provision that I not share this information with neighbors or other members of the public – which I did honor - up until this very moment.

Upon reading it, I noticed the 9-page report wasn't a ringing endorsement of the Forum's plan. Nor was it meant to beas it is simply an objective review of past and current conditions, along with future projections for this much abraded portion of the river. One of those projections was that "The site does not show any clear need for short-term erosion control." And continues on... "As the site continues to evolve, there are some factors that will lean towards no need for treatment, and others that will make erosion control necessary and appropriate." In short, there is little imminent threat to the river's east bank at this time, given their projected year of 2040 as a possible point in time where the east channel may possibly approach the C&C ditch works. But they also went on to state that "In general, it appears that the overall trends indicate that near-term flow shifts may very well include increasing flow volumes in the west channel and reduced flows at the site in question."

There is so much more to this thorough report than just this, which is 'why' I left a phone message w/ Andrea the week of October 19th requesting that the report be released to the public..... a call that was never returned. I thought that action appropriate in that it was project within their park, being funded with taxpayer dollars, only announced publicly on Oct. 16th in a local newspaper article titled "Roots' for Erosion", and one now seeking your approval within a very narrow time frame.....and still with very little public awareness. With that said, I encourage you individuals at the City level to request the report's release to the public, as it is not so technical that it would not be understood.

As for my on-the-ground hydrological concerns, the greatest one remains rooted in the fact that there is no mention anywhere, statistically or otherwise, of the project's expected success. Such questions as 'Will it work?'and 'What will it look like hydrologically if it doesn't work?' need to be asked and answered in depth before any approval by the City or the various regulatory agencies, IMO. Will the very long, 2-3 ft. deep by some 100 ft. wide excavated 'swale' - to be constructed for the planting of trees and shrubs – simply become the next most eastern, eroding 'channel of concern' should your willow

breastwork fail during an over-the-bank event. Which begs another question....What of the healthy, mature, bank-side cottonwood trees we see that are annually undercut and washed away by our spring high-water events? Does anyone at the Water Forum understand the actual power and dynamics of a large river like the Bitterroot to where they could discuss it with the public?.....and would choose to do so?

Further study of previous projects undertaken on rivers bearing similar hydrology and circumstances to ours might be worth a look to determine future ‘efficacy’ of this project. Right now, we haven’t been afforded a single bit of information in that regard, nor does anyone local seem to have the confidence or the time to even speak of it....yet it fortunately appears that we do have the time for further research – if that will be allowed.

Many long-time ‘Bitterrooters’ will remember the hard winter of 1996-97 and the subsequent spring flooding that had ice floes scattered throughout this seventy + acre parcel of floodplain. Many of us still possess pictures of that event, and can only wonder what would happen should another occur with some 4,000 ft. of wire strung down there for the protection of plants. What are the Forum’s & City’s plan to address such an epic event were that to occur again. Though I just used the word ‘epic’, it bears saying that the spring flooding of 1997 was considered to be only a “10-year event” according to State records - in comparison to milder years.

So, my last question is this - What is the RUSH here? Is it for the betterment of a resource that is clearly not in an ‘intensive care’ situation at the moment, or is the obvious RUSH tied to available funding? If the latter is the case, then that is disappointing and something we all need to know about as well.....and soon! And until we do have answers to these questions, in addition to the many others you’ll receive from the public tonight, I’m going to ask of you ‘Committee of the Whole’ members to consider tabling this agenda item until such time that the public’s questions and concerns can be addressed fully and forthrightly.

In closing, I have to say that the amount of ‘due process’ being shown by both acting parties up to this point has never been rivaled by any local, state, or federal government entity that I ever encountered in my fifteen years of professional experience in this field, and that should not be construed as a compliment.....

‘Nonetheless, I ‘Thank You’ for this opportunity to comment publicly.....and I bid you all a ‘Good night’.

Recommendation

This agenda item will stay in Committee, Ms. Barber will be happy to answer questions and project information will be made accessible on the City’s website.

• Covid 19 Issues

Mayor Farrenkopf stated that at the last Council meeting Tiffany Weber, a Public Health nurse talked to us about the situation in Ravalli County. He is a member of a task force that will be meeting again tomorrow. He would like to see, a community conversation about COVID. Emails work as far a communication but we have to be careful not to go around the public process and have a quorum. He suggested that the Council could form a COVID subcommittee. The subcommittee would need to be decided on at a Council meeting and appoint members to the subcommittee. Councilors West, Pruitt and Bielski are interested in working on the subcommittee. Councilor Pruitt commented that she is discouraged for the City and is disappointed in the Commissioners. She feels we are in a crisis with our numbers going up every day.

The Mayor reminded members of the Ravalli County Board of Health meeting on November 10 from 1 to 5pm. The board of health is a volunteer board. They meet once a month. He feels it is a bonus to get the volunteer board together and encouraged members to not lose heart and he hopes to be able to move forward with something.

Member would like to move this to next Tuesday's Council meeting in order to start working right away. The three Councilors would prefer meeting via Zoom.

All members were in agreement to move the formation of a subcommittee to Council.

Recommendations:

Move to Council to create a Covid 19 Subcommittee.

Non-Agenda Items

None.

Adjourn

Councilor Pogachar moved to adjourn. Councilor Mitchell seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:54pm.