

Meridian City Council Work Session

March 26, 2024.

A Meeting of the Meridian City Council was called to order at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 26, 2024, by Mayor Robert Simison.

Members Present: Robert Simison, Liz Strader, Luke Cavener, Anne Little Roberts and Doug Taylor.

Members Absent: Joe Borton and John Overton.

Also Present: Chris Johnson, Bill Nary, Crystal Campbell, Lyle Ludwig, Joe Bongiorno and Dean Willis.

ROLL-CALL ATTENDANCE

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liz Strader	<input type="checkbox"/> Joe Borton
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anne Little Roberts	<input type="checkbox"/> John Overton
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doug Taylor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Luke Cavener
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mayor Robert E. Simison	

Simison: Council, we will call the meeting to order. For the record it is March 26, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. We will begin this afternoon's work session with roll call attendance.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Simison: Next item up is adoption of the agenda.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: We do have one change. We are going to move Item 22 off of our Consent Agenda for a brief discussion. With that change I move that we approve the agenda.

Cavener: Second.

Simison: Have a motion and a second to adopt the agenda as modified. All in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed nay? The ayes have it and the agenda is agreed to.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.

CONSENT AGENDA [Action Item]

- 1. Approve Minutes of the March 5, 2024 City Council Work Session**

- 2. Approve Minutes of the March 5, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting**
- 3. Approve Minutes of the March 12, 2024 City Council Work Session**
- 4. Approve Minutes of the March 12, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting**
- 5. Apex Northwest No. 4 Sanitary Sewer and Water Main Easement (ESMT-2024-0005)**
- 6. Vertex Subdivision No. 2 Pedestrian Pathway Easement (ESMT-2024-0008)**
- 7. Firenze Plaza Shop Water Main Easement (ESMT-2024-0018)**
- 8. Foxcroft Subdivision No. 2 and No. 3 Sanitary Sewer Easement (ESMT-2024-0028)**
- 9. Chipotle AFC Buildings Water Main Easement (ESMT-2024-0042)**
- 10. Foxcroft Subdivision No. 2 and 3 Pedestrian Pathway Easement (ESMT-2024-0043).**
- 11. Aviation Subdivision Water Main Easement No. 2 (ESMT-2024-0044).**
- 12. Summertown Subdivision Sanitary Sewer and Water Main Easement (ESMT-2024- 0045)**
- 13. Hatch Industrial Water Main Easement No. 1 (ESMT-2024-0047)**
- 14. Village Apartments Phase 1 Sanitary Sewer and Water Main Easement No. 1 (ESMT-2024-0048)**
- 15. Water and Sewer Main Replacement - E. Idaho Ave., N. Meridian Rd. to NE 6th St.: Temporary Construction Easements**
- 16. Final Plat for Foxcroft Subdivision No. 2 (FP-2023-0031) by Kent Brown Planning Services, located at 3500 W. Pine Ave.**
- 17. Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law for Linder Condos (H-2023-0074) by The Architects Office, PLLC., located at 300 N. Linder Rd.**
- 18. Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law for Stonehill Church (H-2023-0041) by Stonehill Church, located at 799 W. Amity Rd.**
- 19. Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law for Ultra Clean Franklin (H-2023-0064) by KM Engineering, LLP., located at 3070 E. Franklin Rd.**

- 20. Development Agreement (Watts Meridian Medical Partners H-2023-0075) Between City of Meridian and Reves, LLC for Property Located at 1256 S. Rackham Way**
- 21. Approval of Compensation and Construction Stipulation Letter with Williams - Northwest Pipeline for a pipeline replacement project that includes a small portion of City Well 32 lot**

Simison: Next -- first item up is the Consent Agenda.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: I move that we approve the amended Consent Agenda, for the Mayor to sign and Clerk to attest.

Cavener: Second.

Simison: Motion and second to approve the Consent Agenda. Is there any discussion? If not, all in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay? The ayes have it and the Consent Agenda is agreed to.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.

ITEMS MOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA [Action Item]

22. City of Meridian 2023 Financial Audit Report

Simison: Next item up is Item 22, the City of Meridian 2023 Financial Audit Report, which was removed from the Consent Agenda. Recognize Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Just briefly I wanted to discuss our 2023 Financial Audit Report. We owed our CFO some feedback as a Council, if we had any questions or concerns regarding the audit and, then, he had asked us a question whether we wanted to speak directly with the auditors. Just briefly, I know that today might not be the best day for some extended speaking, our CFO has lost his voice, but I could just summarize. I did have a pretty in-depth conversation with Todd regarding the one material finding in the audit report, which is in the procurement department. So, there has already been a remediation of that finding. It wasn't something earth shattering. It was a change in policy that was already reflected as part of our procedures. We have made that change. So, I'm comfortable that we have addressed that finding. And, then, in addition to that the Finance Department and I discussed the appropriations we have already made in previous fiscal years for internal control audits. It sounds like the plans for those are proceeding apace. So, I just wanted to provide that update and I thought,

Mr. Mayor, you could check if any other Council Members had questions, comments or desire to speak with the auditors at a later date.

Simison: Okay. Council, any additional comments, questions, concerns?

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Fantastic. It sounds like we are in good shape. With that I move that we approve Item 22, the City of Meridian 2023 Financial Audit Report.

Cavener: Second.

Simison: Have a motion and a second to approve Item 22, to the City of Meridian 2023 Financial Audit Report. Is there any discussion? If not, all in favor signify by saying aye? Opposed nay? The ayes have it and the item is agreed to.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.

DEPARTMENT / COMMISSION REPORTS [Action Item]

23. Meridian Arts Commission Annual Update

Simison: Next item up is under Department/Commission Reports, which is the Meridian Arts Commission annual update. I don't know if Cassandra or Crystal is going to come up -- all right. It will be Crystal. One of the duties as new chair is coming in and giving that update. So, Crystal, thank you for being here.

Paulson: Thank you. I'm just going to pull up the slideshow. It's all good. All right. As you heard, my name is Crystal Paulson. First of all, I want to thank Mayor Simison and the City Council for allowing me to come and speak with you today about what we are doing in the Art Commission. All right. So, our commission is looking a little different than it did last year. We have new council members as of last year. Myself, being Crystal Paulson, Brecken Bird and Shaun Muscolo are all new and, then, we just added Bridget King and so it's been fun to be a part of the commission and see everything that we do. So, this is just a review of what we have done in the last year. So, these are the goals that were adopted for December 2022-2023. As you can see some of them are ongoing and some of them we have completed. Okay. So, through the Meridian Arts In Public Spaces, also known as MAPP, through this ordinance City Council allocates 50 cents per Meridian resident to complete the public art project. Some of the slides that you are seeing is showing what we do with that. So, this is Carlton Place, the stop sign by Sector 17. It's a local artist collective. This is at the Meridian pool in celebration with their 50th season and it was a partnership with West Ada Recreation District. I don't know if you know this, but I actually teach classes on the second level of the pool house and the artists that did this -- they were done in two days. So, they were really great. It

looks good. If you haven't seen it maybe drive by or go by the dog park and see it. It's on that side. And it really did turn out very nice. The traffic box series. This is one of our ongoing projects. So, every year they go through and they have a company check them, make sure they are in good shape. So, we have -- you can see some of them. In the top right corner you will see one of the boxes that was actually -- a family reached out to us, because their student passed away and they asked to have their art on the box and so the commission partnered with them and able to do that. This is a beautiful piece. If you haven't driven by -- I haven't gotten the chance to go and actually look really close at it, but just driving by it's beautiful and the light shines on it. It really reflects and this is Water Metrics by Eileen Gay. It's at the Five Mile Creek Trail hub. And there is also a geocache inside of it. So, if you do geocaching it would be a good opportunity to go check it out. All right. So, I know many of you were at the Discovery Park opening and I don't know if you have been to the park, but it's very -- it's amazing. It blows my mind. So, we did partner with the Parks Department and other people, too. If you look at the signage you can see some of the signage that's going on. We also have these benches. I don't know if you have actually sat in the bench, but for someone my height they are very comfortable. These are actually -- if you look at the shape of them they are like a tank and they have cut it straight from that tank, so it's recycled, and they were stainless steel tanks and they are actually really cozy. So, as a patron of the parks I think that's an important feature and they are beautiful and they tie with some of the theme. All right. So, this is The Hole Ballgame by UrbanRock Design and this is over by the ball fields. If you haven't taken a look at this, it's -- it's really cool, because if you walk around it you can see some things from each angle and, then, when you stop right where the two pieces meet it actually forms a person in the inside in the negative space. All right. So, on the left you will see the sculpture Fanfare by Steve Parker. This is actually going up this week. It was held off because the artist couldn't get it done for the opening. So, we have extended -- we -- we worked with the original time and it's really cool -- hello? Okay. Because it deals with sound and so it's very interactive for people of all ages and, then, there is also -- if you look at the bike racks, they are definitely unique. They match with the benches and those just arrived and those will be going in as well. Okay. So, ongoing and upcoming public art projects in development. So, in 2024 the transit shelter wraps -- so, we started this last year. It's moving forward and these are going to be really awesome once they are all done. They are going to be full of color. They are going to be lovely. And, then, of course, the continuing traffic box program. As I said before, they review those, they see which ones need to be replaced and, then, they add new ones. Chateau Park. This is a really exciting project, because it is bringing a lot of the community together. People that live there. Parks and Rec. People from the Commission. And so they are all working together to make this a fabulous place for people to go. And, then, looking forward to 2025. Of course, the traffic box program will continue. I know a lot of people love the traffic box program. They are looking at the Linder overpass Meridian sculpture and downtown Quick project. All right. So, performing arts. This is really exciting. It may not look it just yet, but looking at it I mean the people are excited. But last year we had two groups of people that were interested, so we just split the funds. This year we had five groups. So, that's a significant growth. They needed -- I believe it was 70,000 dollars. Obviously, we couldn't accomplish all that. So, we did give out 7,000 dollars to

different groups and it was through the voting system, so it's exciting to see that this program is having further reach into the community. 2023 Concerts on Broadway. I don't know if you guys have been to the Concerts on Broadway, but they are a lot of fun. It has really good energy. The crowd has a lot of really good energy. The poster that you see here was done by local artists and it was really well received by the community and they had a really good time when they came. As you can see we have opening acts for each of the shows and, then, the headliners as well. This is the Art Week poster for 2023. If you notice it's done by the same artist. Every year we do an art drop and I like to get involved with the art drop. So, I will drop art off and I will talk to people and I do a class every time downtown and so you see grandparents bringing their grandkids and stuff. So, we do the art job. It's a fun part. They bring art. They pick up art. It's kind of like hide and seek with art. And, then, the community art party -- we combined the chalk art contest, the Buskerfests with live music and hands-on activities from different members of the community. Classes that were offered. The History Rock that was really popular. Entrepreneur class, writing class and, then, the plein air class, which I thought -- there was a discussion panel at the Initial Point Gallery that was really well received and, then, the gallery reception and, then, here is a visual of the community art party. On the left you can see a student participating in -- sorry. I say student, because I'm a teacher, but a young lady participating in art done by one of the vendors down there. Then you can see an art piece done on the community center and that was done by one of the art commissioners and it was fun, because it was at the same time as the chalk art competition. So, people go and talk to him and interact with him and ask him about what he was doing. Then the next set of pictures is the BuskerFest. We had a huge amount of youth turnout for that and they were the performers. So, that as a teacher that was really exciting to see. And, then, the last images you can see from -- those were two of the winners of the chalk art competition. Okay. So, Initial Point Gallery. This year in 20 -- well, last year technically -- in 2023 11 total exhibits, with 236 artists, one solo show and the WASD Youth Art, which happens every day, four organization groups exhibited and five group shows. Because of the group exhibits that's why our number is so high for individuals that participated and, then, our current show is the dance studies and that was a partnership with Bosco and Ballet Idaho and they worked together to create art for that show. They also did Ballet Idaho during the opening. They had a couple of dance performances and there -- there were a lot of people that showed up to that show. It was probably one of our best attended. This is our next upcoming show. It's really exciting. Stillness in the West. And so Rick Jenkins -- I used to work with him. So, he was kind of like a mentor to me. So, I'm really excited to see that. And you can see it's going to be beautiful art. If you guys can come down that would be great. So, a review of the 2020 to 2025 MAC strategic plan. So, we did go over the strategic plan this year. Jessica Peters, our former chair, she led that and we revised -- a lot of things were in that plan that we don't actually do, because it was written before we were a commission, so we have better perspective and so we have gone through and kind of seen what we are meeting and where we need to go and so it was very -- I think it was a good thing to -- also because that's when I applied. That's what I looked at to see what the commission did, so -- and, then, Meridian Art Commission adopted goals for 2024. Some of these are ongoing. Like our traffic boxes, things like that. And, then, of course, if you don't already follow

the art commission, I suggest you do, because you will know when all the galleries are, you will see the cool things that we do -- and I'm sure you already know, but if you don't you can check it out. So, this is the time where we get to answer any of your questions. Make them easy. If you have any questions this is the time I will answer them for you.

Simison: Thank you, Crystal. Council, any questions?

Little Roberts: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Little Roberts.

Little Roberts: Mr. Mayor. Crystal, thank you so much. I'm back to the Council after four years off and it's amazing to see the transformation with the Arts Commission. So, thank you to you and all of those serving. A couple of questions. One is just because I'm apparently pretty naive. I have no clue what a BuskerFest is and was curious.

Paulson: Well, thank you, Mayor Simison and Council Members. So, I didn't know what it was either. So, a Busker is basically a street performer and we don't actually have a ton of those in the area, so I think that's part of the reason that the youth came, but it's basically a street performer. So, it could be a juggler. It could be someone dressed up performing. A belly dancer. Anything like that.

Little Roberts: Great. Thank you.

Paulson: Yeah.

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: Crystal, wow, what a busy year, particularly with so many new commissioners. I love seeing the enthusiasm for the work as you are presenting. So, thank you. A couple just quick comments and, then, maybe -- maybe a challenge for you to take back to the commission. So, first, I appreciate you kind of highlighting all the different types of art sculptures. You know, art is so subjective and you have found a good blend of different things for different people's tastes and I just -- want to applaud that and continue to commend that kind of diversity of -- of what art means to a lot of different people. My -- my questions I think probably for the commission is -- really pertains to the MAPPs ordinance and if -- if the funding that the ordinance collects is going to continue to meet the needs of the commission and, if not, I think we -- I would certainly invite you to bring that feedback back to us, either as a special presentation or your next year's annual update for something for the Council to consider some modification. And, then, I think an ask. Particularly I -- I was at -- I was a drama kid in -- in school and so I have such a love and appreciation for performance art and to see there is a lot of enthusiasm about that excites me and certainly there is challenges where there is lots of organizations that can use our support. One of the things that

caught my eye was that some of the grant dollars that you provided to the Treasure Valley Children's Theater was to offset the cost of tuition through that program and so I would encourage you -- you got a great member of our parks department that is here. Maybe there is an opportunity to get those programs offered through our city recreation guide and the reason why I would suggest that is that the city also has the Care Enough To Share program, which offers financial assistance to those that are in need to be able to take advantage of our programs and that may allow you to, one, get more access for students that want to do performance art and also preserves some of your funding to be able to continue to support ongoing performance art, because I think it's a -- it's a huge impact on our community and I just encourage you to keep doing a great job.

Paulson: Okay. Thank you. We will definitely look over that and see what is possible for that.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Thank you, Crystal. I want to compliment you. I think you are doing a fantastic job. One piece of feedback I have received from a constituent was a question that might have been forwarded to you by Dave Miles, but it was a question about the hours of the Initial Point Gallery is open and I know that there are a lot of people who work, you know, different hours and they want that art to be accessible. So, I was hoping you could kind of walk us through at least for the opening receptions, you know, do those happen in the evening sometimes? Kind of give us a flavor for when that gallery is open. Because I think people might find that information valuable. Thanks.

Paulson: So, I can address part of it and, then, I'm going to refer to Cassandra for the other part. So, the Initial Point Gallery is open whenever City Hall is open. The opening shows do extend a little bit past the opening of City Hall. So, now I'm going to refer to Cassandra for the rest of that.

Schiffler: Mr. Mayor, Council Member Strader, yeah. Your constituent is not the only one. I know artists and others have wished that the gallery would be open longer hours, but it is open during when City Hall is open, other than the first Tuesday of the month during the gallery reception, the -- some of the difficulties around that is when City Hall is closed trying to open it and staff it and security and HVAC and elevators, that all just kind of has to be open. So, there -- so, there are some challenges to opening it on other hours.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Yeah. I understand that and I think it would be probably a pretty large expense to do so. I would be curious what it would be. For the first Tuesday, though, that you

are open for those initial receptions, is there kind of a rule of thumb of how late you do stay open?

Schiffler: 7:00 p.m.

Strader: 7:00 p.m. Thanks. That -- that's helpful, because that is, you know, a little bit different and would help I think some people that get off work at a different time. Appreciate the information.

Simison: Council, any additional questions?

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: Not an additional question just one more comment, since we have got Cassandra up here. I just want to share with Council -- I don't know if you are an avid reader of the Idaho Business Review like I am, but this morning the IBR announced this year as 40 accomplished under the age of 40 and our own Cassandra was recognized and so just want to congratulate you for being recognized and appreciate your great work for our commissions and our community. It's a win for everybody and we sure appreciate you.

Schiffler: Thank you.

24. Historic Preservation Commission Annual Update

Simison: Thank you very much. And, Cassandra, why don't just stick around while Blaine does his thing or -- or not. So, with that we will move on to Item 24, which is this Historic Preservation Commission annual update and we will invite the Chair Blaine Johnston up to make comments.

Johnston: Mr. Mayor, Members of City Council, thank you for this opportunity to give our annual report. We have had a very productive year this past year -- if I can get this to work. Up? Down? There it goes. As most of you probably realize we have got a big -- we have got the Meridian Speedway on the National Registry of Historic Places. It's been a four year process. We started this back in 2020 after Firebird Raceway was listed we thought, well, why isn't Meridian Speedway listed. It's been around a lot longer. Through all the work, the work of our consultants, got all their submitters down, sent to Idaho State Preservation office, went to national and they finally recognized this this past month. So, we have had a lot of feedback in the news. While newspapers, TV stations, I would like to podcast about this, which is a bit nerve racking, because I'm not a real good speaker. But it was fun and that's great news for the city, HPC, and the community itself. So, May is Preservation Month as you know. Last year we had a good turnout. We did a walkthrough of historic properties in Meridian led by Barb Bauer from TAG. She volunteered her time for that and greatly appreciated. We had a good

turnout for that. We had a reconnaissance survey completed by then highlighting important properties in downtown Meridian. There was 256 properties surveyed from basically City Hall north. A lot of older homes that we looked at, some of the older homes that are just sitting on -- build kits. You can bring them in and people constructed them. So, there is a lot of interesting properties down there that we will do some further work on. That includes the East Idaho Avenue block with the historic buildings downtown. We also nominated the Tolleth house for position, which they have received. Elizabeth Burgess has done a great job restoring that house back to its origins and that's a great, great complement to downtown Meridian. And here is some photos of the Tolleth house and Hidden Gems event. On HPC products we are continuing our virtual tours through her friends that photograph properties downtown, brought in future areas of the city. A picture of a Eggers farmstead. So, people can get a look at these online, they can look at these photographs and realize the history of Meridian. Our ongoing walking tours. They are self guided. You download the app on their smartphones and do the self-guided tours. A lot of time people can make it down to our designated time for Preservation Month and you need to take your family out just to walk around Meridian and get a little bit of the history about it. We, too, have social media accounts, Facebook, Instagram. To highlight some activities we are doing. Our highlights our here. We are also trying to create some interesting content in those for people to look at and comment on as far as buildings and history of Meridian. What's next is we are updating our historic preservation plan. The last one was completed in 2014 and, obviously, Historic Preservation Office recommends we update this every ten years. So, our ten years is up. We just received a grant from SHPO to do a major portion of this work, so we are thankful for SHPO recognizing our efforts in preserving this. That will give us a framework for what we want to do for the next ten years in preserving our downtown Meridian, but other historic properties in the city. With that I thank you, Mr. Mayor, Members of City Council, and I'm open for questions. Short and sweet. The way I like it.

Simison: Thank you. Council, questions for Blaine?

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: Blaine, appreciate it -- of course it's not, Dean. But it is now. Appreciate that. Blaine, every year I feel that you come here and I say, man, what a banner year for HPC and I'm always wondering how you are going to top it and -- and here you are again topping your success of last year. But I do have a question and, then, maybe also a complement. This change with Meridian Speedway with its historical designation, does that have any impact on its future operations, modifications to the site, new stands, less stands? How -- how does that designation impact I guess the -- the future of that site?

Johnston: Mr. Mayor, Councilman Cavener, as far as I know it's not going to impact the usage at all. I have had that question before. Meridian Speedway is just going to exist

the way it is. Operate the way it is. One of the questions that came back from the National Park Service in our submission was back in 1980 the bleachers were changed out from wooden ones to aluminum ones for safety reasons. They are not original to the site, but did not detract or take away from the experience of going to the Speedway and they recognized that for us, so as far as expansion I don't see it's going to impact the expansion if they need to do some changes, redo the bleachers again, concession stands, any of that stuff. I don't -- I don't see that's going to change the recognition at all.

Cavener: Great. And, then, Mr. Mayor, just one comment real quick and I know we have got a -- an application later on this evening that HPC provides some commentary on and I won't speak about that specifically, I will wait until that meeting comes up. But I just -- I want to -- I thank you and commend you and the commissioners for being action oriented about our history and our community and just want you to know that the voice that comes from the HPC I think really resonates with the Council and just appreciate your great work around the Eggers Farm and making sure that the history of that site is front and center for the Council to consider.

Johnston: Mr. Mayor, Mr. Cavener, thank you so much for your comments and we appreciate that and we appreciate all of the things that the City Council does for us. I appreciate -- or we appreciate being able to use Council Chambers for meetings. I have been to some meetings where they are held in conference rooms. The work gets done, but it's not the same feeling as meeting -- so, thank you so much for that.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: I just wanted to say for a group that's focused so much on the past you are doing a remarkable job of addressing the future and I really appreciated your moves into virtual tours, the digital realm, everything kind of forward looking. I think that's really important for preserving our history and I just wanted to share my compliments on that.

Johnston: Thank you so much.

Little Roberts: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Little Roberts.

Little Roberts: Mr. Mayor. Blaine, I just wanted to add my thanks. I, again, was -- four years ago was able to be the liaison to the commission and just really enjoyed my time there and it's just fabulous to see the amazing continued work that the commission is doing saving our history.

Johnston: Thanks so much.

25. Neighborhood Grants Program: Fiscal Year 2023 Project Close Out and Fiscal Year 2024 Project Recommendations

Simison: All right. Thank you very much, Blaine. Appreciate it. Next we will move on to Item 25, which is neighborhood grants program, Fiscal Year 2023 project closeout and fiscal year 2024 project recommendation. Turn this over to Mr. Cluff.

Cluff: Thank you, Mayor and Council. My name is Jacob Cluff. I'm the community relations and policy advisor here for the City of Meridian. I get the honor of doing the neighborhood grants program each year. It is an ever evolving program and I wanted to recap a little bit of what's going on, give some brief history of what the program is and what's going on and what's going to be going on forward. To do a small recap, this is the third year of this program. We are entering into another year of applications, which we will talk about those funding requests later. Previously we have had two very successful years funding five projects and I get to do some fun and get to review some of those. So, in 2022 we funded three projects. The Beep Beep Jeep, which is a fun little nickname to say, but at -- at Bear Creek Park, at Heroes Park a pollinator garden and, then, had a program partnership with the American Legion right across the street. We are going to start off with the Beep Beep Jeep at Bear Creek Park. The Burgess family -- this was an idea from their family to honor a family member, as well as to honor the connection that they have to the Jeep community here in Meridian and if you haven't visited yet, it's a great play area. It's accessible to all and it's just a fun one. That picture is of the Mayor and a couple of members in -- in attendance just having fun and cutting the ribbon. The next one is going to be the Heroes Park pollinator garden with Meridian Co-op Gardeners, which actually have their annual meeting right behind us here in about 30 minutes. They would love to talk to you about that. They are very passionate about what they do and they give us a lot for what we give them. This is all around a great volunteer opportunity for people. They solicit to the community. They force their kids to come out and dig holes, but they -- but they create a beautiful space for us and this is just one of the many projects that they work around the city, but this was one that was funded through this -- through this program, as well the flag disposal box and disposal program with the American Legion Post 113. We have two locations for these flag disposal boxes. One at Station 5 and one at Station 1. I know they have been getting a lot of flags and they have been going through them as fast as they can. They have a partnership with another American Legion program and they are doing their best. We also funded some burners for them and it's -- it's been a great program and really inspiring to see the -- the impact that the American Legion has been -- has been doing and I heard they just got a new -- new renovations over there, too, as well, so -- last year we were going to fund three projects. Connection Is The Cure was going to be that third project. They actually got a funder to -- to cover the bill, so they decided that they were not going to take up the grant process with us. One of the projects was our I Heart Treasure Valley in the Kelsall wheel -- and the conflict resolution training that they do with -- they go to middle schools and elementary schools and they play a game with the -- with the kids. Mark Thornton would love to have that game played with you guys. So, get in contact with him, he would love to do it. But it was a volunteer opportunity that they do. They work around the Treasure Valley. This was a wonderful

organization that was able to add some -- add a little bit of emotional awareness for our kids as we go forward. The other project that we funded last year would be the Center at the Park outdoor repairs by the Meridian Senior Center. The outside was becoming dangerous to the public and needed to be -- needed to be renovated and shored up, so -- now let's talk about this year. This year for the 2024 I am seeking approval and recommendations for the 2024 budget funds for the neighborhood grant program. Through the scoring applications we have got three projects that has rose -- that have risen to the top. One would be the Meridian Library Foundation for books for the Meridian Library District. The Senior Center has, again, put forth a park improvement. This would be for accessible seating and benches for the back patio and, then, we also have an organization called David's Hope. David's Hope is a memorial for pregnancy loss and infant loss and they are working with the Meridian -- Meridian Cemetery District to put together a great memorial in the new addition that they are planning. It has a gazebo and many other things. You probably saw it in the application, so -- and thank you, Council. I will keep this very brief and short. So, I will stand for any questions that you might have.

Simison: Thank you, Jake. Council, questions for Mr. Cluff?

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: Jake, appreciate the good work. I know it's sometimes herding cats to get scores and applications and kind of keep that process moving forward, so I appreciate your diligence on that. We encountered I think this year, you know, two requests that are not being recommended and part of that was because they kind of exist on private property and we encountered that same challenge last year and it's -- I struggle with it, because we call it a neighborhood grant and we have yet to do a project in a neighborhood and so I worry that by calling it a neighborhood grant program we are inviting ultimately types of requests that we don't feel that we should fund and I guess I -- contrary to that I -- the project, particularly the one that would take care of some of the trees along the sidewalk area to me when -- when I was first approached about this program it's those types of projects that I would like the city to be doing more. So, I guess my -- my question for you is as -- as the Council -- have we created our own limitation from being able to achieve maybe what the intention is -- is that we have got to do better education of grants submitters to have it meet what the goal is? Help me understand how we can get to starting to actually fund neighborhood projects, instead of just ancillary projects as part of other taxing districts and other forms of government.

Cluff: Yeah. Mayor, Council, great question. A lot to unpack there. With your first observation that it is called neighborhood grants and we are not funding as many things in a neighborhood that we were initially believing that we would. That does come down to that private-public space. I included those two, the vineyard HOA tree removal and common area management into it, due to the fact that there was a small piece of public property along with it. But, again, they -- it is submitted in a way that it is the majority

going towards a private property improvement. It would be really great to sit down with all of you guys and all of Council about what your vision is for the future, how you feel like this program should improve. Maybe look at how we can reword it. You have some really great experience throughout your professional career and it would be great to lean on that and ask some questions on that, so -- I may have sidestepped it a little bit, but please --

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: I think so. I think that it -- you know, we have -- this is our -- in our fourth iteration and certainly, you know, we did the participatory budgeting program before that and I think we are getting closer to what I had hoped, you know, six or seven years ago when we went down this path we would get to and, again, the desire of Council may also change and evolve, so I -- I think potentially this summer a workshop session about this -- I think there is some very simple changes that we could make that would make these programs more with what is intended to be done. Frankly, I think next year if we are getting more requests for projects that are occurring on city property I'm probably not going to be very supportive, because we have other mechanisms that -- those projects are important. We have got a mechanism to do it. This is really designed to go outside of city-controlled assets to make an impact in our community. So, we will work with the -- with the Mayor's office and get something like that scheduled sometime this summer.

Taylor: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Taylor.

Taylor: Jacob, good to see you and thank you for the presentation. One question on how -- how do we get the word out, advertise, make people in the community aware of -- of these grants? I think that might speak a little bit to some of your concern, those who are here involved in the process and pay attention would know about it, but maybe we are trying to help those who wouldn't be. So, I'm just kind of curious what -- what do we do to kind of make this program available and aware to people outside of that -- you know, the inner circle scope of those who pay attention to city governance?

Cluff: Council, Mayor, Councilman Taylor, so we have a couple of different ways that we are doing that. We always send out a media release to our comms manager and our comms team, as well as social media posts. We regularly -- regularly posting about this opportunity during the time that we are allowed. We don't want to go before the budgeting process, because I don't want to be trying to backtrack and, yeah. But as well as sending out to previous recipients, previous applicants and, then, personal networking, too, as well. So, direct mail -- direct e-mails, social media, press release. First year -- not first year. Second year FY-2023, we were able to actually get a small news story about it, too, as well, which got some good traction and had some interested

individuals that were learning about the program and, again, this year I do want to preface -- the numbers might be a little lower, but that's also for the fact of one of the feedbacks that I got from last year was this -- a large file coming in to you -- coming to Council and many of them not able to be funded. So, the idea was to try and whittle that down to an appropriate number that was manageable and as well were able to be funded, so --

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Just -- as we are sort of thinking about how to visit this in a workshop session or something, what -- what is the timing in terms of when you will go back out do you anticipate for the next round of applications? What's the timing been?

Cluff: So, Mayor, Council Woman, we will do it around the budgeting process. So, the first week in October, once the budget is approved, we hit the ground running with as much advertisement, both social media and with a press release. Again, it's -- I don't want to go before -- I don't want to put the cart before the horse and get in trouble that way. But, again, I think the effectiveness is there and the numbers don't really tell the story with the amount of people that were contacting us, but I do think that it's a strong -- we have to continue to educate the individuals that were interested in this year, keep them engaged for next year, teach them how to do this. Many of these individuals do not have -- do not have the professional grant writing capability or have that experience, but they are learning the process and they are excited about what they want to do and what they want to bring to Meridian, so --

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Thank you. Yeah. I -- I think it would be great for us to have a workshop session to -- to talk about the purpose of the program, how we can kind of tailor it and how we can help make it accessible for individuals. I think that's really important, as we are sort of, you know, covering a group that -- that doesn't normally maybe access these types of grants. Are you looking for action from us today regarding the recommendations listed here?

Cluff: I believe I just need approval for staff to go out -- to begin the process of getting the contract signed for these -- in these grants that are recommended from -- from the scoring and, then, compiled by myself.

Strader: Got it. Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: I thought the recommendations made good sense. I -- there was a question in my mind about the additional tree removal items and I do think we need a workshop session to sort of talk through those types of applications, but I did think that -- that these three items made good sense and would help our community. Particularly, I thought that the memorial for pregnancy and infant loss was a very unique type of project that I thought, you know, could really impact the community. I'm curious if Council has other feedback about these three recommended projects, if we are going to continue discussions about the purpose of the program and intent, we can, but I wouldn't -- if we are all supportive of these three projects I would think it would make sense to move those forward tonight.

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: Maybe a question for our -- for our legal staff or Jake is -- I'm supportive of the three recommendations, but I would -- where we have excess budget, also funding the -- the tree and plant project, because I believe it's in line with the intent of the program, but I just want to make sure there wouldn't be any concern from legal that we are moving outside of the bounds of kind of what the letter of the rule states versus kind of maybe what has been intended by Council with this program.

Nary: So, Mr. Mayor, Members of the Council, I mean, again, it's -- it's your program, so you are certainly free to deviate slightly if you need to.

Cavener: That would be my recommendation is that we take the three recommended by staff, but also include the tree implant project as the recommendation by Council.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: I have struggled so much with the inclusion of, you know, these enhancements for private property. I'm still -- I'm still grappling -- still grappling with whether that's our role. I think I would be open to doing it on a pilot basis on this one and trying to see if we can work through that legally and kind of what -- you know, if we could have legal and the team kind of report back on what the challenges are and what we are encountering. I don't think it's going to be -- it doesn't sound like it's going to be as straightforward as we are all hoping, but I think I'm open to trying to do that with those projects and that's new ground that we would be trailblazing, but from what I understand from people that were on the Council that was part of the intent of the program. So, I'm open to trying that just for feedback.

Simison: Got a lot of thoughts, but I'm going to withhold them for now, because I think this open -- this does open up a box in a lot of different ways that's -- I mean we have been very diligent in art, for example, of not putting art on things that we don't own.

That now -- I think that -- you know, Emily's not here. I don't know how to -- I'm not involved in the conversations and maybe Dave or Jake wants to -- I know she's had some very strong opinions on this. She is not the city attorney. He is sitting right there. But just as -- if we go down that road I think we are -- we can call it a pilot project, that does change the dynamics of how we view pretty much everything that we spend money on potentially. Or not.

Miles: Mr. Mayor and Council, your comment is very important and valid. I think we have worked through this program and run into roadblocks before, but I do appreciate your -- your comment and suggestion, Council Woman Strader. I think we could certainly look at it and bring back the feedback as we progress through the process. I can't stand here and say that we can make it happen given the rules that we have from finances and the legal aspects of where we can and can't spend money as a city entity, but happy to look into it and I think this has been probably the primary area where this program has sort of met the struggle of the desire of the Council and what the city could actually do and we are always open to try and find how we can navigate that if we can and if we can't we can come back and tell you we can't.

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Yeah. And just to add in like -- if it's a finance policy we can change the finance policy. That's not an issue. If it is state law, then, where -- what are you willing to do in opposition to state law?

Cavener: So, Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: I think Council Member Strader's got a great suggestion. Let's pilot this, just like with past years with neighborhood grants we have learned and we have improved. The intent is there. This is what the Council wants to do. If we are prohibited from doing that we trust that you will come back and, obviously, let us know that and, then, I think that is good information for us to take into account as we go into this workshop session about here is what Council wants -- this is our intent. Can we do it? And, then, let's build the matrix and the mechanism to make sure that we can execute it that way.

Miles: Great. Thanks, Mayor and Council. So, we will progress as if we can and if we can we will keep you updated and hit any roadblocks we will let you know that as well.

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: For action, then, a motion in and a --

Simison: No. You will take a motion and actions on each individual issues that come back with signed contracts or otherwise. And if you don't see one for that one, you will understand why, because there will be a conversation one way or the other, but we will move forward on those three that are -- well, will move forward on all of them, but, yes, you will take individual action as they come forward. If I was concerned I would make -- I would say as to one, but we have four head nods and --

Cluff: Thank you, Council.

PUBLIC HEARINGS [Action Item]

26. Public Hearing for Community Input on Meridian's Community Development Block Grant Program Action Plan

Simison: Thank you. All right. With that we will move on to Item 26, which is a public hearing for community input on Meridian Community Development Block Grant Program Action Plan. We will open the public hearing with comments from Ms. Campbell.

Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, Members of the Council. Let me open this really quick. So, we are right at the beginning of our action plan -- planning period. We are getting ready to develop it and we are wanting to reach out to the public to make sure we have their feedback, so that we are incorporating the projects that they are actually wanting to see. Quick overview of the CDBG program. This is a grant that Meridian receives directly from HUD. So, every project has to come back to creating housing stability. It's also for people who are low to moderate income, which is 80 percent or less of the area median income and it's for people who are Meridian residents. They have to be within city limits. If you are trying to figure out what the AMI looks like, an example would be a four person household can make up to 71,300 dollars and still qualify for this program. We have a couple of different guiding documents. The main one is our five year consolidated plan. It defines the goals for the upcoming five years. And, then, we have an annual action plan, which is what we are getting ready to develop, and it says how we are going to meet those goals and what activities we are going to fund. And, then, at the end of the year we have the report to say how we are progressing towards those goals. So, again, we are at the beginning of the planning process and we have an application opening on April 1st. It will be open the -- the entire month of April and the first thing that we are trying to do as we are asking for community feedback is to ensure that the Consolidated Plan stays relevant and that we are continuing to meet the needs of the community. We are also wanting to review current -- current partnerships to make sure that these partnerships are working and that the needs of the community is being met and, then, we want to see if there is any other potential partnerships that we should be seeking out to see if there is other services that we need to provide. So, for our applications we have public services and housing, potential projects for public services that we are funding right now. Our emergency rental assistance, childcare scholarships, and we are actually funding domestic violence services this year as well. Potential housing projects include homebuyer assistance and homeowner repair and we do not have an application coming for our public facility

and infrastructure improvement dollars, because we are using the rest of the con plan to work toward walkability projects that were identified in our LMA walkability study. When we develop the con plan we also look at the analysis of impediments to fair housing and when we did this, then, there were three impediments that were identified. So, I'm going to go through each of those impediments and talk about the actions that we are currently doing and, then, potential action items that I would put into our upcoming plan, unless there is feedback that says that those are not a great plan. So, the first impediment is lack of data on fair housing violations. The city wasn't requesting this information previously. So, in the meantime we have made contact with Intermountain Fair Housing Council and Idaho Legal Aid and we are requesting that on an annual basis and moving forward we would like to identify a fair housing contact and this person would be able to refer residents to appropriate resources and, then, collect data on any calls that we receive to the city. So, we just kind of want to streamline that, so that if there is a call coming in people know where to go. We do have an action item of fair housing testing that was included as a recommendation in our AI, but we are recommending that's put on hold, because Intermountain Fair Housing Council is actually receiving other federal funding to do this and so unless there is a great need in Meridian, then, we would rather put our resources elsewhere. For impediment two, there was a lack of sync -- or lack of complaints was out of sync with our community feedback. So, we are trying to provide greater outreach and support to residents when they are trying to file a complaint. So, ongoing actions. We have a group that we meet with regularly. It's the Treasure Valley Entitlement Communities. We call the group the Can-Ada Collaborative and we discuss actions like this and how to address it. We also have a fair housing radio campaign for Fair Housing Month in April that we work with the Can-Ada collaborative on. For future years we would like to continue to find opportunities to educate the public and we would like to update the language access plan. We would also like to work toward a Fair Housing Month proclamation and a fair housing webpage. For impediment three there was concerns with fair housing violations in the rental market, because all of the violations that were documented were for renters. So, ongoing actions. We are working with Intermountain Fair Housing Council to hold a fair housing training here at City Hall next week, actually. So, that's something that we will continue to work with. We also have been working to help facilitate the Idaho Fair Housing forum for the last couple of years and, then, again, that Can-Ada collaborative group does a lot to discuss how to address these situations. Moving forward we will look for opportunities to provide education to rental management and rental property organizations. Quick overview of what the application process is going to look like. The application opens on April 1st. We will have an application workshop for anybody who is wanting to apply on the 16th and, then, it will close on April 30th. In early May, then, we will have a scoring committee that reviews the applications and, then, late May they will make the recommendations and do all the scoring and everything and, then, I will update our action plan, put all of their recommendations in there and the draft plan will be open for public comment from June 11th to July 14th. So, again, what we are asking is for the community to provide feedback on the needs and potential partnerships for services in Meridian. If people would like to provide the feedback they can scan this QR code and it will have questions related specifically to those items or they can e-mail me at ccampbell@meridiacity.org

or call me at 208-489-0575. And we also have a website, meridiancity.org/cdbg where people can find additional information, including all of our plans. And with that I will stand for questions.

Simison: Thank you, Crystal. Council, any questions?

Taylor: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Doug.

Taylor: Close enough. Crystal, thank you. I was kind of interested with the lack of data or kind of syncing with what are we receiving in terms of complaints or issues with fair housing. Have you reached out at all to Consumer Protection Division at the state? I think it's under the Attorney General's Office. They are primarily responsible for those types of consumer-related issues where there might be a violation. So, I'm wondering is there data that they would have that would help you have a better idea of kind of the issues here in the city?

Campbell: Mr. Mayor, Council, that's a great suggestion. I wasn't aware of that. So, I have not reached out to them. My main -- with my contacts and it's mainly HUD, fair housing, things like that. So, I -- no, that's a great suggestion. Thank you.

Taylor: Mr. Mayor, if I could just a follow-up comment.

Simison: Councilman Taylor.

Taylor: I think in the past that they have -- even that the office has put together a -- kind of a guide for property managers on how to make sure that they are in compliance with fair housing laws and things like that. So, I think it's a great resource where there is -- there is information there. I think you should include them as much as you can, not just for information, but inviting them to participate in any of your -- your forums, you know, training for property managers and companies, which I think is a great idea just overall, because Idaho is one of two states where property managers are not licensed. It's Maryland and Idaho. And so there is -- you don't have to hold a license to be a property manager and so they are -- I think educating them on some of these issues is significant. I think a higher level of -- I would love to see this in Meridian and, of course, statewide, but at least in our city I think if there is a higher level of understanding of what -- not just what the laws are, but ensuring there is a good relationship between landlords and tenants, I think would help address some of our problems. I know some of the emergency rental assistance programs we have in the valley -- one of the best things they do is act as a mediator and they can keep people in housing by just having a conversation and I think -- I think that would be a great use of our time to do that. So, thank you.

Campbell: Thank you.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Every year I struggle with the homebuyer assistance component of the program, because it's very underutilized. It's very targeted toward a small number of people. I feel like it has a very limited impact. I'm just curious to hear what the alternatives are. What are other things we can kind of pursue? I understand that there are very stringent requirements of these programs and a lot of red tape, but -- you don't have to answer that, but I'm just curious, you know, even a follow-up conversation what are sort of alternatives that we can kind of pursue, because in the past, you know, we have had this homebuyer assistance plank as kind of part of our program. It's been very underutilized and I would just hope we could, you know, sort of find some -- something else that might have a better impact or where dollars could go a little bit further, especially in this market, I think it will be really challenging to make that effective.

Campbell: Mr. Mayor and Council, those are great comments and you are absolutely right. I actually did have a conversation with the organization that we typically partner with on that and told them that I actually wouldn't recommend it. I'm not the one who makes the final decision on the applications and so if they want to provide that application it's an open application, but I did tell them that I would let the scoring committee know that it probably wasn't the best use of funds and to -- it is tricky trying to put CDBG funds into housing, because we can't actually do any type of construction. So, what we found is that the homeowner repair program has actually been really successful and our best way to help as many people as possible and I don't have the exact numbers off the top of my head, but the majority of people that we are helping are elderly women who are single with limited income. So, it's -- it's actually helping people to age in place and it's creating a way for them to stay in housing that's affordable to them.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Thanks for that feedback. I appreciate that.

Simison: Are there any additional questions for staff? Okay. Well, this is a public hearing. Is there anybody present who would like to provide testimony, either in person or online? Seeing none, Council, is it your desire to leave the public hearing open?

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: I guess I move that we keep the public hearing open. I don't know if we need a motion for that, but that -- that would probably makes sense at this point.

Simison: Do we have a date certain that this needs to stay open until?

Campbell: No, not necessarily, but I do have a public comment period that closes on April 7th. There is a couple of places where I'm going to be next week. I'm going to have an open house -- actually out here when you guys have your Council meeting next week and I'm also going to the Do The Right event. So, after that, then, I was hoping to collect everything and end it on April 7th. The only real deadline is that if there is any extra organizations that are identified I want to make sure that they have time to complete an application.

Simison: So, would you want to continue this until April 9th to allow time for everything to be added in, an additional comment period?

Campbell: Sure. That sounds great.

Simison: Does that work for the Council? Okay. Then a motion, please.

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: I move that we continue the public hearing for community impact on Meridian's Community Development Block Grant program to April 9th.

Strader: Second.

Simison: Have a motion and a second to continue this item until April 9th. Is there further discussion? If not, all in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay? The ayes have it and the public hearing is continued.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: I move that we adjourn the meeting.

Simison: Have a motion to adjourn. All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay? The ayes have it. We are adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:34 P.M.

(AUDIO RECORDING ON FILE OF THESE PROCEEDINGS)

MAYOR ROBERT SIMISON

_____/_____/_____
DATE APPROVED

ATTEST:

CHRIS JOHNSON - CITY CLERK