

## **Meridian City Council Work Session**

**March 25, 2025.**

A Meeting of the Meridian City Council was called to order at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, 2025, by Mayor Robert Simison.

Members Present: Robert Simison, Luke Cavener, John Overton, Doug Taylor, Anne Little Roberts and Brian Whitlock.

Members Absent: Liz Strader.

Other Present: Chris Johnson, Bill Nary, Jamie Leslie, Steve Taulbee and Dean Willis.

### **ROLL-CALL ATTENDANCE**

<input type="checkbox"/> Liz Strader	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Whitlock
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anne Little Roberts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Overton
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doug Taylor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Luke Cavener (4:32pm)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mayor Robert E. Simison	

Simison: Council, we will call this meeting to order. For the record is Tuesday, March 25th, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. We will begin this work session with roll call attendance.

### **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Simison: Next item up is adoption of the agenda.

Little Roberts: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Little Roberts.

Little Roberts: Mr. Mayor, seeing no changes I move we adopt the agenda as published.

Taylor: Second.

Simison: Have a motion and a second to adopt the agenda as published. Is there any discussion? If not, all in favor signify by saying aye. 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 11, 2025 City Council Work Session**
- 2. Approve Minutes of the March 11, 2025 City Council Regular Meeting**

3. **Primrose School Inglewood Place Subdivision No. 2 Water Main Easement (ESMT2025-0023)**
4. **Soldier Place Subdivision Sanitary Sewer Easement (ESMT-2025-0024)**
5. **Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law for 965 E. Ustick Rd. (H-2024-0063) by Mussell Construction, Inc., located at 965 E. Ustick Rd.**
6. **Acceptance Agreement for Chateau Park Artwork between the City of Meridian and McCall Studios**
7. **Resolution No. 25-2509: A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Meridian signifying final acceptance of Chateau Park Artwork from McCall Studios**

Simison: Next up is the Consent Agenda.

Little Roberts: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Little Roberts.

Little Roberts: Mr. Mayor, I move that we adopt the Consent Agenda as published.

Taylor: Second.

Simison: Have a motion and a 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]**

Simison: There were no items moved from the Consent Agenda.

#### **DEPARTMENT / COMMISSION REPORTS [Action Item]**

8. **Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Amendment in the amount of \$158,760 for Fire Outreach Center Design**

Simison: So, we will move on to Department/Commission Reports. So, Item 8 is Fiscal Year 2025 budget amendment in the amount of 158,760 dollars for Fire Outreach Center design and turn this over to Chief Butterfield.

Butterfield: Good afternoon, Mayor and Council. You have in front of you a budget amendment request for 158,760 dollars for the design of the Fire Outreach Center. Also attached within your packet is a memo from the CRR division manager and questions that have been asked and answered. So, at this time I would like to turn this over to our division manager of CRR Carly Shears for a brief presentation on the amendment that's in front of you. Thank you.

Shears: Good evening. I do just have a few slides. Just quick question. Do I just press the over tab or ask you to move? Press the arrow? Okay. Sounds good. In trying to be respectful of your time this evening I did write down what I wanted to say so I can be concise. So, I am going to be reading. So, good evening, Mayor Simison and Council Members. I want to thank you for your time and the opportunity to present to you on the proposed Fire Outreach Center. I want to start off with stating the intent and the purpose of this space and the value that the Fire Department sees in having an Outreach Center, specifically at this location and attached to the community center and, really, the intent and purpose is to better serve the public through fire and life safety education and community engagement, helping create a safer and more resilient city. Based on the experience gained in the CRR division, having held a multitude and variety of classes and community events, this space is recognized as an invaluable opportunity that would meet the needs of the CRR division and the community both today and for years to come. Settlers Park being centrally located and widely used is an excellent location for this outreach center and to meet the needs of the community. Additionally being attached to the Meridian Community Center provides an increased opportunity for public engagement and educational opportunities. Having a solid year now under my belt as a division manager of CRR for the Fire Department a few things have become very clear to me and those are being the expectations of the community when it comes to the Fire Department providing fire and life safety education, risk reduction efforts and overall public engagement, but even more importantly the actual need for risk reduction efforts and the overall impact it has on our community. While being only one component in the over -- overall CRR process, I do want to take a minute to highlight the important role public education plays in creating safe and resilient communities. When people understand the risks that they face, as well as the appropriate prevention and mitigation strategies, they are able to make safer choices and without consistent education complacency sets in leading to an uptick in preventable fires and injuries. The data that you see in front of you, while it may not reflect causation, certainly shows correlation and that correlation is a noted increase in the incidence in the Meridian response area, particularly in the categories shown above falls and assists, cooking fires, structure fires, motor vehicle collisions, as well as a noted decrease in the public education and community outreach, the community risk reduction division has been capable of providing over the past 18 months. In fact, when we compared the year's data from 2021 to 2022 and that of the most recent year 2024 to 2025, we have seen a decrease of 80 percent in total community risk reduction responses being educational presentations, classes, station tours, et cetera. Within these total CRR responses we have noted an additional 68 percent decrease in community event contact time, as well as a staggering 98 percent reduction in hands only and certified CPR classes offered to the community. When we look at why we

have had this reduction there is a direct relation to both decreased staffing in the division, as well as no longer having an adequate facility to provide vital classes and educational opportunities for various community groups and organizations. In the years past the CRR division had the fire safety center off Leighfield Drive, which for the time was used and was a valuable resource to the community. However, this facility was not designed for or planned appropriately at the time to meet the future needs of how large and diverse the community would become. That is why we view this initiative as crucial in addressing a significant gap in our ability to provide essential fire and life safety education to residents of all ages. It is anticipated that the center will host community training sessions, including fire extinguisher training, CPR, AED classes and additionally this space will be designed to accommodate our larger car seat safety clinics, as well as regularly scheduled car seat safety checks. Another key function of the center will be to offer an alternative venue for groups seeking fire station tours, reducing the operational impact on fire stations while still providing an educational experience to the community. Beyond community outreach and engagement the center will also function as a workspace for the CRR division, support -- supporting both current operations and future growth. By integrating a fire outreach center into the new community center we can significantly enhance community engagement, risk reduction and overall public safety. This space would not only be an educational asset that is a forward thinking investment that will save both lives and taxpayer dollars in the long run. I strongly urge the Council to prioritize and support this initiative as part of the new community center development. Thank you. And I would be welcome -- to open for any questions you may have.

Simison: Thank you, Carly. Council, any questions for staff?

Overton: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Overton.

Overton: Not a question as much as a comment. Many years ago we opened a training center and it was a partnership between police and fire, which was brilliant. Building two of them, one for each agency, didn't make any sense and I like seeing the fact that we are now bringing fire into the community center and, again, bringing two parks program and fire program together into one location. I think that's probably the most efficient way we can get the job done.

Shears: I couldn't agree with you more, Councilman Overton. Thank you.

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Oh, Councilman Cavener, I -- and I didn't notice what time you joined, but welcome.

Cavener: Thanks. Apologies, team, for -- for my tardiness. Carly, first to commend you and your team. Great presentation. I think, you know, when we get into some of these

budget amendments it's sometimes, hey, here is a -- here is a picture and a paragraph and I pick -- I appreciate you and your team's efforts to really paint a big picture and a vision for what you are hoping to achieve. My question somewhat dovetails off of Council Member Overton's statement, which is about the training center and certainly we have got some space right now in our current Home Court facility I think you guys are using. Help me understand why this approach going along with a new building is more efficient as opposed to repurposing or reutilizing some existing space that we have?

Shears: Yeah. That's a great question, Councilman Cavener. It's -- what I have experienced in the past year in this role, especially trying to schedule classes at the Public Safety Training Center, is that it is widely utilized and very very difficult to schedule classes. I tried to schedule some classes recently and we are really pushed out to weekends when we use that, which is okay, we are operating outside of our normal work hours, so that, you know, causes some issues, family life, different things like that, but overall it's very difficult to schedule space at the Public Safety Training Center. What could be addressed or done for that in the future I'm not quite sure. I think it's probably above my -- my pay grade, but I suppose there are options there. Regarding Home Court, it is a great facility where we are able to have storage, as well as offices for our personnel in the CRR division. However, we don't have very many AV capabilities. It was recently renovated from a church and there are some classrooms there that we could gather some people in and we have before, it's just not an ideal environment. Specifically for car seat checks we are still doing those, especially in inclement weather days, at the stations to provide coverage and so the proposed Community Center also has a sally port that would provide that safe space for families as we are installing car seats. So, additionally, it is my understanding that future needs of the community and specifically court space and time that there is the potential that the Home Court facility basic specifically would get turned into more court space for the community to use and then -- so, really looking into the future of the CRR division and where we could be. I don't see it being into Home Court facility for into the extended future and I do think that this opportunity at the Community Center is much more viable, especially when we are talking about future needs.

Taylor: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Taylor.

Taylor: Just a quick question. Do you have any sense of kind of where we are at now with the number of kind of classes and outreach we are doing and what you think having this space would enable you to do? I mean maybe it's a little premature on numbers. It sounds like you probably have to develop the programs a little bit more, what we would do, but do you have any sense or -- that you could provide?

Shears: Yeah. I mean I do know that we do turn down a lot of requests for classes just based off of staffing and availability in our division. I do have some numbers from '24 to '25 for the last year as far -- as far as how many classes and events that we have been

able to provide. Is there anything in particular that you are looking for or just kind of total community engagements?

Taylor: Just a general sense.

Shears: Yeah. So, it looks like total contacts in the CRR division at events was 4,415. We had 37 presentations to classes, educational facilities, 27 of them were elementary schools, 61 hands-only participants for CPR, 61 for certified CPR. Station tour contacts. Two hundred and eighty-five station tour contacts, 1,285 total school contacts. Yeah. We have a lot of different numbers here, so -- but comparative to years past, again, we have decreased, you know, 80 -- upward of 98 percent in a lot of those. Did that answer all of your question, Councilman Taylor?

Taylor: Yeah. That was helpful. I was just trying to get a sense -- and what you said there at the end in terms of where it -- where I was and kind of where we are now and seems like clearly, excuse me, moving back to where we were and, then, even above and beyond trying to provide some more services and classes.

Shears: Yes. Absolutely.

Whitlock: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Whitlock.

Whitlock: Carly, thank you for the presentation and in real estate they always say location, location, location and that's the big driver. Is this the right location for you in terms of being central to our community, which you said, but do you get the kind of traffic and visibility do you think and have we seen that across the country by co-locating and being in a high traffic area, does that help as you do your community outreach?

Shears: Yeah. I do believe the location at Settlers Park is an ideal location for this. Originally I was thinking, oh, maybe on the south side of town where we are developing and things are going to be newer, but a lot of our educational efforts, specifically at the Public Safety Training Center are much more centrally located on the north side of 84. When we schedule different events it seems like they are always wanting to be scheduled on the north side and Settlers Park is just a very busy community-oriented -- not only park but area. Additionally, being tied to the community center, you know, there is the possibility that they are going to be offering things like cooking classes there and we have the opportunity to get in and, you know, we have seen an increase in our cooking fires and to be able to provide that fire prevention education around cooking safety. There is a lot of opportunities that are missed currently, because we don't, one, have the space or, two, are tied up with something like a community center where we can really engage and interact with more members of the community, specifically for targeted intervention programs, so --

Simison: And no one ever told me the south side was an option for something, so, I don't know, maybe we have to reconsider this. Council, any additional questions? Comments?

Taylor: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Taylor.

Taylor: A question -- maybe Steve answers this or finance. Impact fees are paying for the community center. For this portion of it is it fire-related impact fees that will pay for it? Getting a head nod.

Simison: No, it is not. It is General Fund dollars.

Taylor: Okay.

Simison: That would -- that leaves us open opportunities for however we would like to move forward in the future and be impact or General Fund at the appropriate time.

Taylor: Thank you.

Shears: Any other questions?

Simison: Thank you, Carly, very much.

Shears: You are welcome. Just to close I would like to throw it out there that I would love the opportunity to still come talk to Council about community risk reduction and the process and what we do in our division. I would love for Liz and Luke to be able to be here. So, whenever you guys are willing to invite me I would humbly welcome that opportunity. So, thank you again.

Simison: Thank you. And, Council, I will just add I, yeah, appreciate Council Woman Strader and all the diligent questions she asked and the information that was provided to you all on this. When the chief first approached me about this topic I thought it was a natural connection and, really, if you look at what we utilize -- and I don't know when the last time any of you were in the old facility -- fire education is more than that, it's moved forward in a lot of -- a lot of different ways to -- and can be better served in this community and so I think this is a great way for us to take advantage of an asset we hope to have in our community soon, but at the right time and have this be part of that operational facility, more people in the parks, which is where people go in one of our busiest parks, so I think it's got a lot of intrinsic value that we don't even realize yet when the time comes. So, with that I would be happy to entertain any motions.

Little Roberts: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Little Roberts.

Little Roberts: Mr. Mayor, I move that we approve the budget amendment in the amount of 158,760 for the Fire Outreach Center design.

Overton: Second.

Simison: Have a motion and a second to approve Item 8. Is there discussion on the motion?

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: I want to just maybe speak real quick to my vote. I won't be voting in favor and it's not because I don't think that we need a new facility. It's no surprise to this Council I have got some concerns about this community center project. I would much rather -- I would much rather prefer a larger conversation about either a dedicated facility or a rehab of an existing facility to meet these needs, as opposed to putting this in connection with the community center. So, I appreciate what the team does. I'm all in favor of CRR. I just don't like this particular location.

Simison: Council, any additional questions or additional comments? If not, clerk call the roll.

Roll Call: Cavener, nay; Strader, absent; Overton, yea; Little Roberts, yea; Taylor, yea; Whitlock, yea.

Simison: Four ayes. One nay. And the item is agreed to. Thank you very much and, Steve, Chief, look forward to continue forging the partnership on this item, so --

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. ONE NAY. ONE ABSENT.

## **9. Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Update to City Council**

Simison: Okay. With that we will move on to Item 9, which is the Parks and Recreation Commission annual update to City Council. Turn this over to Commissioner Gelsomino.

Gelsomino: Mr. Mayor, City Council, thank you so much for allowing me to speak today. The last time I presented the Parks Commission report as chair was right at the outset of the pandemic. So, it's -- it's a great feeling to not have to do that during the outset of another tragic pandemic. Before I continue I would like to extend a big gratitude plug to Shelly Houston for preparing this PowerPoint today, knowing that I work in a different time zone, although I work from home, she was able to put together an incredible PowerPoint to present for each of you today. But we will get started and I apologize, we are just clicking the left arrow? Right arrow. Perfect. Thank you. So, as each of you may know, the Meridian Parks and Recreation Commission updates its list of goals for the coming year. We have currently identified 11 goals for the act -- we are actively



working towards in 2025. In this presentation I will briefly tell you about the progress we have made. So, first goal. Participate in the design and programming of our new community center. As you know planning is well underway for this new facility, which will serve as the hub for the city's community education programs. It will be accompanied by an expansion of Settlers Park. The Parks Commission has been actively reviewing documents, providing input and attending public engagement opportunities as they become available. I apologize. Let me put my eyeballs on. Our second goal and one that a lot of us are -- that is a favor of many of us, the support and development of a connected pathway system across the City of Meridian with the focus on user experience amenities and improved connectivity. The Parks Commission remains very invested in the development of our city's connected pathway system. We see it as an incredible opportunity to offer an alternative method of transportation, among others that we currently already have. Each May we take a bicycle pathways tour to personally view recently completed projects, see progress being made on current projects and to understand future connections. In our 2024 pathways tour I was able to record our entire tour on bike through the -- my map -- my ride app and we did about a five mile ride from Reta Huskey where we started to Black Cat and back. Our attention has mostly recent -- most recently been focused on the Five Mile pathway, the trail hub, the Golden Spike Bridge and the future connection that will connect McDermott Road to Glassford and pass underneath State Highway 16. This is an ambitious project with -- which we will be in collaboration with ACHD on. Our third goal, the Meridian path -- the Meridian pathways master plan is currently being updated. It has not had a -- undergone a comprehensive update since 2012. The park staff is currently working with Alta Planning Consultants and an initial information gathering has begun. Input has also already been sought from a steering commission, of which two of our parks commissioners are currently members, and broader public engagement activities will take place in the near future. The updated pathways master plan is targeted for completion by the end of this year. Our fourth -- fourth goal, continuing to provide feedback for our ongoing parks improvements and enhancements. We continue to explore ideas that enhance and improve the user experience to -- for those who utilize our various parks. A recent example of improvements we have implemented would be the lights that have been added to the tennis and pickleball courts at Discovery Park. Our Commission also gave input on the communication board that was installed as part of the Tully Park playground replacement. It helps nonverbal individuals better communicate with other -- others during visits to the park. We also supported the addition of a small parcel of donated land to Hillsdale Park, which provides a more convenient way for residents of a nearby neighborhood to access the park. One quick item that I would like to add to the -- to the updates and renovations to Tully Park. As a former case worker for individuals with both mental health experience, with mental health illnesses, with behavioral health, disabilities, any opportunity that we find where we can improve the quality of life of others in our -- of our fellow Idahoans who do live day to day with mental health, behavioral health or any other form of disability is an incredible blessing, because as Idaho we do sometimes lack in available resources for those who live with those day-to-day challenges and so providing them with those additional opportunities and amenities to make them feel more welcome is incredibly important and a valuable goal that we continue to strive for. Our fifth goal,

participate in the partnership with the Meridian Arts Commission to add theming and identity reinforcing art in Meridian parks and along pathways. Focus this year is on Chateau Park and the arts master plan. Last year Seasons Park received a colorful new themed entrance sign and picnic shelter gable. These artists created items help reflect the park's four season themes -- four -- four seasons theme and give the park a more memorable look and a sense of place. The latest Meridian Park to receive a glow up through the installation of public art is Chateau Park. On Monday, April 21, at 4:00 p.m. we will dedicate the new public art pieces in Meridian's Chateau Park. The pollinator and native flower themed pieces, designed by Treasure Valley artist Ken McCall, are part of the city's ongoing efforts to make its city parks more distinctive and inviting through the installation of themed public art. I will also make a quick plug on that as well, as many on the commission know and as well as many of you on Council may know, one of my -- my biggest items that I have striven for, both as chair in the past, as an ongoing commissioner and as chair this year, is to increase our use of native and pollinator flora throughout the City of Idaho -- or throughout the -- excuse me -- the City of Meridian. I believe that as we continue to strive towards being better stewards of our environment we need to have the ability to provide ecosystems where those, you know, species that give us clean air and clean water to breathe and drink flourish. Our sixth goal is supporting future improvements at Lakeview Golf Course, including clubhouse and patio improvements and new on-course restrooms. Last May the golf community, city leaders and park commissioners gathered at Lakeview Golf Course to celebrate improvements made to the course and clubhouse. Our very own Council Woman Little Roberts gave the opening shot and did so gracefully. We also held a Parks Commission team building gathering at Lakeview last year. The course has benefited from an entirely new irrigation system, paved cart paths and reshaped tee boxes, along with a new fleet of golf carts. The clubhouse debuted new furnishings, fresh paint and carpeting, as well as a new custom bar top. The patio's enhancement included a new louvered shade covering, new patio furniture, flower boxes filled with colorful flowers and a pair of fire tables. Two new on-course restrooms are currently being installed with two additional coming later this spring and for those of us who are golfers it is always nice to have a restroom facility at arm's length. Goal seven, pursue a future park site in northwest Meridian Fields District. The city is currently working to acquire approximately 40 acres of future park land located southwest of the intersection of Can-Ada and McMillan Roads. The land would eventually be used for a future regional park centrally located within The Fields District. Pathway connections are projected for the area, as are a number of smaller neighborhood -- neighborhood parks likely to be constructed by developers and HOAs in the area. The Parks Commission will be given a project update on the -- on this next month's commission meeting. We are excited that new parkland, half purchases, half donated, will be reserved for a new regional park. Our eighth goal, support replacement of the Settlers Park splash pad. Last May 30th, just in time for summer, we celebrated an all new splash pad at Settlers Park with a pop-up popsicle party with the Mayor, Parks Director Siddoway and other city leaders. The splash pad, which replaced the parks aging splash pad, has an -- has a fun nautical theme with water cannons. It also has a UV water sanitation system and other features, which help protect the health and safety of its users, which makes my germaphobic heart happy. Our city splash pads will open for the warm weather season

around Memorial Day and we are hoping for a less smoky summer this year. Goal nine. We engage other task forces, commissions, entities and agencies through workshops and other outreach for partnership opportunities. We enjoy collaborating with a variety of community partners. Examples of those -- we have had as guests at our monthly commission meetings include Ada County Parks and Waterways, Boise and Nampa Parks and Recreation, the Meridian Dairy Board, one of Meridian co-op gardeners, MYB and PAL and ACHD's Safe Routes to School staff. Others such as the Meridian Library, Meridian Food Bank, Idaho Fish and Game and MYAC, regularly take part in our large community events. Guests from outside organizations also occasionally attend our annual parks tour by charter bus, which we hold each September. Our tenth goal, supporting ongoing operations of the Meridian pool. The Meridian pool remains as popular as ever. Aquatics director Willow Spurlock recently gave an update of recent improvements throughout -- we -- that were made to the pool last year. These include a new motor installation, front railing work, the installation of a three -- new three meter diving board and -- and a new fabric shade sail -- or new fabric shade sails. Excuse me. Hiring for lifeguards and swim instructors is going well and the pool is planning to be able to accommodate some of its -- some evening and Saturday opening swim hours, in addition it -- to its usual afternoon open swims. The Meridian Pool will be open for the season on Monday, June 2nd, and sign-ups for swim lessons begin April 3rd. And, lastly, Goal 11, pursue improved communication tools and opportunities to engage the community in diverse interests. One of the newest ways the Meridian Parks and Recreation Department is reaching out to residents is through a new online e-newsletter, which goes out near the start of each month. It is sent to an e-mail mailing list of over -- excuse me -- of more than 26,000 addresses, which include all the folks who have ever rented facilities from us or participated in our classes, camps and sports leagues. Director Siddoway recently spoke about the department to the Meridian's Chamber leadership, Meridian participants and to the Meridian Rotary Club. I will also make a final plug from my -- for myself and for our other -- my fellow commissioners. We also -- because we do discuss this throughout our Commission meetings, we do also engage our community members and fellow citizens of the -- of the City of Meridian by just going out and being out in the community. Most of my engagement is at the dog parks and hearing what our fellow community members have to say, whether it's complements, whether it's areas of improvement and -- and everything in between. So, being able to reach out to people via the digital -- via digital mediums is also going to be a major method of gathering stronger input and with that I will stand for any questions.

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

Whitlock: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Whitlock.

Whitlock: Chairman, thank you for your presentation and for sharing some of these goals. Is that working now? Sorry. Thank you for your presentation, Dom, and -- and for sharing the goals and as I reflect back over the -- the past year and some of the things that we have been able to do as a Council and some of the long-term planning

that we are looking at in The Fields District, the Community Center, the commission has been very involved in the groundwork with some of the decisions that have come to Council. So, appreciate all of the -- the groundwork that you are doing with your commission and the recommendations that are coming forward and sometimes plans change and I just want to compliment the commission and the department. Earlier this year we had an opportunity where a family in this community wanted to do something and add to our Discovery Park and -- and we had a budget amendment that came to us to approve a Ninja Warrior course at Discovery Park and so I just -- as you go through these goals and as you are looking long term, I just appreciate the flexibility along the path to be able to say here is a new need, here is something that we -- wasn't planned for, but something that we want to support and the support that we felt here as a Council from the department and from the commission to be able to have a budget amendment to fulfill a little girl's dream was both heartwarming and heartbreaking for us at the same time. It was an amazing -- amazing evening and thank you for the work that went into that ahead of time. As I look through all of these goals you're doing some things that are improving the quality of life for all residents of Meridian and so I just appreciate the - the sacrifice of time, I appreciate the hours that you spend at the dog park talking to people, I appreciate your fellow commissioner here with you tonight to support you in this presentation and the full commission for all that you do. So, just wanted to say thanks.

Gelsomino: Commissioner Whitlock and Mr. Mayor, City Council, thank you so much. You know, that's -- that's our role both yourselves as elected officials and ourselves as, you know, appointed volunteers to make those tough decisions. Sometimes they are great, sometimes they are not the easiest. I have -- we have all learned how to do acrobatics on our commission, especially in the very outset of my very first term as chair of the commission we had to do some acrobatics during the very first year of the pandemic. So, you know, there are those times where I have pushed -- if it were up to me we would have a community garden in every park in the City of Meridian. The fact that we got one at Discovery Park I can only thank yourselves and Mike and Steve for really sticking with me and allowing it to happen, because, you know, having to find a clone for Julie is not easy, but we were able to find someone to administer -- to administrate and manage the community garden at Discovery Park and we are able to extend that resource. There have been other things that I have pushed for that didn't come to fruition. So, I understand there -- there are those things that we win and we don't.

Little Roberts: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Little Roberts.

Little Roberts: Mr. Mayor. Dom, thank you so much. Great report. And thank you for all of your years of service and dedication. It's greatly appreciated. You mentioned things that you kind of work for and in your talk you mentioned pollinators and I guess since it's spring we are hearing a lot about pollinators and we don't have places where

they can thrive like they used to. Is there anything specific for pollinators that we are looking at doing or that we are currently doing?

Gelsomino: Council Woman Little Roberts, thank you. And that is an excellent question. I can speak not as a botanist, but I can speak as a homeowner that has -- has had his shares of struggles and successes with -- with regular gardening and with growing my own vegetables. There are a lot of different items that we can pursue and that we do continue to pursue, which is identifying those native and indigenous plants to the state of Idaho that are more pollinator friendly or introducing flowers, plants that tend to attract higher levels of pollinating insects, bees, butterflies or pollinating birds, such as hummingbirds. It also -- on a macro level we also have to consider the air quality -- air quality, water quality, so seasons like last year -- summers like last year where our skies are orange and toxic, they are not going to be conducive to active pollination, but when we do have better years, hopefully this year, we will continue to push for the inclusion of those pollinating plants, flowers, so that we can continue to nurture and strengthen those pollinating ecosystems, because the catastrophic consequences otherwise are to have a future where we don't have clean air to breathe. Thank you.

Simison: Council, any additional questions? All right. Dom, thank you very much for what you do and all the commission and appreciate the hard work.

Gelsomino: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, and thank you, Council. Have a wonderful rest of your evening.

## **10. Historic Preservation Commission Annual Update to City Council**

Simison: With that we will move on to Item 10, which is an annual report update from the Historic Preservation Commission and turn this over to Chairman Johnston.

Johnston: Mr. Mayor, Members of the Commission, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak this afternoon on the highlights that HPC has done this past year. Our ongoing projects include our virtual tour. We are continuing our projects with Whole Films to document areas and buildings associated with City of Meridian. These virtual tours include Meridian City Hall, History Center, Main and Broadway, Pine Tree School, exterior-interior. Black Cat Farms. Meridian Speedway. Downtown areas along Idaho Street near Centennial Park. Community Center. Along Idaho Street between 4th and 5th and the Eggers Farmstead at Black Cat Road. In 2025 we plan to add new virtual tours along north side -- North Main Street. You can visit this website off the city's website or go to the link that's listed here. May is always preservation month and this past May we celebrated the month with downtown signage and walking tours. We would like to thank Pine Tree School and Hidden Gems Events for their help with these tours of the historic sites. Ongoing HPC projects, the self-guided tour. Self-guided walking tour is available year round. Free book -- excuse me -- free booklets with a map and interpretive information are available at City Hall. For an enhanced walking tour experience download the Meridian Historic Preservation app for Android and smartphones. We also redid our walking tour brochures and I handed those out to each

of you earlier today. Our guided walking tours. In 2024 we hired an historic preservation consultant to create a new easy-to-follow walking tour guide binder to aid our HPC commissioners in leading these in-person walking tours and gave challenge coins to the walking tour participants. Commissioners led four walking tours last year and we plan to do a series of six this coming year. We will do them the third Saturday of every month. There is -- it's free. No registration is required. We just meet outside the City Hall at the front steps around 10:00 o'clock on those Saturdays. Our social media continues to grow. Efforts -- continuing efforts to encourage the public to follow both Meridian history on both Facebook and Instagram. Our posts highlight our history, both our culture and our historic buildings. Our accounts continue to grow in numbers -- followers and the people that comment on our posts. As you know last year we got the Meridian Speedway listed in the National Register of Registry of Historic Places. That ended a four year process for HPC and the speedway was greatly appreciative of our efforts. This year -- this past year the Eggers Farmstead, Black Cat historic structures. We would like to thank the Mayor and Council and to the developer for helping facilitate the preservation efforts for this last remaining dual silos structure in the Treasure Valley. The silos have been carefully disassembled and transferred to Victory Gardens for future reassembly on their properties for the community to continue to enjoy and remember our past. Historic preservation projects landmarking program research. Idaho code allows commissions to create landmarking programs. This will allow historic preservation and mission to review and make recommendations on changes to landmark properties and time to negotiate with property owners or other parties in an effort to mean -- find means of preserving properties. Advantage for this for Meridian over local historic districts. Landmarking can be noncontiguous properties throughout the city. Less regulatory or restrictive than historic districts with design guidelines and standards. Create a formal way to celebrate and preserve -- identify local historic properties. Our next step is to -- as a planning project HPC would need to do more research, create recommendations of which properties would be included, what criteria would be used, how the properties would be designated, what activities might trigger review. HPC would need to clear -- the clear purpose and criteria for review. Updating Historic Preservation Month plan. Meridian currently has a Historic Preservation plan that was completed in 2014. The Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, SHPO, recommends updating preservation plans every ten years. We received a 12,000 dollar CGL, certified local government, grant from SHPO to help with this project. We are also providing 5,000 dollars in matching funds and in-kind staff and volunteer hours. The consultant began this project with a kickoff meeting that involved interested historic preservation stakeholders at our regular February HPC meeting. The public -- a public survey will soon be open and the first public outreach meeting will be held on Saturday, April 19th from 11:00 to 1:00 at Hidden Gems Events. Join us for the outreach meeting at City Hall for our first guided walking tour of the season. With that I would like to thank you. Thank the Mayor's office, City Council, city staff for all they do for us and it's our pleasure to be able to serve you, the citizens of Meridian, serving our history. Without the support we receive from the city we would not be able to do the work that we have been tasked to do. With that I will -- I will stand for any questions.

Simison: Thank you, Blaine. Council, any questions or comments?

Taylor: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Taylor.

Taylor: Mr. Chairman, I just want to commend you and all the good work that you do. I read an article today, kind of an update on those silos, which I think kind of highlights a really good working partnership with the Commission and with the Council and -- and our community partners to sort of figure out how do we go about preserving the kind of unique history that we have. I think the Victory Gardens location is a perfect spot for something like that. It's a -- it's a neat little area, it's a nice little business, and I think it's a great way to preserve and tell the story and I just want to commend you for kind of being creative and helpful and patient with the City Council and the Mayor as we all tried to kind of figure our way through that. I think it was about a year ago, if I recall correctly, kind of discussing it.

Johnston: Yep.

Taylor: So, anyway, just really appreciate your work and I think that's a great example of how the commission advises the city on what are some really good decisions and how we should go about doing that. So, I just want to say thank you.

Johnston: Thank you.

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: Yeah. Along the lines of Council Member Taylor, Blaine, you are -- you are far too humble. You helped to drive getting those silos placed when the city kind of exhausted options or thought options had been exhausted, you were quick with an idea and helped bring this all together. So, one, thanks to the commission for flagging this as an issue and, two, thanks for your hard work to get those relocated. I can't thank you enough for your perseverance and creative approach. It just goes back to I think what we say every time when you are before us, the HPC commission is about making history. It seems not just preserving history and I -- I appreciate your leadership and the commission's efforts. Our community should be really proud of our HPC commission.

Johnston: Mr. Cavener, thank you.

Simison: Okay. With that thank you very much for the update and wishing all the best.

Johnston: Thank you so much. Have a good evening.

## **11. Meridian Arts Commission Annual Update to City Council**

Simison: Next up is Meridian Arts Commission annual update and it looks like we have Cassandra and Brecken there.

Bird: Thank you, Mr. Mayor and Council Members. Thank you so much for letting us present to you today. My name is Brecken Bird, I'm the current chair of the Meridian Arts Commission and I will be co-presenting today with Cassandra Schiffler, who is the, of course, arts and culture coordinator for the city. These are our wonderful commissioners. We have a great team and we love doing what we do.

Schiffler: One of the major projects that the Arts Commission works on is through the -- the public art program. The MAPS program. So, through an ordinance that was passed in 2014 called the MAPS ordinance, the Meridian Art in Public Spaces, City Council allocates 50 cents per Meridian resident to complete public art projects for visible, tangible public art on public property. So, additional funding might come from other sources, like this year Valley Regional Transit and the Meridian Development Corporation sponsored some pieces. We will -- I will show that in just a minute. So, it might come from other sources, but primarily comes from that ordinance. So, just this last year the projects that were completed were some bike racks at Discovery Park, a fanfare sculpture also at Discovery Park, collaborative signage project at the trail hub, West Ada School District student art on the traffic boxes, some traffic boxes by professional artists that were themed with Meridian history and the transit shelters. So, here is some images of these. These are bike racks. And these pieces they represent a peregrine -- peregrine falcon and the raptors and so they each have kind of a different color and they are made out of salvage stainless steel propane tanks. So, they are 99 percent post-consumer recycled products. Another art piece is the fanfare piece by Steve Parker and this also utilizes recycled materials. Those are actual reclaimed brass marching band -- marching band instruments and to interact with the piece you are supposed to put your ear up to the bells on the bottom and, then, they amplify the exterior sound so the work serves as a reminder to be present and appreciate the sounds around us. Then in 2023 there was the taller mosaic sculptures that were installed and in 2024 completing sort of the site at the trail hub. We had the artist work with the sign company as a collaborative project. So, the mosaic that's on the public art piece is also on the sign. So, it's kind of a nice through way for the art pieces and, then, there is also -- they might not be super recognizable as bike racks, but those cat tail sort of sculptures are bike racks. They have a little sign at the bottom with a bike to indicate that. So, it's kind of some nice theming through that -- through several projects, sort of the same way that Discovery Park had several projects with theming around learning, exploration and discovery.

Bird: Yeah. Like Cassandra said, we had -- we -- every year we have our West Ada School District art show in the gallery and us as arts commissioners get to jury these wonderful kids' artwork and we pick several to be on traffic boxes. So, we were able to wrap five of those this year and -- yeah. And, then, next we were also able to wrap three boxes by professional artists and we did it a little differently this year. We decided to do -- they get -- they got pairs of boxes, so we could have a little bit more of a cohesive look to these traffic boxes, which I think turned out really beautifully and -- and



like Cassandra said, they were -- there was a theme this year and it was Meridian history, so all these -- all these pieces have something to do with Meridian specifically and the history. One of the artists Kayla, she specifically went to the history center and did a ton of research for her project and she got permission to use this historical photo for one of her boxes that she used as reference for the bigger box, which was really cool. I like that little piece of history that she used. We also were able to work with Claire Remsberg in -- in acquiring her pieces that she created for her traffic box. She has three pieces that she created for these boxes and we are in the final stages I believe of acquiring those and they will actually be hung right outside the windows there, so you will be able to see them all the time. But they are really beautiful and I know Claire personally, she's a great local artist, really influential in the community, so -- yeah.

Schiffler: I was exceptionally happy with how this project turned out, because this was a collaboration with Valley Regional Transit, because they have the transit shelters and, fun fact, there are actually only two transit shelters in the City of Meridian, so we have done public art on both of the transit shelters and the Meridian Development Corporation sponsored these. So, this one the theme was getting around Meridian. So, they are kind of transportation and Meridian themed. One of them -- the structures are kind of some abstracted pieces and silos and there is some railways imagery that's in Meridian and the one on the right, the couple that's in there is actually the -- Eliza and Christian Zenger. I hope I got those names right. The founders of Meridian and you can see the water tower and things in there. So, both artists did a pretty exceptional job on these. Really happy with how this project turned out. And if they build some more transit shelters, then, we could do some more public art on the transit shelters in the future. So, what's next with public art? What else is coming up or in development? We have got the traffic box program planning on doing the West Ada School District once again. Safe passages is an artwork that is planned to go in the median along Linder Road. There is a little bit of a mock up design there on the right. That's a local artist Stephanie Inman and we used a stakeholder committee with ACHD's planning department, parks, arts commissioners and the landscape architect is doing the landscaping in the median to select the project. There were three artists that submitted designs and Stephanie's was the one that was selected. And, then, as you heard just a few minutes ago, Chateau Park is -- it's installed and we are not going to show you pictures, because we would really love you to come out to the dedication event and, again, that one was kind of -- we used a stakeholder committee of parks and rec commissioners, arts commissioners, some neighborhood citizens, the HOA and other city staff to guide that. The artists submitted a few different designs and the one that's installed is the one that was selected. Also we are looking at doing some artwork on the community center. So, Stephanie Inman is going to work with the design team to identify opportunities for integrated public art at the community center. The big project this year, though, is probably the public art master plan. We have never had a public art master plan for the City of Meridian, so we are just barely underway, but there should be a survey coming out soon and some public engagement event -- public engagement activities to get some information from the community about what they would most want to see. And as -- as Dom said earlier, the theme kind of for the Chateau Park was

pollinator and native flowers and so some of those -- the little hummingbird and the butterfly and the bee are actually pieces that are in the sculpture that we pulled out for the graphics. Excited to see those.

Bird: Yeah. So, Initial Point Gallery is near and dear to my heart. We had the most applications we have ever had for the gallery this past year in 2024. So, double the applications we usually get. The word has really gotten out about the gallery and it's -- it's one of only two art galleries in Meridian and it's one of the best places to show work in the valley. So, it's a really great opportunity for artists locally and really instrumental in our art community. So, we -- yeah, we -- and we currently have -- we currently have landlines on -- on view for another week. Stephanie Inman, who she was just referring to as the designer for that Linder overpass project, actually has work up in the gallery right now. So, she's a very influential local artist. And our call to artists is currently out and the deadline is May 30th and those applications will be for the year of 2026 and we -- yeah, we anticipate a lot of applications this year as well. We usually are able to give a lot of the artists that apply a chance, but last year -- we, you know, sent a lot of rejections, which was sad, but also really cool, so --

Schiffler: Good problem to have.

Bird: Good problem to have.

Schiffler: Arts Commission supported three different youth performing arts projects for Treasure Valley Children's Theater. Their Imagine A Dragon performance, the Idaho Fine Arts Academies, Sabrodoria Connecterra performance and the high school band boosters. Concerts On Broadway. Popular series as always. We had Afrosonics, Steve Fulton's Ultra Muse and Summer Group Party Band. This year we have Soul Patch and Rock A Betty, which is a little bit of a newer band that does '50s and '60s covers of female -- female hits and Summer Groove Party Band has kind of been here every year, but their scheduling didn't work out, so, then, we have Billy Blues band for the last one and just a heads up, those were kind of all sort of around September. So, we are spacing these out a little bit this year, so they will be happening in July, August and September, one each month.

Bird: We -- so, the Tammy de Weerd Award is something that happens biennially. So, last year we had ours and these were our winners. It is a legacy award named for the former Mayor Tammy de Weerd, who was just a huge supporter in the arts and sort of really instrumental in forming the Arts Commission. So, that's a really cool -- it's a really cool award. There are four categories. Student excellence in the arts. Supporter of the arts. Excellence in the arts. And arts in education. So, that -- that happens, yeah, like I said biennially. So, we will have the next awards in 2026.

Schiffler: Meridian Art Week is another great program. We have the art drop, which happens all week. There -- and this year -- or this last year it also -- we had this coincide with National Arts in Education Week and sort of tried to -- instead of doing all the arts for everyone, focus it just a little bit on education and education focus things.

So, there were several classes and artist talk at the gallery and, then, the community art party event I -- this has been a little bit of an evolving event and I think this was definitely the most successful year. Worked a lot with Renee, our special events coordinator, and we had a lot of components come together. It was at Kleiner Park. There were some art installations. You can see the -- this is called Yarn Bombing. It's the -- they Yarn Bombed the Kleiner statue. We got permission from the Kleiner family. But they are just -- they are crocheted and they are kind of temporary. She also wrapped several of the trees. So, that was a fun installation. There were several hands-on booths. There is letterpress printing and people could take away posters. We had lots of community organizations, like story -- story night and things throughout the valley. So, it was really an opportunity for the community to come and learn about various arts organizations throughout the valley that they might not know about that have opportunities for them to get involved. There were also performances throughout and you want to talk about the chalk art competition?

Bird: Yeah. And every year we have a chalk art competition and that's always really successful. And especially -- I think especially like the kids and families really enjoy that. So, we have three categories. We have a youth, obviously, and a group. So, kids will come together and with their friends or families will come and do a chalk mural together and, then, we have a professional category. So, we have -- and this is judged by the arts commissioners. So, that's always a fun -- a fun thing. And we -- yeah, it felt really -- it felt really fun to give those awards on that big band shell at the park, so --

Schiffler: Oh. And the -- and the Boise -- Boise Co-op in Meridian at The Village actually sponsored the award. So, the cash prizes happened for all of the chalk artist.

Bird: Right. Yeah. That was good. That was fun to be able to give them a cash prize, too.

Schiffler: We also had a temporary mural paintings and installations. So, he -- there on the left. That's actually Jay. He was not a commissioner at the time, but he is now a new arts commissioner. And these are kind of temporary panels that were put up in the park by different mural artists that were happening on site.

Bird: Yeah. And it was -- I actually got to help one finish her mural, which was fun. But, yeah, we had -- we had three muralists and, then, on the -- on the other side of the cube there was a -- sort of color -- color in design made by the last -- last year's seasonal assistant Paxton designed it and it sort of ended up looking kind of like a Jackson Pollock at the end, but -- but it was really a fun activity and all the kids really loved it. It was very unrecognizable at the end. But, yeah, that was a really -- that was a really fun project and we are happy to have Jay on as a commissioner. We are also in negotiations to purchase one of these murals and have it permanently --

Schiffler: The -- the mural with the bright colorful ones in the mountains for installation at Home Court in the -- in basics and sort of the lobby area, so -- but just overall that

event, it's been kind of evolving and I felt like we really hit the right formula. So, this year we really just want to try to replicate it and keep that momentum.

Bird: That was especially good for the kids, I think, and the families to have it at the park and in the day. That was really nice, so --

Schiffler: Yeah.

Bird: These are -- but these are our adopted goals for 2025 as a commission and I won't read through these individually and bore you with them, but, please, look these over. We are really excited for the upcoming year and we are excited to work on and towards these goals. Thank you guys so much for listening to us and having us. Appreciate it.

Simison: Thank you, Brecken and Cassandra. Council, any questions or comments?

Taylor: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Taylor.

Taylor: Cassandra, thank you. Great to see you again, Brecken. Thank you for being here. Just one comment and a question. First as a comment. I think the traffic box are -- is one of my favorite things that you do. I think that's really fun. I had a guest from out of town who came and they just noticed it at every intersection as we were driving around and I think that's a really unique way to kind of make it kind of fun and interesting. On the -- the temporary murals, can you just -- that's -- I had -- that was kind of the first time I had seen that. Would you just take a minute and tell me how long those temporary -- temporary murals are up, where do you put them, do you plan to maybe have them at different locations in the city, like where -- I'm just kind of really interested if you could take a couple minutes, maybe, and tell me a little bit more about that.

Schiffler: Great question. Thank you, Councilman Taylor. So, the temporary -- they are up for the event four hours. So, we did find that location for one at Home Court. Tried to look into different solutions, because they are just on like plywood panels and so exterior we -- if you have any places that are interior locations with big walls, but we just couldn't find permanent homes for those. So, talk to the artists that -- on the other ones and they are fine turning those panels around and we can reuse the panels for next year, but -- so, there -- it was a little bit more of like the performance part of the -- of the mural painting.

Simison: Additional questions, comments? All right. Thank you very much. You guys stay busy. We know that. And so we look forward to seeing what you can top this with next year.

Schiffler: Thank you.

Bird: Thank you so much.

Simison: Council, we have reached the end of our agenda. Are there any comments or a motion to adjourn?

Little Roberts: Mr. Mayor?

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: Thanks, Mr. Mayor. Team, before we wrap up, I know there is still some folks that are in the audience and I know Dave sent us an e-mail just announcing the passage of Lila Hill and I just want to take a quick moment and just thank Dave for sending that to us. I know Lila was a very unique individual with strong opinions on just about everything and when Blaine was giving his presentation I wish that I could have had Lila with me to hear her opinions, the good and the bad. I'm sure that she would have offered about what HPC is doing and I just wanted to take a moment and recognize her impact in our community. While never elected was certainly a leader and a driver of many leaders in our community and I just -- I want to take a moment. Thanks, Dave, for sharing that sad news and just to take a moment to recognize her impact. So, thank you, Mr. Mayor. And with that I would move that we adjourn the workshop.

Simison: Motion to adjourn. Do I have a second?

Little Roberts: Second.

Simison: Motion and a second. All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay? The ayes have it. We are adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED: FIVE AYES. ONE ABSENT.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:36 P.M.

(AUDIO RECORDING ON FILE OF THESE PROCEEDINGS)

_____ MAYOR ROBERT SIMISON	_____ /        / DATE APPROVED
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ATTEST:

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CHRIS JOHNSON - CITY CLERK