

## **Minutes Neighborhood Council 3 (NC3)**

**February 6<sup>th</sup> 2026, 6:30 p.m.**

### **Riverview Elementary School - Music Room**

**CALL TO ORDER:** at 6:30 p.m. by Kathleen Gessaman.

Pledge of Allegiance and quorum established.

Council members present: Kathleen Gessaman, Emily Bertsch, Brad Riehl, Garri Mauch, Eric Peterson

### **OLD BUSINESS**

• **Minutes from the December 6, 2025, meeting:** Garri Mauch made the motion to accept the minutes of the December 6, 2025, NC3 meeting. Brad Riehl seconded the motion. The motion to accept the minutes was accepted unanimously by the council. Donny Gehart had a request for clarification on the minutes Eric Peterson read the minutes from the last meeting. Due to the issues with clarification the council members agreed to delay the approval of the minutes after a repost of the recorded meeting in December was made available to those who wanted clarification. The motion to approve December 4<sup>th</sup> minutes was denied.

It was mentioned that the planning board will be meeting Tuesday March 10<sup>th</sup>.

- **Calumet Updates:** Calumet will have a maintenance turnaround in March.
- **Vision and Goal Setting:** Vision and goal setting will be held for a future meeting.
- **Committee Reports:** There were no new reports from the committee.
- **NC3 Facebook Page Update:** Eric Peterson provided the NC3 Facebook page update for the month of January. He said the page has a total of 1024 followers. He said there were 16 posts made since the last meeting, and during the last 28 days the page had 3680 post views.
- **NC3 Crimemapping Report:** Crime mapping is back up from GFPD as of the date of the meeting.
- **Nominations were made for the new NCS council members.** Kathleen Gessaman nominated Eric Peterson as Chair and Garri Mauch seconded. Garri Mauch nominated Kathleen Gessaman as Vice Chair and Brad Riehl seconded. Garri Mauch nominated Emily Bertsch as Secretary, and all were approved. Kathleen Gessaman nominated Garri Mauch as Official Delegate and Brad seconded. Eric Peterson is Chair, Kathleen Gessamen is Vice Chair, Emily Bertsch is Secretary, and Garri Mauch is Official Delegate.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

• **Planning and Community Development Office Andrew Finch:** Andrew from the COGF handed out interactive maps with a link for those who want to review and comment. This helps the city make decisions for future annexations. There is a proposed growth map of where the Planning Department would like to see the city grow. There is a copy of this document in the City Planning Office, they have a computer there if you prefer to come in and make comments. The meeting has not been scheduled for the Good Medicine project. If you prefer to reach out to the city, please email Andrew at [afinch@greatfalls.mt.net](mailto:afinch@greatfalls.mt.net).

• **Little Shell Good Medicine Housing/Casino:** This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time this housing project has come up for discussion at NC3, Chair Eric Peterson reiterated that NC3 is an advisory board only, and decisions are up to the city. City Commissioner Shannon Wilson came up and shared that this annexation is a new process for the city. She said the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) sent notice to the city to do an environmental study of the area. Federal approvals requested by the tribe give land of the Little Shell tribe to a federal trust status. The tribe proposed casino plans, and this part of the project is up for public comments from Jan 19<sup>th</sup> to February 19<sup>th</sup> on the BIA website. Comments are to be sent to email on the BIA site. They request that all comments be very detailed. The Department of Interior (DOI) has contacted the mayor. Stating that the BIA environmental assessment is at the 136-acre fee-to-trust transfer for a Casino/Waterpark. They asked the mayor if the COGF would provide it if they want to cooperate with the DOI. This is not an official approval request from the BIA but asking the city to be a part of this process. Commissioner Shannon Wilson said she will let the council know if comments on the BIA project will be extended past February 19<sup>th</sup>. This project is independent from Good Medicine Housing and is located at parcel #2591, #2400-700 and #2400-750, which is right above Valley View. Andrew Finch with the city said they just received the proposal and at this time the city has a check list that needs to be reviewed before any project moves forward. There was concern about a past project for HUD house years ago that was stopped because that same area had an environmental assessment and there was found to have contamination in the soil. There was a question asking who is doing the environmental study. Commissioner Wilson requested that everyone submit comments to the planning board and mention the previous environmental study. There was a question regarding license amounts and if there was even room for another casino in this jurisdiction. Another question was asked about the tribe having borrowed the money from a Florida tribe and if the money from the casino would even filter back into the community. It was suggested that they contact the Cascade County Commissioners.

### **Comments:**

Karl Dorr from Valley View, talked about the first house built and that the city

gave the street the option of sidewalks or streetlights. So, some streets have no sidewalks, and some have no streetlights. How will this area safely take on traffic from a casino and neighborhood without sidewalks or proper lighting? It was suggested that they put the entrance off the NW bypass. It was also mentioned that Little Shell does not always need permits for revisions. A case in Poulson was brought up where a tribe agreed to pay taxes after city provisions, and they stopped after two years on the terms that they are sovereign. Also, there is concern about the Valley View school taking on more students.

John Hayes representing the tavern and gaming commission said in 1947 they stopped issuing licenses and started a quota system, others were grandfathered in but since then our area is still 41 establishments over quota. John raises concerns that a 900- machine casino will cost other local businesses in Great Falls that pay local taxes.

Donny Gerhart mentioned that right before the last meeting he and his wife issued flyers all over Valley View to get people to come to the council meeting. He encouraged residents to get on Cadastral and look at what the tribe owns and where the proposed Casino and housing will be located. He proposed organizing a Valley View group to have discussions outside of NC3 because they want to stay informed and not be caught by surprise with this project progression.

Kurt Stull mentioned that there are no streets that aren't connected through residential areas, that streets are already crowded, especially in the summer with campers. This infrastructure doesn't guarantee that amount of traffic. He also raised concerns about the utilities; there are issues on Valley View Drive and with this addition things could go backwards. There are lots of concerns with infrastructure that need to be addressed.

Commissioner Shannon Wilson offered to get information about these concerns. Tim Kuluza questioned if the COGF can just say "no" to this project.

Leanne Anderson stated traffic by 6<sup>th</sup> street NW during the last Little Shell Pow Wow was really congested, that there needs to be better options to get to the proposed casino.

Richard asked about the water system for the casino, will they use a well? Can they do that without a permit?

NC3 Brad Riehl asked for a show of hands for who is against the project and there was a majority against the project.

Michael Santiago states the 1<sup>st</sup> phase could account for up to 200 more cars per day and that the roads in Valley View aren't wide enough.

Karl Dorr mentioned that the tribe is sovereign even if annexed to the city, so who trumps the housing issues, the city or the tribe? He goes on to say the casino is federal, so who controls that area? It seems like there would be two sets of rules.

Angie Santiago mentioned concerns that employees of the casino will not have to pay income taxes.

Jason mentioned that all proposed studies and any analysis from them would be a part of the agenda report for the planning board. That is why they have had a delay in setting the time to meet because they are waiting for all the facts.

NC3 Garri Mauch stated that they came to NC3 multiple times, that they are going to be a part of the city and it is their land. All of these are “what if’s” and it would be similar to Poulson, MT native only residential areas. She also mentioned that the Arc Apartments, which has 216 units at full capacity, was able to absorb students without redistricting.

NC3 Emily Bertsch mentioned that initially she was all for this project but is concerned about permitting issues.

NC3 Garri Mauch asked if the city could enter into a contract development agreement that was conditioned to agree to use proper permitting.

Chair Eric Peterson suggested getting back to the agenda and moved on to other business.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Petitions and Communications**

- **Neighborhood Concerns:** Donny Gerhart suggested a project to get stands that dispense bags to pick up pet waste. NC3 Emily Bertsch mentioned the congestion of traffic near North Middle School during pick up and drop off and it was suggested that they invite the superintendent. Chair Eric Peterson stated if anyone has issues please reach out on FB.

**AGENDA SUGGESTION ITEMS:** NC3 Garri Mauch thanked everyone who brought the issues to the councils’ attention and suggested there be standardization in meetings and proposed more structure and getting clarity on rules for conduct. John with Neighborhood Watch mentioned getting in touch if anyone wanted to volunteer and giving out NHW stickers.

## **ADJOURN**

Garria Mauch made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Emily Bertsch seconded the

motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned by Eric Peterson at 8:15 p.m.

The next regular NC3 meeting will be held on Thursday, March 5, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Emily Bertsch, secretary.