1. CALL TO ORDER
Commissioners Present: Commissioner (Chair) Michele Landquist, Commissioner Bill Carey, Commissioner Jean Curtiss

Staff Present: Greg Robertson, Public Works

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS
Chair Landquist announced that the Fair Premium Books are out, please check dates for entries if you plan to enter.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT
None

5. ROUTINE ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS
Weekly Claims List ($3,210,342.68)

Executive Session
Commissioner Curtiss made motion that the Board of County Commissioners approve the Weekly Claims List in the amount of $3,210,342.68. Commissioner Carey second the motion. The motion carried a vote of 3-0.

6. PROCLAMATION: UM Retirees’ Day
Commissioner Carey read Proclamation

7. HEARINGS
a. RSID 8489: Proposed Levy of Special Assessments (Project substantially complete, including all incidental costs)

Greg Robertson read staff report. The purpose of this hearing is to consider any further final public testimony and consider the resolution as presented.

Public Comment

Senator Dale Mahlum: We are a participant of the sewer that Mr. Robertson is talking about and I would like to compliment Mr. Robertson for what he has done for getting the sewer out there, at a very competitive price, it’s good for the people that live out in that area. Greg, you should put your hands up and say ‘touch down’ I got a good thing going. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Curtiss: One of the reasons we were able to come in…well, we got a good bid from a bad contractor who went bankrupt. But the ARI that money did make a big difference in bringing the cost down on this. You all paid into this. Thank you.

Commissioner Carey: I’d like to concur with Senator Mahlum not only for the work that Greg’s done on this particular project but for the way he’s grown his department over the years and the service he’s provided Missoula County, we’re very appreciative. Greg, thank you.

Executive Session

Commissioner Curtiss made motion that the Board of County Commissioners sign the resolution relating to the Rural Special Improvement District #8489 with the final assessments. Commissioner Carey second the motion. The motion carried a vote of 3-0.

b. Recommendation from Missoula County Fairgrounds Advisory Committee to Adopt 2014 Update to Western Montana Fair Enhancement & Development Plan

Steve Earle gave staff report. I’m presenting this on behalf of the Fairgrounds Advisory Committee; there are several members here today. They have spent the last three meetings discussing this in detail. There has been at least two and I’m thinking three different opportunities for public comment regarding two different drafts and then a final draft of this memorandum which will update the enhancement and development plan, which is a five year plan for the fairgrounds in terms of enhancement, development and planning. The way this plan works, it’s a revolving five year plan. The current plan starts with 2013 and goes out for five years but 2013 will be gone on July 1st and in order for us to get our enhancement request into the County and their budgeting process, we need to have this plan updated preferably by June 1st. The committee was very efficient this year and got it done at their last meeting.

Public Comment

Kimberly Dudik: Representative of the County of Missoula and the State Legislature and I’m here asking that the Commissioners do not take the recommendation to destroy the race track. I appreciate all the work that’s gone into it by Mr. Earle, as well as the Advisory Committee. I believe that there’s a substantial public outcry against destroying the Fairgrounds horse track and that this community, while it’s had its
extensive public input, I don’t think all that input has been fully incorporated in the
development plans for the Fairgrounds. I don’t see this as an either/or situation; that
you have to have either a multi-purpose facility or a race track. I think both can
happen on the large slough of land we have and I would encourage this community to
please consider that. For some history; horse racing started in Missoula County in
1876, that’s actually before the City of Missoula was incorporated as a City. Missoula
City didn’t come into existence until 1885. In 1914, that’s when the current race track
was established, it was the first structure built on the Missoula County Fairgrounds.
It’s the oldest one there and everything that came up afterwards was surrounding that
race track because it is the lynchpin of the Missoula County Fairgrounds. If this
committee chooses to no longer incorporate that, it will be destroying a substantial
history of Missoula County what makes our county so unique and individual. There
are not many historic race tracks left. This race track will be 100 years old next year
but instead of having a 100 year anniversary we’re considering demolishing it and
doing away with it. That would not allow us as residents here to enjoy the fairgrounds
and the race track as they currently exists but also takes that away from future
generations. Instead of demolishing the race track I would ask that we figure out how
we can use that as a boom to our economy and use it as a way to attract tourists here
and to attract other events. Currently it’s already used for numerous events like the
monster truck races there are rodeos that are held there, concerts held there, as well
as other meetings. And there’s no reason that we cannot follow suit as what’s happen
in other states, where we use that as a cultural and significant land mark and use that
as a way to have people come to our City and appreciate what we have to offer here.
There are not many of these race tracks left in our State and I don’t see that it serves
the people of our City well to do away with it and just have another dime-a-dozen
event center put up there. There are already event centers throughout Missoula as
well as throughout the State that can house these large events. Although it’s
commendable that we want to do that, we need to be able to balance that with people
who still do not want to give away our history. I have two small children, they are two
and four and I used to go to the race tracks when I grew up, I was in 4-H and I had
sheep and pigs and bunnies and just about every animal. And I went to the horse
track, I was old enough to be there of course, but when I was little I went there and it
was because of the history of what we have. I sit on the same track that existed in the
pictures in 1930 that we have in the application for recognition on the National
Register of Historic Places, I stand on those steps and I’ve gone there with my
children. We should keep that in our town, it’s existed since 1914. On the actual
application for recognition on the National Register of Historic Places it states that as
the first improvement to be built at the grounds the race track is a very important
contributing structure, it’s position influents all future development...all development.
The Fairgrounds are recognized in the National Register of Historic Places and to do
away with the lynchpin of that recognition and the development of it truly does a
disservice to that historic nature of that land. I would ask that although it has been to
recommendation and there’s been a lot of work that’s gone into the planning that
would do away with that, I ask you to please consider other options. It’s not an
either/or situation and we can make all residents of Missoula County happy with the
development of that land, if we can figure out how to do it equally. I ask you for that.
Please don’t destroy this, once history is gone it’s never replaced, it never comes
back. Please consider something else. Thank you.
Senator Cliff Larsen, District 50: I want to thank you for your attention to planning efforts for Missoula County Fairgrounds. As a rural resident and someone who really appreciates agriculture, I know that one of your Mission Statements to the Advisory Committee was; don’t forget this is about agriculture ~ not about hockey, it’s not about soccer, first it’s about agriculture. I appreciate the fact that you’re really trying to embellish some of those elements as we go forward with our County Fair. I will leave some formal comments for you but I want to read one paragraph into the record. This really I believe clarifies how I view the use of the Fairgrounds and the race track and certainly all the activities on the fairgrounds that we currently have, seem very compatible to me. It’s just as I, as a country boy, really resist the idea of turning this facility into something that’s really more of a broad scale enterprise then really remaining focused on agriculture. I serve the Montana Legislature in District 50, as you all three know, in fact one of you is my constituent and I have a lot of relationships with the three of you over time. I’ve tried to be a good citizen and support my County and I think I’ve done a good job at that. By all means I listen to you every time I get a message, I listen to Mr. Bickell virtual every day of the session, I saw his name, and I still like him in spite of sort of a flowing neon name there every single day! We had 962 bills passed and I think about 700 of them had something to do with the County. I do appreciate your attention to serving the people in the County and it’s very important. I understand that your Advisory Committee must consider all options for our Fairgrounds property. I participated in a number of efforts over the years looking for potential and logical uses of our Fairgrounds and the property. I’m a strong advocate of planning of this nature; I would have not succeeded in business if I didn’t plan ahead logically. Until a final plan is embraced with funding and extensive community by-in I have a suggestion and this is something that I’ve spoken to you about in the past; let horse racing organizations race horses and increase county revenues through increased income from sharing with the annual fair concessionaires, including the beer garden. History has shown increased profit sharing with the concessionaires, with horse racing; less profit sharing income without horse racing. In closing let me say; if we have a race track and long range plans dictate removing of the track for a good and logical and well-funded enterprise, then why not allow racing until you’re ready to build something new and better. And of course, remembering horse racing is agriculture. Thank you for your time.

Dale Mahlum: Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today. I would like to give you just a little history of what’s happen and then some of my thoughts. One of the things I have here it says Montana’s Horse Racing runs deep, this goes back to 1964 when they ran horses and races down the streets of Virginia City. They also had a place called race track, which is on the way to Butte and that was used to primarily run Indian races against the white people’s horses, at that time. So we know, like Representative Larsen said, it’s been here a long time. One other thing that happened years ago and a guy by the name of Marcus Daily, I think we all remember who Marcus Daily is. When he got sick he had to sell his horses, he had a personal sale of his horses. The majority of these horses were thorough breeds, they were sent to New York aboard special cars and each car had a person taking care of each of the horses in there. Each of these horses sold for about a Million dollars, it was the largest disbursal sale in 1900’s in the World. Let me talk for a moment, if you would please about our current, what I call dilemma of getting rid of the race track which we have now. First of all, I’m in favor of those sort of things that we have at the Fairgrounds, I think the hockey is wonderful; it brings in funds for the Fairgrounds, not
only that it’s good for the young people of our community. I have a problem with the Events Center if the Events Center wants to go out in the middle of the race track, which some propose to do. The reason I have a problem with this is because I serve with Kevin LaTrell and six other people on the Event Center and we were looking for a place to put it. To me I think the Events Center is a wonderful idea, I just think Missoula should have an events center but I think it should be a place where you can get to it easily. The people in Missoula know how to get to the Fairgrounds but a lot of these people who come to an events center will come from Washington, Idaho, different places, they will be driving in. John, Brady and I, we looked real hard and we found a place right on the freeway, which is on some of your county land, I think it would be a great place for it because you can see it real easy. Its right by the airport turnoff Blvd and you go right down there, there’s all kinds of Hotels, there’s a lot of eating establishments there, it’s easy to get to. Getting to the Fairgrounds is like going through a maze if you haven’t been through there before, it’s difficult from the freeway to find your way in there. I’m not against it, I think it’s a great thing to have, the thing about it to me now if you lose the race track, you’re losing part of your identity of who you are in our community. The race track brings in a lot of people during a certain time of the fair. But if you’re going to lose the race track then what are we going to lose next? Are we going to lose the rodeo? What’s gonna happen to us? We’re an agriculture community, although I must admit that a lot of our agricultural land went into homes but we still have a lot of agricultural land out there. We’ve got to remember we are agriculture. We’ve got these young kids, the 4-H’s, they can enjoy the projects they’re into and we want to make sure they have an opportunity to go to a fair where they can show off their goods, show off what they got, be proud of what they have. I think it’s very, very humilitating to them if we do something to discourage their grounds for them as far as they’re concerned. I think you three people up here really want to make sure that our heritage continues on. I’m just really want to impress upon you my thoughts about heritage because as I grow older, and I’m getting older, I want to make sure that my kids and my grandkids have an opportunity to come to the fair and see what it has been. As far as losing a race track and I told you once before we have some problems out there with the barns. I don’t think that’s a problem because what we can do with the barns is you can go to the Southside Lions or somebody and say okay you’re going to get barn A, you’re going to get barn B; they’re going to go out and they’re gonna redo the barns for you, they’re going to clean them up and put a big sign on it saying ‘sponsored by the Southside Lions’. It doesn’t cost us anything to do and it’s a project for them. I’d ask you to please make a decision that’s good for the future of our community. Thank you.

Chuck Leonard: I’m a citizen of the County. Questions ~ #1; Steve, you said that an economic impact study was done regarding horse racing and the fairgrounds. You know this is a complicated issue and there’s a lot of controversy about this so I think it would be important to make. Whatever the committee used as the figures to make the economic impact should be a matter of public record.

Commissioner Curtiss: It is.

Steve Earle: The statement I made was that we looked at economic pros and cons relative to horse racing; I did not say that an economic impact statement was done.
Chuck Leonard: Okay I stand corrected then. Whatever figures were used to make that statement then, I think should be a matter of public record. Jean, you and I have had discussions about this and couldn’t come to agreement, so it’s a complicated area.

Commissioner Curtiss: They are all part of public record.

Chuck Leonard: I tried to look for the January 28th meeting, I couldn’t find it so it would be nice if that’s was easier to find. My 2nd question is to ask the Commissioners if there’s a written conflict of interest policy with regard to membership and voting on the Fair Board Advisory Committee.

Chair Landquist: Yes. Are you thinking because I sit on that committee?

Chuck Leonard: No, it's not you or any other member in particular. I read it was a 10-4 vote and if this indeed does come, I’ve heard a number of people speak to this that if it’s a choice between the race track and an event/ice hockey arena, then there are people who potentially have the perception of having a conflict of interest. If that’s the case, this should be revisited.

Commissioner Curtiss: They’re not the ones making the decision, these three people right here are and we don’t have a conflict.

Chuck Leonard: But you’re going to take the vote of the advisory committee under advisement, correct?

Commissioner Curtiss: We’ll take that under advisement, that’s what we asked them to do.

Chuck Leonard: So again, I just question how you take the committees advice? That I guess is up to you, but I guess I would raise the issue that if any members of that committee potentially have a conflict of interest that it would be nice to have a matter of public record or somehow inform us about that if we’re going to have a decision about that.

Commissioner Curtiss: All of our Boards are asked to disclose if they have a conflict of interest.

Harvey Hergett: President of the Board of Directors for the Missoula Area Youth Hockey Association. Would like to say I appreciate the work that the Advisory Committee has put into this. We’ve given several presentations about what we would like around the concept of ice sports to this Advisory Committee and I applaud the discussion that they’re making right now. I’d like to go on record saying that we support the decision to not have the race track in the future. And support the decision for a multi-use events center. Now with that being said I’d like to say I grew up on a ranch here in Montana, my family ranched farm. I’m an agricultural person; I was an FFA member as a kid so I definitely have an agricultural background. I support the whole concept having agriculture as a main focus for the Fairgrounds but I also feel
that this idea of a multi-use event center is a good concept for the City of Missoula. The reason behind that is we struggle in this community to have a venue where we can have larger concerts, something besides the Adams Center, which isn't always available to us. We struggle to get High School State Tournaments in this community. We rarely get Basketball, Volleyball, and Wrestling Tournaments. In the past when the Adams Center at the University has put in bids for those they've had to cancel because of some of their playoff games and we don't have that opportunity a lot in this community. I've heard a lot that horseracing brings a lot of economy into the community, I think it's a fairly short lived economic boost and that the idea of a multi-use event center ~ that could house some of these things and would be a year around boost to the economy of Missoula. The ice rink has offered to be a primary tenant in that. Part of what we have asked is that if we are going to move to a multi-use events center on the Fairgrounds, we would consider placing a sheet of ice inside of that event center so that folks like the Missoula Maulers or the hockey team here in town have a better venue to play in. It would also provide us a venue for youth organizations to have State tournaments and stuff in a nicer venue. We think that helps make an events center concept economically viable by having a major tenant involved there and that would be the ice rink. In closing, I just want to say that as a Board of Directors for the Youth Hockey Association we actively support the concept of having an events center on the Fairgrounds. Thank you.

**Marsha Holland:** I sit on several Boards and Committees that are interested in supporting the events center concept of Missoula. I think for some of the same reasons Mr. Hergett just said, so I won’t repeat those. But my only comment is on the process. I've been trying to come to any of the Missoula Fairgrounds Advisory Committee Meetings when the agenda is any discussion of the plans of what we're considering today. I may have misunderstood Mr. Earle, but I thought he said that it was approved at the last meeting, which was Monday, but when I checked in the paper the....

**Chair Landquist:** That was a month ago I think.

**Marsha Holland:** I just wanted to make sure that I didn’t miss an opportunity last Monday to come and indicate that there are other non-profits in town that would support that same concept.

**Cindy Johnson:** I live in the Orchard Homes area. I have a letter from Jessica Grant that lives out of (inaudible). I am a Member of the Turf Club and have worked at the Fairgrounds doing the pari-mutuel ticket sales and stuff for quite a few years and I've been to the races in Kalispell and Great Falls and there's just something about Missoula, there's so much more excitement in the air. There are people that come to my window that were from out of State that planned their vacation every year to come here for the Fair to go to the horse races. The last year that we had had it for the five days they said they wouldn’t come back, they wouldn’t plan their vacations for Montana. They talk about the economic impact but these people that have the horses around Montana and around Missoula area, they make an impact on the economy every month because they buy hay, they buy everything around Missoula, going to the feed stores, vending the fair. They're here going to the Motels and everything else. It isn't just for the Fair. They used to have training all summer at the track, that brought
in all of that because we had people that were trainers and all those people that came and worked there too, brought all that economy into the Missoula area for the whole summer, so this wasn’t just an impact that was just during that week. I am in support of keeping the race track and I don’t think that it should be an either/or situation. Thank you.

Torin Dixon: I came here for another agenda item but enjoy the conversation. I’d like to comment that I moved here 19 years ago with my family from a big city and one the things that we greatly enjoyed right away was going to the rodeo, to the horse racing events and one of the reasons why we continue to live here is because of the rural environment here. I think it’s very important that the County provide facilities for youth sports, youth events and it’s very obvious we need a multi-purpose events center for other events; basketball tournaments and other types of things. But I also agree there could be another location for that, another venue for that and maintain the charm and rural atmosphere at the Fairgrounds; continuing to have the rodeo, continuing to horse racing events and not lose the heritage that makes us part of Missoula and Montana. Thank you.

Jason Sheer: I am a member of the Fairgrounds Advisory Committee. I’m also the son and a grandson of a Montanan and I really appreciate the comments of my friends and neighbors who value horse racing, it’s a beautiful sport. I don’t think it’s an issue of horse racing vs. events center, nor is it an issue of an events center or horse racing vs. hockey. It is an issue about community impact and community benefit. We have spent more than a year trying to hear from our community; what use would you put this Fairgrounds to? And we heard from no group more than we heard from those who are interested in horse racing, often small groups of people who gave very passion, emotional respond to the idea of losing horse racing. We challenged them on a number of fronts, one around viability. Where is horse racing? Are we taking something away or are we recognizing that something doesn’t exist? And are we asking ourselves do the taxpayers in this county deserve to have such a large piece of property put to a use that will either serve them in generating revenue or serve them improving the quality of life in Missoula in such a way it would be worth the sacrifice? This is an issue about funding that is needed for our Fairgrounds to help ground fleshling seed, there’s excitement, there’s conversation, in some places there’s a small amount of (auditable) There is a little bit of flagging at some concrete pylons and some pavements and it looks like something light happen. It’s starting to happen, it’s hopefully and people have been talking about it. We need resources to make that a reality and we need to accept that…correct me if my facts are wrong…horse racing, a beautiful sport I’d love to take my kids to that I enjoyed as a kid has been active for public consumption approximately 7 days in the last 10 years. That is not a community benefit that is appropriate to a 25 acre partial of land that is beautiful and central to our city. We just simply need to ask ourselves what use might be put that land to that does more for Missoulians?

Executive Session
Commissioner Curtiss: I just want to comment that Commissioner Carey and I toured the Fairgrounds; Michele has represented us on the Advisory Committee so she’s been out there a lot more and she was out of the office last week. I’d like to thank the Advisory Committee and especially Mr. Earle for all the improvements that
we see on the grounds. I agree with Mr. Sheer that there are some seeds that have been planted there and there’s been some great progress; the new gates the colorful booths, the old cars that no longer work are gone. The parking along and the trees that have been planted by the hockey rink are great. When we hired Mr. Earle this job, his direction from this Board was to work with an Advisory group and figure out how to make these 46 acres that belong to the public, in the center of our community sustainable. We aren’t sure why he took the job because it was a big one but we appreciate that he did. I think that any decision that we make today does not kill horse racing; horse racing has unfortunately died a slow death as Mr. Sheer just said. In the last 10 years we raced 7 days. It is not because the Commissioner did not say we couldn’t race, it’s because nobody wanted to take the risk other than one gentleman, one vendor that raced for a few days and lost money, as the County had. We had decided when we quit running the racing, when the county quit running the racing, that it wasn’t the best way to spend tax payer dollars to lose money on horse racing; if it was a viable thing there would be tracks all over the place. This is not unique to Missoula County, the viable of horse racing across the Country is in question, in small places if you don’t have some sort of gambling facility next to it, it really struggles. It’s not our fault and we can’t fix it. You can’t enjoy horse racing if it can’t pay for itself. Even though the track now gets used for other things, it’s not designed to be used for those other things. As Mr. Earle pointed out to us as we were walking through the area that gets used for the rodeo, it’s not a rodeo arena; it just gets fenced off and used as a rodeo arena. The existing facilities on those historic race tracks, that whole historic race track needs a ton of improvements and a ton of money for something that might happen a few days out of the year. We are the ones that spend your money, deciding where it should be spent. For one thing State Law doesn’t allow us to invest in racing facilities so it would have to be figured out in other ways. I grew up on a farm and I had a horse and it was the fastest horse in the valley so I know about horse racing because I could have beaten you. My dad never said that was part of Ag of our…it was just called hay burners. The new facilities that are envisioned on this site will support Ag in a much better way, I think. Right now when it comes time for the kids to show their 4-H and FFA animals, we’re putting them in facilities and tents and things that were not really designed for that. We can do better. I understand the emotion and the passion and the history. We have 46 acres as we said in the middle of town and over 20 of it are tied up in that track, as you walk those grounds you realize how much is there and how it could be used to still honor agriculture and still honor our history but get used in 365 days a year, which is what we challenge them to do. Central Park Partnership that Steve worked on with the other public facilities in the neighborhood of the Fairgrounds, I think is great; figure out how we all work together. Things like taking down barbwire on the top of the fence and saying ‘come on in’, instead of stay the heck out. When we were there the other day, I don’t know how many people walked through the Fairgrounds from one side to the other, at least three groups went through -that’s what should be happening on these Fairgrounds. I think that the Advisory Committee has made a well thought out recommendation. I appreciate all the time and energy and listening that they have done to the public’s comments.

**Commissioner Carey:** I agree with Commissioner Curtiss. I just say the choice in my mind is not between…and I think the Advisory Committees mind, is not a choice between a race track or an events center. That’s not really what we’re dealing with; I think we’re dealing with a once viable industry of horse racing that’s no long viable. I
think we just have to accept that and move on. Senator Mahlum raised a legitimate point of view that perhaps the events center would be better built along I-90 and I think we have to take a look at that. I don’t have the benefit of an Ag background but I love to watch horses run and so on and I wish there was a way for us to still be involved with it but to me it just wouldn’t be financially responsible to prolong this. So I support the Advisory Committees recommendations.

Commissioner Landquist: People may have already seen that Mr. Earle designed a new logo for us. The Fairgrounds has become an events center already, we may not have a huge building that we house all these events in but there’s a lot going on at the Fairgrounds in any building, on any given day and time now at this point. We have to be grateful and thankful that we may not have a huge building like some places but we already have an events center here in Missoula Montana and there may be others that come along after and build something similar to what some other cities have, some grand event center off the interstate and that’s just dandy if they can do that but we’re already headed down that road of making those grounds sustainable and that’s something that I’ve been hearing since I’ve become a Commissioner and listen to the pros and cons of what was going on at our Fairgrounds. That is important when you’re responsible for managing a large piece of land with buildings on it, paying the insurance on them and all those things that go along with it that they’re paying for themselves. That’s taxpayers money that’s going into these grounds and facilities and so it makes sense that we’d want them to be sustainable and kind of paying for themselves instead of bleeding us all dry. We do have to consider that community benefit and impact as we move along and that community investment. We do have community investment in it already, others wanting to invest more and we need to make decisions that will help foster the confidence to people out there; our taxpayers and other private investors. That the short and long terms goals of the Fairgrounds are something you can depend on in perpetuity and we’re not gonna just at the drop of the hat say; oh no never mind bring horse racing back, forget the money that you gave us to build this that and the other thing, or sponsor this building…so we have to be able to have some continuity and predictability in the decisions we make going ahead. Even providing for horse racing in the short-term, we tried that and thinking it might give us some money - it didn’t go, it didn’t fly. It doesn’t offer us that predictability. The folks in support of horse racing keep saying we’re getting closer, we’re closing, give us another year we’ll bring something to you may be here, or maybe there. I support Ag and I have nothing against horse racing if horse racing’s really gonna make a comeback; go buy some land somewhere and make a horse track and make it come back but having horse racing here for 7 days out of the year but really it’s maybe only 3 maybe 5, that’s not very sustainable. It’s still seasonal at that whereas we’ve got some county land that we can look at maybe doing something, and we are doing stuff with those buildings 365 days a year, we have those possibilities. I really do like horse racing enough, my dad retired out there in New Jersey by Mammoth’s Race Track, a beautiful facility. Even that’s seasonal and not making it. So it’s not like I don’t understand horse racing and the people and animal that horse racing did support and may still be able to support. But I still have to look at all the other possibilities and it’s not just hockey, there’s a whole lot of ice sports involved with the ice that is out there. We’ve learned so much along this information journey that we’ve been on that certain events can’t be planned 2-3 years out which requires some things 2-3 years out because of related sports venues that maybe needed at the University. We’ve listened for the 5 years that I’ve been on this commission now; it has been a huge
informational journey, pros and cons. You could relocate the Fairgrounds here or there, wherever, there’s always some other big mitigating factor as to why; cost is one of those things, trying to purchase land that’s not in the floodplain that’s accessible and so and so. We do have this jewel property in the center of town. And yes, some people still complain that is in the center of town and it’s hard to get in and out of with your animals. Well we’re looking at ways to make that travel into and through the Fairgrounds easier and more accessible. We’re going to work through all these things but I have to say in the end after 5 years of hired consultants, 5 years of being involved in listening to all these pros and cons, in order to move forward there’s one big decision that has to be made and that’s to look at those grounds and figure out how to move forward, how to get the buy-in that we need and make some difficult decisions. I have to hand it to even some of the people that support ice -maybe over horses; they’ve been very candid and very objective in trying to listen to everybody’s input. Most of the horse people that I’ve been talking with have tried to be pretty objective too but I understand the emotional factor to it too. The committee has worked really hard to beat the bushes asking people to come to us with your ideas; this is over and above; hiring the consultant that had several years of public process and public meetings. Beating the bushes, getting people to come and talk to them and explain what you’re needs and wants are for those Fairgrounds. This is not a decision that has been made without trying to gather all the input that we needed to.

Commissioner Carey made motion that the Board of County Commissioners approve and sign the updated Fairgrounds Enhancement and Development Plan. Commissioner Curtiss second the motion. The motion carried a vote of 3-0.

Commissioner Curtiss: We will not be providing horse racing in the short-term, as it will not foster that landscape of predictability that long-term investment requires. Until we can finally say that we’re not just gonna let the track sit there and crumple waiting for horse racing to come back or to let horses race in the middle, we can’t move on. That’s a lot of land that’s needed there, a simple thing as having a concert in the center and needing to get people across a dirt track keeps us from being able to use those grounds like they need to be used for the public. I think we need to make sure that the public understands that’s what this decision is.

c. (continued from May 8, 2013) Proposed Modification to Missoula County Building Code Enforcement Program (postponed to a later date tbd)

8. OTHER BUSINESS
None

9. RECESS
Being no further business to come before the Board the Commissioners are in recess at 2:43.