

TRINITY DEVELOPERS, MISSOULA COUNTY BREAKING PROMISES

October 20, 2022, Missoula Current

Jean Curtiss:

The Trinity Housing project on Mullan next to the Missoula County Detention Center has not lived up to its promises and expectations. This was supposed to be a collaboration between the city, the county and HomeWord. HomeWord brought in Blue Line Developers for their expertise.

Missoula County commissioners agreed to gift almost 5 acres of county taxpayer owned land adjacent to the Missoula County Detention Center to make this project affordable. The land was purchased with taxpayer funded bonds to build the detention center.

This property has been held by the county for future uses. You may remember when a joint city-county law enforcement center was proposed at that site. The sheriff's department may need additional space in the future and unfortunately, the detention center may need to be expanded as our population grows.

However, the commissioners agreed to gift the land to the city for this project.

Sheriff McDermott was asked what he needed to protect the detention center and his officers. He had two, very clear, requests. He needed a new, dedicated access to the back side of the detention center as the project would cut off his current access. His second request was for a secure, fenced parking lot for the officers in that same area.

The City and HomeWord agreed to those reasonable requests. But apparently, nothing was put in writing with the transfer of the land.

Now, HomeWord and Blue Line have backed out of those promises saying they do not have enough money to meet those promises because the cost of the project went up. If you google Trinity Project Missoula MT, the website clearly states there will be no local tax dollars used to fund this project.

Not true. Earlier this year, the county commission agreed to use \$460,00 of general fund money to build this access road and fence a parking area. Those are local tax dollars. The bid just came in for the project at \$830,000.

Now the county is looking to fund that with an InterCap Loan, which will be paid back with local tax dollars. It should be on the project managers to find that money, not the County. Honor your promises HomeWord and Blue Line.

Jean Curtiss served as Missoula County commissioner for 18 years.