

# **Kalispell council to consider new economic development district**

**By SEABORN LARSON Daily Inter Lake | Posted: Monday, April 4, 2016 8:59 am**

The Kalispell City Council is considering the creation of an economic funding mechanism for the Glacier Rail Park and will vote tonight to schedule a public hearing for April 18 on the proposal.

The city plans to create a Targeted Economic Development District on 49 acres of the Glacier Rail Park northeast of Kalispell. The district would be similar to a tax increment financing district, in that it generates infrastructure funding through the existing tax base, but tax increment districts can only be used for revitalization projects. Planning and Building Director Tom Jentz said in February the Targeted Economic Development District would not require the city to raise anyone's taxes.

The funding could be used for developing roads and connecting city services to the properties intended for future rail-served businesses.

The council will also vote on changes to the city personnel policy handbook in order to maintain insurance coverage under the Montana Municipality Interlocal Authority. The coverage includes costs for defense against wrongful employment practice lawsuits brought against the city in the future, such as unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment.

The state authority is required to complete a renewal process to maintain Kalispell's coverage and has spent two months reviewing Kalispell's human resource and legal departments to identify changes that would need to be made. The authority found two changes required for the city to remain insured:

- n Short-term employees who are not eligible for permanent employment may not work for the city for more than 90 days in a continuous 12-month period. Previously, short-term employees were required to wait five consecutive days before being rehired by the city.

- n Extended temporary disability leave will be granted after the employee has exhausted all accrued sick days and compensatory time. Before the changes, that list included vacation leave.

A memorandum from Kalispell Director of Human Resources Terry Mitton to City Manager Doug Russell states the changes would not affect any union contracts with the city.

Mayor Mark Johnson and the council will reappoint C.M. Clark to the Evergreen Water and Sewer District board of directors.

Clark's term on the board expired in November; he was the only person to express interest in the six-year position. The board sets water and sewer policy in the district, reviews main extensions and petitions of annexation.

The council also will vote to allow alcohol sales at the "Run Through History" and block party event hosted by the Kalispell Downtown Association on April 17 on Fourth Street West.

The council meeting begins at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 201 First Ave. E.