

# Citizen Conservation Advisory Board

## AGENDA

April 12, 2018

Room 326, City-County Building, 4:30 PM

### 1. Introductions – Staff, Board Members

Members in attendance: Ann Brodsky, Hannah Cail, Brian Fadie, Lisa Fairman, Liz Fuller, Diana Hammer, Patrick Judge, Ken Knudson, Sarah Norcott, Richard Sloan, Greg Ross, Denise Roth Barber

Public: Morgan Shimkus, Carroll College student (applied for student position on board), Makenna Sellers, Northern Plains Resource Council (NPRC).

Resources: Sarah Elkins (city manager's office), Jon Pallister (building division), Sharon Haugen (community development), John Hilton (Helena Recycling)

#### **John Hilton, Helena Recycling – Brief Update/Presentation on Commodities:**

Commodities markets are severely depressed, recycling companies across the state are working together to look for solutions to process Butte's recycling, the company there shut down.

China shut down single stream purchases from the US due to contamination of batches.

Pacific is currently accepting only aluminum and cardboard due to the decrease in commodity purchases/prices. Cardboard was \$160/ton, and is now \$30/ton.

John stressed the need to educate the public about contamination to make recycling more affordable for the city and profitable for his company. With single stream plastics, he's seeing 25-30% contamination. Separated plastics is much cleaner. Helena Recycling no longer takes 3 – 7 plastics. 1s and 2s still have some value, but it costs more to bale and ship those. Most recycled plastics in China are being used for manufacturing in China. There are domestic mills, and most of our cardboard goes to US mills. Helena Recycling is currently storing a lot of cardboard because they have too much chip board in their bales (cereal boxes, etc.) We really need to separate corrugated cardboard from chip board to get a reasonable price for cardboard.

#### **Education “when in doubt, throw it out.” Carbon footprint is bigger when bales are contaminated.**

Mixed paper – magazines mixed with newspaper, etc. is not a high value recycling commodity.

Is the dip here seasonal? Not likely. Generally, plastic prices follow oil prices. When oil prices are high, plastic recycling improves. When oil prices are lower, the value of recycling plastics drops. Separating 1s & 2s would definitely improve commodity prices.

What can this committee do to help? EDUCATION – how do we most effectively recycle? Where and how do we reach our community?

Helena Recycling is working through a renewed contract with the city, adding lids to collection containers and adding glass recycling. One reason residents don't sign up for curbside is that they don't currently collect glass; if a resident wants to recycle glass, they have to go to the transfer station, so they bring all of their recycling, rather than participate in curbside.

Is there a way for the city to open the square windows into the recycling containers? Those smaller slots keep people from putting entire large bags of garbage into them.

Maybe coordinate with HCC for a neighborhood recycling advocate program?

It's costing the city \$190/ton to recycle plastics right now. Maybe get rid of plastics at the transfer station to push people to use the curbside program. This would decrease the cost to the city because they currently contract with Helena Recycling to come to the transfer station to bale and move the collected items. Helena Recycling does serve outside the city limits, so those non-city residents would still be able to sign up for curbside. Missoula is no longer recycling plastics as of April 7<sup>th</sup>.

Would it make sense for Helena Recycling to manage and maintain off-site recycling locations? The funding for those is complicated, and John would have to invest in additional equipment to make that work.

## **2. City Building Division – Conservation-related codes and update (Jon Pallister, Sharon Haugen)**

**Sharon Haugen:** City reduced permitting requirements for solar installations. The city doesn't have jurisdiction to set requirements for materials, and cannot have more/deeper requirements than what the state sets.

Sol-Smart Community- City was awarded [silver status designation](#) for zoning and permitting adjustments to renewable energy installations/implementation and efforts in certification activities of staff.

In 2016, the city set aside \$200,000 toward no-interest 10 year loans for residents to install renewable energy systems. Approximately 25 residents have taken advantage of the loans to implement solar energy systems, and they are gradually paying these loans via their utility/water bills. currently the City has zero funds in the renewable resource loan program. Since the City relies on loan repayments placed on the tax bill to recapitalize the fund, we will have to wait

until the May or November tax collections for more funds. We receive approximately \$24,000 a year in loan repayments.

**Jon Pallister:** 2013, city worked to create an incentive for alternative energy construction in the city. Worked with solar installers and geothermal companies, as well as construction and contractors to reduce permit fees by 50% to stimulate and build incentives for renewable energy system implementation. It can take 25 years to realize your investment in these systems in residential properties, particularly when installing in an older home that primarily uses gas, not electricity. In some newer homes, it can be much faster; the cost to install varies depending on the type and size of the system.

Education: What are the barriers for people to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy systems? Maybe we can focus on these in efforts with the community.

What about city facilities and energy conservation codes?

Building Codes: 2012 International Codes (16) – Energy code forces builders to build more efficient buildings, including windows, materials, etc. City will adopt 2018 codes likely in January 2019. One interesting development is the CST type foundation – recycled plastic blocks being used with concrete for foundations. Many local designers are working with LEED standards, and not at the minimum state requirements. Are any looking at net positive building? Mosaic may have recently worked on one in Great Falls, but Jon hasn't seen this in Helena. Some homes are working on gray-water systems. What gray-water systems are allowed? Rain run-off from rain gutters, systems must include storage systems; most household wastewater cannot be used.

R-factor is insulation factor; U-factor is in reference to windows.

Certification of a city is related to insurance classification – when the city is certified, residential insurance rates/classification improves.

### **3. Organization Purpose Statement Draft Discussion**

All but two members (Sarah Norcott & Greg Ross) approved leaving “urgent threat” in the final sentence of the statement. Denise made a motion to approve, Patrick seconded. Approved by board.

### **4. Review of By-Laws Draft**

Via email: Patrick suggested adding a phrase to reflect the group's sentiment that the positions rotate annually, and that officers may continue to service in their roles if elected. This implies no term limits, but an ability for officers to rotate annually. Also via email, Ken agreed.

### **5. Public comment**

## **6. Future meetings:**

- May 10<sup>th</sup> – review by-laws draft, update on where city is on implementation of recommendations of previous board, update on energy cap, update on having the city participate in the data collection organization, ICLI Clearpath recommended by Patrick (Sarah will follow up with city manager), maybe consider hiring an intern or contacting energycorp.com to help collect data
- Field trip to Helena Recycling facility
- Education for recycling in the community, invite John for feedback/ideas

## **7. Adjourned at 6:15pm**

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