

CITY OF HELENA
REGULAR CITY COMMISSION MEETING
June 29, 2015
6:00 P.M.

- Time & Place** A regular City Commission meeting was held on Monday, June 29, 2015 at 6:00 p.m., in the Commission Chambers, 316 N. Park Avenue, Helena, Montana.
- Members Present** Mayor Smith indicated for the record that Commissioners Ellison, Haque-Hausrath and Haladay were present; Commissioner Elsaesser was excused. City Manager Ron Alles, City Attorney Thomas Jodoin and City Clerk Debbie Havens were also present.
- Pledge of Allegiance** Mayor Smith asked those persons present to please stand and join him in the pledge of allegiance.
- Minutes** The minutes of the regular City Commission meeting of June 15, 2015 were approved as submitted.
- Board Appointments** BOARD APPOINTMENTS:
A. Civic Center Board

Mayor Smith recommended the appointment of Kendall Stewart to the Civic Center Board. The unexpired term will begin upon appointment and expire March 1, 2016.
- Public comment Mayor Smith asked for public comment, none was received.
- Motion** **Commissioner Haladay moved approval of the appointment of Kendall Stewart to the Civic Center Board. The unexpired term will begin upon appointment and expire March 1, 2016.** Commissioner Haque-Hausrath seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried.
- Consent Agenda** CONSENT AGENDA:
A. Claims
B. Adoption of the updated Official Zoning Map for the City of Helena

City Manager Alles recommended approval of the claims and Item B.
- Public comment Mayor Smith asked for public comment, none was received.
- Motion** **Commissioner Haladay moved approval of items A and B on the consent agenda.** Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried.
- Bid Award** BID AWARD:
A. 2015 Chip & Seal Project No. 15-6
- Staff Report City Engineer Leland reported the 2015 Chip & Seal Project will add a new wear surface and pavement sealer by applying a single

application of asphalt material followed by spreading a 3/8-inch gravel chip.

The city opened two bids for the project on April 7, 2015. Helena Sand & Gravel, Inc. was the lowest responsible bidder for Schedules; A - East Central City Streets (East/West); B - Southeast City Streets (North/South); C - Southeast City Streets (East/West); E - Southeast City Streets (North/South); and F - South Central City Streets (North/South) for a total of \$295,059.60 with a unit price \$1.70 of per square yard. Last year's unit price was \$1.60 per square yard.

Engineer Leland recommended awarding Schedules A, B, C, E, and F, to the lowest responsible bidder; Helena Sand & Gravel in the amount of \$295,059.60. This project will complete approximately 8.70 miles of city streets this year compared to 9.93 miles last year.

B. Change Order No. 1 to add additional streets to the 2015 Chip & Seal Project, City Project 15-6.

Staff Report

City Engineer Leland report the 2015 Chip & Seal Project will add a new wear surface and pavement sealer by applying a single application of asphalt material followed by spreading a 3/8-inch gravel chip.

The City opened two bids for the project on April 7, 2015. Helena Sand & Gravel, Inc. was the lowest responsible bidder and was awarded the bid for the 2015 Chip & Seal project.

Along with the previous action, staff is proposing to add two additional streets to the project to protect more streets for the available budget. The City could not award all schedules because of the bid, and budget but propose two additional streets in need of chip and seal. The proposed change order would be for Highland Street, from Montana Avenue to California Street, and Helena Avenue, from Montana Avenue to Sanders Street, at a cost of \$54,587.34. This change order exceeds 10% of the original contract and requires commission approval. The total contract would be \$349,646.94.

Engineer Leland recommended approval of the Change Order No. 1 for the 2015 Chip & Seal Project, City Project No.15-6 in the amount of \$54,587.34.

Public Comment

Mayor Smith called for public comment, none was received.

Motion

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath moved approval to award Schedules A, B, C, E and F, of the Chip & Seal 2015 Project No. 15-6 to the lowest bidder, Helena Sand & Gravel, Inc. in the amount of \$295,059.60. Commissioner Haladay seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried.

Motion

Commissioner Ellison moved approval of Change Order No. 1 to add additional streets to the 2015 Chip & Seal Project, City Project 15-6, for the amount of \$54,587.34. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath seconded the motion, all voted aye. Motion carried.

Communications

COMMUNICATIONS/PROPOSALS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Mayor Smith reported that he had a very good visit at the Change of Command Ceremony in Norfolk.

Commissioner Haladay spoke of the recent school bond failure and noted he intends to send the following letter to the School District and encouraged the commission members to sign it also. He did acknowledge Superintendent Kultgen has been invited to the July 8th administrative meeting.

Trustees of the Helena Elementary School District,

Thank you for your continued service to our community and tireless efforts to improve education for every child in the Elementary School District. This letter is to urge you to immediately begin work on a new elementary school bond and to ask that the City of Helena be included in the process of designing that new bond. The continued success of both the School District and City of Helena are intertwined and our relationship cannot be ignored when crafting a vision for the School District's future.

As the election results reflect, the proposed bond was unpopular across City neighborhoods, many of which normally support education measures by overwhelming majorities. Educational ballot measures succeed in the Helena Elementary School District only when the residents of the City support them. As such, the Helena City Commission is uniquely positioned to assist in crafting a future bond that both garners support of City residents, and reflects a vision that aligns with the City's continued success.

Please begin the process for a new bond proposal, and include the City in your planning process. We look forward to working with you to ensure the continued strength of our community.

Sincerely

Commissioner Ellison commented this idea was discussed at the June 24th administrative meeting and stated he would be happy to sign the letter. It is important for the city and the School District to work together.

Commissioner Ellison noted there was a low voter turn-out and hopefully that will change with the next election.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated she concurs with sending the letter and it is vitally important that the School District move forward with a new bond.

Mayor Smith concurred this is a well written letter and he supports the city working with the School District.

Public Comment

Helena Citizens Council member Dick Sloan stated the HCC discussed this issue and is in strong support of the City Commission reaching out to the School District.

City Manager Alles reported he has extended an invitation to Superintendent Kultgen and School Board members to attend the July 8th administrative meeting.

Commissioner Haladay will send the draft letter to City Clerk Havens to prepare for signatures.

Commissioner Haladay asked for commission concurrence to ask the City-County Parks Board to consider rededicating Helena's Confederate Fountain, located in Hill Park. This is a project that is well positioned for one of our advisory boards to tackle and need not consume much, if any, Commission time.

Historians disagree as to the multitude of factors that resulted in the Civil War. However, there is no denying the Confederacy was, at a

base level, an armed insurrection with a goal of preserving the odious system of slavery in the United States. In light of that legacy, Confederate flags, monuments and fountains cannot be disentangled from their celebrations of violence, separatism and racism. Commissioner Haladay stated he does know such celebrations not to be welcome in Helena.

Commissioner Haladay stated he is aware of historians in our community who defend the fountain as a monument to those who served. This of course ignores the fountain was built at the time of a larger propaganda campaign in the early 20th century to encourage public nostalgia for the Confederacy. If our goal is to honor those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, the fountain could easily be a Civil War Fountain. That would be a more meaningful memorial than a one-sided celebration of revisionist history.

Commissioner Haladay asked the commission to take the responsible step of asking our advisory board in charge of public parks to re-brand this fountain in the spirit of Helena and inclusiveness. I would also ask we avoid the process discussions that inevitably consume Commission time and instead limit our decision to the simple issue: (1) send this to the City-County Parks Board, or (2) keep a confederate fountain in a public park.

Discussion

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated she supports the renaming of the Confederate Fountain and deferring it to the Parks Board for a recommendation.

Commissioner Ellison thanked Commissioner Haladay for the recommendation. At the administrative meeting on June 24th; there was commission concurrence to discuss this when all five commission members are present. He also stated it will be important for someone with a historical background, perhaps a Carroll College Professor of History, or representative from the Historical Preservation Commission to be present at the next city Administrative Meeting when this topic is discussed.

Commissioner Ellison again stated he would like all five members be present and give the public the opportunity to comment on the proposal.

City Manager Alles reported Director of Parks & Recreation Teegarden has a folder on the history of the Confederate Fountain and he would recommend the information be made available prior to presenting it to the Parks Board.

Mayor Smith concurred the recommendation is very timely due to recent conversations; however, as of tonight he would not support sending it to the Parks Board for consideration.

Commissioner Haladay concurred an historian should be involved in the discussion as this proposal moves forward.

Public comment

Mayor Smith asked for public comment regarding the proposal to rename Confederate Fountain; none was received.

Report of the City Attorney

REPORT OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

City Attorney Jodoin had no items to report on.

Report of the City Manager

REPORT OF THE CITY MANAGER

Manager Alles reported the city of Helena will provide bus service to the 25th ADA Anniversary Celebration. City employees will

schedule the rides up through July 2nd; however, after that MILP will be scheduling the rides.

Manager Alles invited Administrative Services Director Tim Magee to the podium. Manager Alles reported Director Magee is retiring effective June 30th; he personally recognized and thanked him for his years of service and his commitment to the City of Helena.

Commissioner Ellison thanked Director Magee for his service to the city of Helena and noted of the five audits that have been completed since he joined the commission, all have been unqualified, which is the very best. Director Magee has always shared the credit with his staff, which are all well trained. He will be missed.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath seconded all of Commissioner Ellison's comments and thanked Director Magee for his service and wished him a great retirement.

Commissioner Haladay concurred with the previous comments and he too thanked Director Magee for his service to the city.

Mayor Smith stated he never has had nagging doubts about the financial ground of the city as the result of Director Magee's leadership. Mayor Smith stated Director Magee has been in local government for 41 years and he wished him the best in his retirement.

Director Magee thanked the commission for the comments and noted he and his wife plan on staying in Helena. He stated his career at the city has been the most successful and the staff is great.

***Report from the
Helena Citizens
Council***

REPORT FROM THE HELENA CITIZENS COUNCIL

HCC Representative Paul Pacini reported there is an ongoing discussion on how to make the HCC representatives more visible and known in the community. One of the recommendations is having small signs made for all HCC members to put in their yards that say "An HCC member lives here, talk to me". This is a very preliminary recommendation and the HCC will continue to pursue the idea.

The HCC will have further discussion at the July meeting. Mayor Smith stated if the HCC members are willing to do this, he believes there would be positive feedback from the community.

Mayor Smith noted he too has had this very discussion on how to make the HCC more visible in the community.

HCC Representative Dick Sloan has developed some thoughts and ideas on the budget and will be prepared to present them at the budget work session on June 30th.

Regular Items

- A. **CONSIDER ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES PROPOSALS FOR A PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND GOLF MAINTENANCE FACILITY.**

Staff Report

Community Facilities Director Carpenter reported a Request for Proposals was advertised on April 12th, 19th, and 26th for the maintenance facility. The City received five proposals from the following Helena firms: SMA Architects, Mosaic Architecture, Slate Architecture, CWG P.C. Architects and Dowling Studio Architects, PC. Staff reviewed the responses on May 4, 2015 and arranged for oral interviews with all respondents on May 21, 2015. The oral interviews were held with a City committee comprised of: Gery Carpenter; Amy Teegarden; Larry Kurokawa, Golf Course Superintendent and Craig Marr, Parks Superintendent.

The first phase of this project is to provide the City with a schematic design that will meet the needs of the Parks and Recreation Department with associated costs. The committee ranked Dowling Studio Architects, PC number one to provide architectural services for this project with the initial contract for the first phase.

Director Carpenter recommended approval of the committee's ranking and authorize the City Manager to negotiate a contract.

Discussion

Commissioner Ellison asked if the FY16 budget includes this proposal. City Manager Alles stated this item is not specifically budgeted for; however, there are 440 funds that have a reserve and this expenditure would come from the 440 funds.

Commissioner Haladay asked if money from the 440 is going to be used, will the other Parks Department divisions be asked to pay their fair share of the proposal. Manager Alles stated ultimately, those divisions that would benefit from the building, would pay their portion.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if this piece of the project would be paid for by all the divisions. Manager Alles stated the \$35,000 is not a large amount and would be paid out of those 440 fund.

Public Comment

Mayor Smith called for public comment, none was received.

Motion

Commissioner Ellison moved approval of the committee's ranking and authorize the City Manager to negotiate the contract.

Commissioner Haladay seconded the motion.

Discussion

Commissioner Haladay stated he originally supported moving this project forward; however, with the recent budget discussions, is there a reason to move forward if there are not funds to build the maintenance building.

Manager Alles stated he and staff had deliberated on the proposal and until he knows what the total needs are for all the divisions, he cannot put an amount to it. Once the costs are identified, he and staff can begin looking at funding mechanisms. If this project is completed in one or five years, this study will still apply.

Manager Alles noted the current Parks Maintenance Facility is in desperate need of being replaced.

Commissioner Ellison stated he shares Commissioner Haladay's concerns if there is no funding to move forward. However, he recognizes there is a need for the Parks Maintenance Division. The city is going to have to find a way to fund the facility.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if this proposal is a schematic or will the proposal include looking at current facilities that could be used. Manager Alles stated the proposal could look at existing buildings; however, at this time, no facility has been identified.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated the old armory building has been discussed and she would like staff to explore the option. Manager Alles reported staff has met with the state and toured the building; however, the facility may not work due to some renovations. In addition, the proposal is to combine this facility with several divisions of the Parks Department.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath commented the last time this was discussed, there was consensus on the importance of city employees having a safe place to work. However, she is concerned with having the plans prior to a budget, there will be cost overruns. If an

existing building could be used, then there may be funds available. She stated she is okay moving forward if it includes looking at existing buildings and getting the Parks Maintenance Division out of the basement. However, she does not see this building being able to be built for quite some time.

Mayor Smith stated he has been advocating for this project for some time. He supports moving forward with the proposal tonight and he believes there are other financial opportunities to look at. He too would support looking at existing buildings.

Vote

All voted aye, motion carried.

- B. CONSIDER A RESOLUTION OF INTENTION TO AMEND SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT LIGHTING DISTRICT NO. 222 TO ALTER THE BOUNDARIES AND ADD SEVENTEEN (17) NEW LIGHTS.

Staff Report

City Controller Jorgenson reported the City Commission created Special Improvement Lighting District No. 222 (SILD) in March of 2011. The SILD includes all of Antelope Trace and Craftsman Village Phase 1 of Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows. The SILD has been amended twice as adjacent property was developed. This amendment will increase the square feet of property in the SILD to include recently platted Alexis Avenue, adjacent City park land, and property along South Alice Street that benefit from the new lights. Exhibit A provides the list of new properties being added and a lighting map.

The entire SILD, including the proposed amended area, has Lexington Colonial luminaries with 100-watt, high-pressure, sodium vapor lamps. These lights comply with the City's dark-skies lighting ordinance.

Staff is recommending the SILD be amended to add properties benefiting from the additional 17 additional lights installed on Alexis Avenue and South Alice Street and pay the associated costs. The additional cost of the new lights is anticipated to be \$6,634 for the first year with a total cost of \$37,923 for the amended SILD. The cost per square foot was estimated to be \$.0222 per square foot prior to amending it. It is estimated to be \$.0171 per square foot if amended.

If approved staff will advertise twice in the Independent Record and send notices to all property owners in the SILD and proposed amended boundary.

The advantage to this amendment is the current SILD property owners will benefit from having a more equitable distribution of the cost of the lights that benefit all property owners. They also receive benefit from the new lights as they help light a main arterial street into the subdivision and the recently developed City park.

Controller Jorgenson recommended approval of a resolution of intention to amend resolution No. 19818 that created Special Improvement Lighting District No. 222 to alter the boundaries of and add seventeen lights in SILD NO. 222 in the City of Helena, Montana and set a public hearing date for July 27, 2015.

Discussion

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated the lights are 100-watt, high-pressure, sodium vapor lamps and asked if NorthWestern Energy is allowing the use of LED lights. Controller Jorgenson stated not at this

time. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked City Manager Alles to reach out to NWE and ask if LED lights could be used.

Manager Alles noted the same lights have to be used within a district; however, he will contact NWE.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if NWE can enforce their recommendation or can the city adopt an ordinance requiring the use of LED lights.

Mayor Smith stated one-year ago the city commission discussed creating an ordinance requiring the use of LED lights. He suggested the manager reach out to NWE.

Public Comment

Mayor Smith called for public comment, none was received.

Motion

Commissioner Haladay moved approval of a resolution of intention to amend Special Improvement Lighting District No. 222 to alter the boundaries and add seventeen (17) lights and to set a public hearing date for July 27, 2015. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried.
Res #20171

C. CONSIDER A RESOLUTION OF INTENTION TO BUDGET ADDITIONAL PROPERTY TAX REVENUE FOR FY2016.

Staff Report

Budget Manager Robert Ricker reported State of Montana statute allows the city to budget additional property tax revenues over the prior year level as specified in 15-10-420, MCA. In accordance with 15-10-203, MCA the City is required to hold a public hearing before budgeting any increase in total property tax revenues. The city intends to budget tax revenue increases as allowed by state law.

Approval of the resolution of intention will allow the city to advertise the required notices and hold a public hearing to obtain public input on budgeting additional tax revenues as allowed by state law. These additional tax revenues are necessary to preserve the present level of services to the community. Any increase in taxes or service rates is a sensitive public issue.

Budget Manager Ricker recommended approval of the resolution of intention to Budget Additional Property Tax Revenue for fiscal year 2016 with an increase of up to 0.44% over the property taxes levied in the prior year and set a public hearing date of July 13, 2015.

Discussion

Commissioner Haladay asked if this increase is included in the assumptions in the FY2016 preliminary budget. Manager Ricker stated these amounts are included in the preliminary budget amounts.

Public Comment

Mayor Smith called for public comment, none was received.

Motion

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath moved approval of a resolution of intention to Budget Additional Property Tax Revenue for fiscal year 2016 with an increase of up to 0.44% over the property taxes levied in the prior year and set a public hearing date of July 13, 2015. Commissioner Haladay seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried. **Res #20172**

D. CONSIDER A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AMONG SIX (6) MS4 COMMUNITIES TO COST-SHARE CONSULTANT

SERVICES FOR REVIEW OF MPDES STORM WATER PERMITTING.

Staff Report

Utility Maintenance Superintendent Hart reported the seven largest cities, collectively known as the traditional MS4 cities, have entered into an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Environmental Quality to collaboratively review and develop a 3rd generation storm water MPDES permit. This action was taken following concern that an initial proposed permit intended for reauthorization was deemed onerous and costly, and had inherent inequities regarding treatment of storm water issues among counties and cities which needed to be dealt with before moving forward.

The parties signed an MOU to address the concerns and work toward common understanding and consensus implementation of the next generation of this permit. The seven MS4 cities through the proposed MOU seek to equally share in funding costs for consultant work on behalf of the MS4 cities. Billings has volunteered to administer the consultant contract and do periodic billings to other cities to split the costs of the effort. If signed, the MOU would obligate Helena to one seventh of the costs of the consultant agreement, projected to be about \$17,500 based on the agreed to scope of work (Exhibit A). Funds would come from contracted services line item in the storm water budget.

The proposed MOU, incorporating the consultant contract, will provide the mechanism and vehicle to allow cost participation by the signatories who will benefit from the expertise of the consultant in furtherance of the collaborative storm water effort.

Joint participation and collaborative effort will further the interests of the MS4 cities in the development of cost efficient and consistent storm water programs for those projects, development and entities covered by state storm water regulations.

Superintendent Hart recommended approval of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding and authorization for the City Manager to sign the MOU.

Public Comment

Mayor Smith called for public comment, none was received.

Motion

Commissioner Haladay moved approval of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among six (6) MS4 communities to cost-share consultant services for review of MPDES storm water permitting and authorize the City Manager to sign the MOU. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried.

- E. CONSIDER AMENDING THE APPROVED CONDITIONS FOR ENLARGMENT OF THE WATER AND WASTEWATER SERVICE AREA FOR PARCEL #1, TRACT B, BEING A PORTION OF THE HAWKEY LODGE MINING CLAIM AND PARCEL #2, GOVERNMENT LOT 4, ME NO. 4335, AND GOVERNMENT LOT 5, ME NO. 3562 BEING PLACER MINING CLAIMS.

Staff Report

City Engineer Leland reported the above referenced property is generally located at the end of Chaucer Street with Iowa and Rhode Island streets dead ending into the property. The City Commission on

May 9, 2011 approved, with conditions, the enlargement of the water and wastewater service area to include this parcel for a single family residence. The conditions of approval were: to loop a water main to provide fire flows and water quality, and extend the sewer main from the manhole in Iowa Street to the edge of the property.

In the previous request the property was located in the Hale Water Pressure Zone, which would have required a looped main plus an individual booster pump in order to provide enough flow and pressure to serve the residence. Since that time, with other development in the area, the City has changed the pressure zone to the Winne Water Pressure Zone which increases both fire flow and pressure.

The applicant, Paula Theide, is requesting to remove the condition to loop the 8" water main from the approval based on the new pressure zone. She is requesting to allow a single dead end main from Iowa Street to the property near a future residence. The calculated fire flow to a hydrant near the proposed house will be just under the City required 1750 gpm.

If approved, this will allow for the addition of a single family residence on a city lot.

If approved, this will perpetuate and increase a dead end water main. Industry standards and good practice is to loop all water mains. The looped mains provide for better fire flows and water quality.

The recommended motion was to approve, table, or deny the amendment to the conditions for enlargement of the water and wastewater service area for Parcel #1, Tract B, being a portion of the Hawkey Lode Mining Claim and Parcel #2, Government Lot 4, ME No. 4335, and Government Lot 5, ME No. 3562 Being Placer Mining Claims

Discussion

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath referred to problems with water quality associated with the proposal and asked who will be most affected by the issues. Engineer Leland explained due to challenges in generating adequate circulation of water in the area, adjacent property owners could experience some water quality problems due to stagnant water in the existing mains that will be affected by the proposal.

Commissioner Haladay commented the existence of the dead-end mains located in the subject area is a result of past Commissions' approval of extensions but not requiring looped systems. Engineer Leland confirmed previous actions in the subject area did not include the requirement to install a looped system. Engineer Leland stated he is hopeful by requiring any future developments to install a looped system water issues in the area will be resolved.

Mayor Smith referenced the numerous vacant lots adjacent to Iowa Street, and asked if they are buildable lots; if so, could the commission anticipate similar requests from those property owners. Engineer Leland explained there are some lots that are already being built on and there may be a limited amount of requests for similar extended services. He indicated on a map which lots are in government ownership and described the status of those not.

Commissioner Ellison asked if this request is approved, does this preclude the main being looped in the future. Engineer Leland stated no.

Manager Alles noted from time to time these proposals come up and staff tries to work with the individual property owners to accommodate their needs and keep infrastructure costs down, yet still pay their fair share. At the time the requests are received, staff

considers adjacent properties to see if there is an opportunity for a looped system and manage the applicants costs as well.

Public Comment

Mayor Smith called for public comment.

Byron Stahly, Stahly Engineering, representing the applicant; spoke in support of the enlargement of the water and wastewater service for areas described above. Mr. Stahly showed the location of the existing water service and its close proximity to the applicant's property, which is approximately 160 feet. If required, a loop system would be cost prohibitive for a single family residence.

Engineer Stahly also addressed the current fire flow requirements and commented the addition of this house could potentially help with the water quality in the area.

Motion

Commissioner Ellison moved approval the amendment to the conditions for enlargement of the water and wastewater service area for Parcel #1, Tract B, being a portion of the Hawkey Lode Mining Claim and Parcel #2, Government Lot 4, ME No. 4335, and Government Lot 5, ME No. 3562 Being Placer Mining Claims.

Commissioner Haladay seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried.

Public Hearings

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. CONSIDER ADOPTION OF THE GREATER HELENA AREA TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2014 UPDATE.

Staff Report

City Engineer Leland reported the Greater Helena Area Transportation Plan – 2014 Update process began in February 2014 and through rigorous technical analysis and intensive public outreach has culminated in the public draft presented by Robert Peccia & Associates. A summary of the public outreach is attached for review. The budget for the project has been expended. Significant changes or extending the public review process will require additional time and effort by the consultant and will require a contract amendment to allow for the associated cost increase.

Adoption of the plan will allow planning and budgeting of future projects identified in the Greater Helena Area Transportation Plan – 2014 Update. Adoption of the plan doesn't guarantee that any or all of the projects will be funded, or that the projects will be constructed as proposed.

Engineer Leland recommended the commission approve, table, or deny the adoption of the Greater Helena Area Transportation Plan – 2014 Update as presented.

Discussion

Commissioner Ellison referenced the following written recommendation from Commission Elsaesser and asked what process would be used to include these comments as an appendix to the plan.

Commissioner Elsaesser submitted the following written comments:

Helena Area LRTP Comments:

- Priority to bypassing Malfunction/Queen City Crossing
 - Signal at National; Expanded Signal and roadway connection to Boulder at Livingston Signal; Safety Improvement for crossing Montana between Sixth Ward and redevelopment area towards Centennial Park;

- Prioritize this project ahead of new light at 14th & Last Chance Gulch; improve safety in that area with bulb out and improved lighting.
- Shared path or other NMT conductivity using gibbon's to connect Centennial East to East Helena Trail and Capitol Interchange ADA/Bike/Ped Bridge
- Intersection of Benton near rail crossing
 - Provide safe crossing for community events and Centennial Trail West, address event and transfer station traffic flow, and augment quiet zone
- Establish pavement and sidewalk preservation policy and practices, such as shifting lines to disperse vehicle wear on roads and filing down sidewalk trip hazards, to extend the life of transportation infrastructure
- Create a special lighting district to be used for safety at pedestrian crossings and illumination of trails, including grid-tied solar when adjacent to utilities
- Establish a hybrid shared use path along rail spur from Montana to National Avenue
- Establish Helena South Gateway Project for South Cruse and Cruse & Cutler Intersection by utilizing excess right-of-way designated for Helena bypass project no longer anticipated as designed by staff for MAP 21 application.
 - Include safety improvements that allow for new park and recreation features, such as a dog park, in median area already maintained by Parks
- Cook Street ramp and accessible pedestrian connection from Helena Avenue to Transit Center
- Establish an en lieu program that allows non-priority sidewalk property owners to contribute to a fund that would install priority sidewalks
- Create a voluntary sidewalk district that includes eventual replacement of the sidewalk; encourage such districts –with snow removal-in new subdivisions
- Allow narrowing of streets where current right-of-way is not needed by extending protect tree boxes and medians into existing streets, allowing curb sidewalks in such cases, and ceding excess ROW to tax base
- Revise street snow removal policy to minimize snow being plowed into ADA ramps, on sidewalks, and left in cross walks
- Explore the reduction of existing public right of way to allow for more affordable sidewalks, traffic calming, and green infrastructure boulevards in residential neighborhoods that have wider streets than necessary.

Engineer Jeff Key, Robert Peccia & Associates; consultant on the plan; acknowledged all of the Commissioner's comments and public comment submitted will be included in the plan as part of the official record. Very detailed discussion was held on how the plan was updated, the recommendations contained in the plan and how the recommendations contained within would be implemented. He stressed

the plan is a guiding document and should not be used as a policy platform.

Commissioner Ellison asked when the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) will be adopting the Transportation Plan. Engineer Key stated the BoCC is scheduled to consider adoption of the plan at their July 2, 2015 meeting.

Commissioner Ellison thanked Engineer Key and his team for the work they have done to bring this plan forward.

Public Testimony

Mayor Smith declared the public portion of the hearing open and called for any persons wishing to address the Commission.

There being no persons wishing to address the Commission, Mayor Smith closed the public hearing.

Motion

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath moved adoption of the Greater Helena Area Transportation Plan – 2014 Update.

Commissioner Haladay seconded the motion.

Discussion

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated overall the document is well written and should be adopted. There have been discussions of a road diet on Montana Avenue and she would like the commission to explore this option with MDT. She listed the following additional recommendations the commission should discuss on a policy level: traffic calming on Boulder Avenue; and the expansion of Custer and 11th Avenue. She commented she has significant concerns for the latter in relation to bicycle and pedestrian safety and cautioned the commission against implementing those two recommendations.

Commissioner Haladay concurred with Commissioner Haque-Hausrath's comments, noting the plan is a good document.

He then listed the following concerns with recommendations contained in the plan: MSN Projects- they are good for transportation but not necessarily good for the growth of the city, as the plan wasn't created with that scope in mind; the plan does not account for valley residents that do not pay their fair share of costs to improve the city's road system. He stated he believes the city extending and improving its roads encourages the valley residents to take advantage of city services, resources and rewards bad behavior.

He reiterated, as he has several times recently, per the plan anticipated large commercial buildings will be developed within the City of Helena and not in the valley. He commented he personally would never encourage development outside of the city limits.

He then listed several recommended projects that he believes would be bad policy: the Henderson Street underpass upgrade; Custer Avenue improvements; and the extension of Airport Road.

Commissioner Haladay gave an example of the Great Northern Town Center as a great development. He commented again that all economic development is not created equal.

He indicated he would support adoption of the plan, and again, urged the commission to take his comments into consideration when making decisions on future development.

Mayor Smith thanked the commission members for their comments and agreed it is important the commission consider future development, in conjunction with adoption of the plan.

Vote All voted aye, motion carried.

Public Communications PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
No communications were received.

Meetings of Interest MEETINGS OF INTEREST
The next Administrative Meeting is July 8, 2015 and the next Commission Meeting is July 13, 2015.

Adjournment There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

/S/ James E. Smith
Mayor James E. Smith

ATTEST:

/S/ Debbie Havens
Clerk of the Commission