



**HELENA OPEN LANDS MANAGEMENT  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
SUMMARY  
March 13, 2018**



City of Helena

**City Members Representative**

- Betsy Miller
- Eric Sivers
- Jeff Shirley
- Dan Wirak
- Karen Reese

**City of Helena Staff Representatives**

- Brad Langsather, Open Lands Manager
- Greta Dige, Code Enforcement
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

**City-County Parks Board Representative**

- Dave Payne

**Helena Citizens Council Representative**

- Denise Roth Barber

**Helena Tourism Alliance Representative**

- Jennifer Davis

**PPLT Representative**

- Evan Kulesa

**LOCATION: City of Helena Parks and Recreation – Room 326**

**TIME: 5:30 Pm – 7:00 pm**

**Call to Order**

**Welcome/Introductions/Visitors**

Carolann Bunegar, HCC; Nick Sovner, Resident; Andrea Opitz, Helena Tourism Alliance

**Minutes Approval – February 13, 2018**

- With no corrections, the February 13, 2018 were approved as submitted.

**HOLMAC Action Items**

**DeFord Trailhead Improvement Modification**

- In reviewing the open lands comments, one of the residents living near the DeFord Trailhead expressed concerns and asked to meet with Brad. His concerns were regarding the expansion of the middle Davis parking area. With the expansion of the middle Davis parking area, the resident is concerned that visitors backing out of the Davis parking area will back into his driveway as his driveway is located directly across from that area. Brad assured the resident that we will only expand south to that point where our fence is so when people are backing out, they won't back into his driveway. With this in mind, the first lot will not be as large. We will gain some capacity, but it won't be the 6 or 8 parking spots as we hoped for. We still will have approximately 18 parking spots total.

**Old Business**

**Jim Phillips Memorial Dedication**

- The memorial dedication for Jim Phillips will be placed on the new bridge.

- The plaque will read as follows:  
***In Memory of Jim Phillips - 1943 to 2016***  
***Jim Phillips had a great passion and enthusiasm for trails, especially the South Hills Trail System. He donated many hours of his time and energy to trail maintenance, tree planting, trail construction, and clearing downed trees from the trails. With his background as a smokejumper and high school counselor/teacher, he was an integral member of the Helena Open Lands Management Advisory Committee and the Prickly Pear Land Trust Trails Committee. We are grateful for Jim's contributions to the South Hills Trails and he will be missed.***
- It was recommended that we add a picture of Jim to the plaque if this is possible. Brad will look into this.

#### **ACTION ITEM(S):**

- **Brad will research the possibility of adding a photo of Jim to the memorial plaque.**

#### **Parks and Recreation Report – Brad**

##### Beattie Street Trailhead Improvement Project Update

- Brad thanked HOLMAC members for attendance at the open house meetings regarding the Beattie Street Trailhead Improvement project. The open houses were both well-attended. We received several letters (most were in support of the project – alternative one). Some were sent to the commission while others were sent directly to Brad. Brad is working through the letters and comments. He will answer the letters and take that information and our recommendation to the commission.
- Brad will go before the commission on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to present the final work plan minus the Beattie Street Trailhead Improvement project.
- Nick Sovner asked when the Beattie Street Trailhead Improvement project will go before the commission. Brad stated he does not have it scheduled yet. We are hoping for April, but it could be May.

##### Nob Hill Property Donation

- Brad reviewed primary access points to the trail system on Nob Hill. We have been approached by an individual who wants to donate some of the property he owns to the City of Helena. What this will allow us to do is exit the sidewalk and go directly onto the trail. It will be a very nice access point for our trail users. Users will be able to do a “loop” hike.
- Brad was asked if there have been any complaints from residents of the condominiums. Brad stated none to date.
- The lot to be donated will become parks property. There is a tool shed located right on the property line so Brad added that we will need to do a lot line relocation survey to move the line 21 feet and then we will need to build the trail. This will be a project for next year’s work plan.

##### Controlled Burning Update

- Brad and Greta have done some controlled burns. Brad stated we will have to stay on this if we want to finish MT Ascension. Realistically, we have about two weeks to finish. The Forest Service has offered help so Brad will bring them in. Park maintenance helped Brad and Greta today. We should be able to get all these done except for those buried under snow.

## 2019 Preliminary Open Lands Budget

- Brad reviewed the 2019 budget. One important thing to note is that last year we received a little over \$1 million dollars in federal grant money. Brad can't move this number into the the FY19 budget because if we have any expenses between now and FY19, we will need to spend the funds for this year. As we accomplish items, the total number of grant money will decrease until we receive another grant. The balance left will eventually "carry-over".
- When we save money, we build up money for other larger projects. Brad then asked board members to help him identify additional types of revenue streams. This would be very beneficial. One assignment of HOLMAC in its conception was to work on grant opportunities and ideas. Brad would appreciate assistance with this. We need to look at new opportunities. We have a unique situation over the next few years as our seasonal workforce and some equipment is currently bolstered by a grant project which has approximately four more years left. We will keep our cash draw down to a minimum over the next few year.
- Betsy recommended the possibility of using donation cans for trail improvements in businesses such as the Base Camp, bicycle shops, or other places trail users would shop. Brad stated there have been suggestions over time (such as stickers to place on vehicles, putting some of the old parking meters at the trailheads, etc.). Brad added that in light of it being budget season, he wanted to get us thinking about where else we can go for funding.
- Dan – while not a popular idea, he asked how much Missoula gets for requiring residents to register bicycles. Brad stated there was conversation on registering pets. One of our rising costs is mutt-mitt stations.
- We have minimal revenue streams other than our maintenance district.
- Betsy suggested "rent a trail" for a day or have certain groups that would sponsor trail runs.

## **Reports from Subcommittees**

### Weeds – Greta

- Greta is still working on sidewalk snow removal complaints.
- With all the snow, it will be interesting to see what weeds do.
- Greta did announce that we are putting out a Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified contractors for weed spraying services on the City of Helena land and properties. We hope to get some good qualified candidates.

### Report from PPLT - Evan

- PPLT is gearing up for trail work days. They have been receiving calls from various groups who want to sponsor a volunteer work day. Last year, we had 1,400 hours of total volunteer work on trails.
- PPLT just opened a position to hire a full-time seasonal staff to work with Evan and Emmett on some different projects. Some of the work will be done on open lands, forest service and for PPLT. The position is funded for 21 weeks . The salary is \$13.00-\$14.50 per hour based on experience. This employee will be working mostly outside with volunteers.
- The Digital Trail Map will be ready to unveil sometime in April. We will have it ready to go live for new trail season. They are in the process of getting feedback from different partner organizations.
- Evan was asked about the 10-Mile Creek Park. PPLT typically has a strategy in place when they acquire land. There are some potential exit strategies; however at this time, no one is willing to manage this park. PPLT has developed approximately 3 miles of trail and parking area. There is

smaller plans for signage. This area is a blank canvas. It will depend on how much the board is willing to maintain and manage the park.

- This park has been opened for use but the “grand opening” of this park will be on June 2<sup>nd</sup> which is National Trails Day. They are hoping for 100 volunteers on this date. For more information go to: <http://bikehelenahelena.com/events/national-trails-day-trail-workday/>. The work event will begin at 9:00 am and go until around noon.

#### Cultural Resources

- Dan – there was one resident on Davis street that had no idea their road was going to become busy this summer. Do we need to notify the residents of the 30-day closure? Should this road be oiled to keep the dust down? Brad – while we are trying to keep abreast of the dates of the project, this is a Public Works project. We need to get the word out to those who use the trails. This is the West Main Reconstruction Project.
- **West Main Reconstruction:**  
The project limits are beginning near the intersection of Reeder’s Village and West Main Street and continuing south ending near the intersection of Grizzly Gulch Drive and Oro Fino Gulch. This project will reconstruct the water, sanitary sewer and storm drain facilities. The roadway and multi-modal facilities will also be reconstructed or installed. The multi-modal facilities are foreseen as sidewalks on both sides of the roadway and a climbing bike lane on the northwest side of the roadway. Project was budgeted in January, 2014.
- **Status as of March 2018:** In June, 2017, the project was approved by Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). At the June 12, 2017 City Commission meeting, the City Commission rejected all bids received on May 31, 2017.
- The project was rebid in late winter, 2018, and was awarded on March 12, 2018 to Helena Sand and Gravel. Construction is anticipated to begin in mid- to late April, depending on weather. A public meeting will be held on March 29, 2018 at 6 pm in room 426 of the City-County Building at 316 N. Park.
- For more information on this and other projects, please go to: <http://www.helenamt.gov/pw/engineering/master-plans/budgeted-capital-projects.html>; or <http://www.helenamt.gov/pw/engineering/master-plans/budgeted-capital-projects/west-main-reconstruction.html>.
- Evan stated they will invite Ryan Leland to the next Trail Committee Meeting.
- In closing, Dan mentioned that with the snow melt, there is quite a bit of dog waste on the trails. Is there anything we can do to get more people to clean up after their animals? Brad stated part of the reason behind the leash law was to ensure the owner could see what their pet is doing and clean up after them.
- Greta added that we are currently down to one animal control officer. Greta suggested we do an educational program at the trailheads expressing the importance of cleaning up after your pets. Brad added that a few years ago we looked at signage options for this issue. Maybe we need relook at this as a possibility.
- In Jackson, WY the Bridger Teton National Forest enforced a temporary ban after rangers picked up 168 piles of dog feces left behind along the trails (please see attached article): <http://planetjh.com/2015/03/11/feature-story-dog-days-are-over-forest-service-warns-dog-owners-with-week-closure-of-cache-creek/>

- These are suggestions we will need to consider moving forward. Pick a high-use area or busy trailhead and place someone there during a busy time. They can serve as a reminder of cleaning up after our pets.

#### Wildlife

- None.

#### Forestry

- None.

#### **Public Comment**

- We had a couple calls of another mountain lion kill on the MT Helena trailhead. Brad reminded everyone to be cognizant of this as you are out hiking. If you do hear of wounded deers or a dog chasing a deer, please have them call animal control.
- Jennifer is leaving Helena Tourism to work with Leadership Montana.
- When asked if dogs are allowed on the shuttle, Jennifer doesn't see this happening. This decision would come from Helena Transit.

**Next Meeting Date: April 10, 2018**

#### **Future Agenda Items:**

#### **Adjournment:**

- With no further business, the HOLMAC Advisory Board meeting adjourned at 7:13 pm.

#### **ADA NOTICE**

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