



Helena Citizens' Council (HCC)
Monthly Meeting
April 26, 2017- 7:00 PM
City/County Building - Room 326
Helena, Montana

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members Present:

District 1 Mary Ann George, Pat Christian, Sarah Sadowski

District 2 Gary Spaeth, Tyrel Suzor-Hoy

District 3 Sumner Sharpe, Flannery Herbert

District 4 Tom Woodgerd

District 5

District 6 Terry Ray

District 7 Dick Sloan, Denise Roth Barber, Bob Habeck

Guests Present: Brian Coplin, HELP; Sharon Haugen and Ellie Ray, Helena Community Development Department; Luke Muszkiewicz, citizen; Amy O'Leary and Laura Gowen, students;

Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

Chair Gary Spaeth called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and all present were introduced.

Spaeth stated that he went on record in support of revisions to the Community Decay Ordinance, which was on the City Commission agenda for April 24, 2017.

Downtown Zoning Code Update

Sharon Haugen, City Community Development Director, and Ellie Ray, City Planner, updated the HCC on the downtown zoning code update. The City adopted a Downtown Neighborhood Plan in 2016. Updating the zoning code is part of implementing the Downtown Neighborhood Plan. The City hired the consulting firm Orion Planning & Design to update the downtown zoning code. The consultants have conducted initial meetings to gather input from stakeholders. They anticipate a draft in June or July. Input from stakeholders will be solicited in August. HCC District representatives will be invited to participate.

Walking Mall Maintenance Recommendations

Mary Ann George presented a draft memo from the HCC to the City Commission. The memo is based on the report presented by Paul Pacini at the March 22, 2017 HCC meeting. She called attention to the addition of a disclaimer regarding lack of funding. Motion by Sumner Sharpe, 2nd by Pat Christian to approve the memorandum. The motion was approved with two members opposed. The following revisions to the memo were identified during discussion:

1. Delete the last sentence under bullet #3 that reads “This recommendation is made with the acknowledgement that there is not money currently budgeted for this position.”
2. Reword the last sentence to say “The Helena Citizens’ Council recommends that the City Commission consider these recommendations to ensure that the Downtown Walking Mall continues to be a viable and successful venue of the City of Helena.”

Snow Removal Policy Enforcement

Mary Ann George explained that the Chair of the ADA Compliance Committee, George McCauley, had asked the HCC to support his efforts regarding enforcement of the City’s snow removal policy. McCauley supports the City-initiated enforcement of the snow removal policy. Currently enforcement is complaint-driven.

Motion by Pat Christian, seconded by Denise Roth Barber, to send a letter to the City's ADA Compliance Committee supporting McCauley's proposed change to enforcement of the City's snow removal policy. The motion failed with five in favor and six opposed.

City Budget Work Sessions

HCC Treasurer Dick Sloan reported on the April 6 joint city-county budget work sessions. He stated that several city commissioners threatened to withdraw support for maintaining the city's portion of the budget for Historic Preservation, which is about 25% of the budget. Sloan suggested that the HCC consider taking a position on this.

HCC Coordinator Mary Vandenbosch distributed a revised schedule for the May 23 budget work sessions. Sloan requested that members email Vandenbosch if they wish to attend a session. The possibility of a special HCC meeting in early June focusing on the City budget was discussed.

Reports from Fact Finding Teams, Boards, Committees, Districts

Civic Center. The HCC fact finding team will make a recommendation at the May 24 HCC meeting. The team is interested in attending the budget work session and reviewing the budget request before making a recommendation. Flannery Herbert commended the consultant's report. Sarah Sadowski recommended looking into the exemption from term limits for Civic Center Board members.

Loss of Blue Cross/Blue Shield Employees Downtown. Sumner Sharpe distributed a preliminary report on this topic. Tyrel Suzor-Hoy agreed to join Sharpe in investigating the issue.

City Street Replacements. Sumner Sharpe distributed a preliminary report regarding the comprehensive capital improvement program proposed by the Public Works Department. The proposed program would affect rates. If adopted, it will provide for the first time a source of funding for major improvements to or rebuilding of major streets.

Summer HCC and Neighborhood Gatherings. Chair Gary Spaeth reminded members that funds are budgeted for publicizing neighborhood gatherings.

Caird Site Development. Tyrel Suzor-Hoy requested that this topic be placed on the agenda to consider a recommendation for action at the May 24 meeting.

March 22, 2017 Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the March 22, 2017 HCC meeting were approved as written.

HCC Budget

HCC Treasurer Dick Sloan called for HCC members to volunteer to attend budget work sessions in May.

Coordinator's Report

HCC Coordinator Mary Vandebosch reminded members that those who wish to serve on the HCC in 2018-2019 must file for election between April 20 and June 19. In addition, there are vacancies for the current term in districts 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.