



Helena Citizens' Council (HCC)
Minutes
November 30th 7:00pm
Zoom and in person Room 326

Meeting was called to order by HCC Chair Cole Rosling at 7:00pm

Attendance: John R Andrew, John E Andrew, Patricia Bik, Diana Hammer, Nancy Perry, Joe Lehman, Ben Kuiper, Nolan Harris, Lowell Chandler, Paige Myers, Margaret Strachan, Emily Mowers, Michael Monaco, Rachel Okapal, Cole Rosling, Erinn Donnell, Heidi Friendlander, Elizabeth Maida-Gerhart, Steve Allen, Chelly Hasquet, Bob Habeck, Denise Roth-Barber, Susan Steffens, Peggy Benkelman (coordinator)

Excused: Dyan Klapmeier,

Absent: Ryan Schwochert, TJ Lehman, Susan Smith

Guests: Commissioner Dean, Commissioner Logan, City Clerk Dannai Clayborn, Dr. Thomas G, Lucas Wallace, Ann, Norm Mullen, Jim Kerins, Lynn Exe.

A Quorum was established - yes

Approval of October 2022 Minutes – Minutes approved with two small corrections: New sustainability director's name is spelled correctly and her position is ½ recycling and ½ sustainability.

Public Comment –

Ann (Heidi – name will remain confidential) spoke out about her upcoming eviction notice asking for the HCC's help. Ann says she will be evicted in about 2 weeks and has nowhere to go. She has checked, and there are no places to rent within her income level. She has been in several car accidents and that has affected her mentally. She used to be a school teacher. She is asking for any help the HCC can give or suggest. Commissioner Logan suggests many of the non-profits that may help her. HCC members suggest a few legal resources as well. Peggy B., the HCC Coordinator will email Ann a list of helpful contacts.

Norm Mullen (westnorm@hotmail.com) spoke about the bad drainage and poor conditions of the tennis courts. Norm has spent 23 years in Helena playing tennis and some pickleball. He says over the years the courts get cracked – probably from freeze and thaw. Barney Park courts have been redone, but there still may be drainage issues. The US Tennis Association has standards for drainage, but Norm doesn't know if the city follows them. The courts could continue to breakdown if not repaired properly. These large cracks could cause people to trip and fall. This could be a source of legal action. HCC District #2-member, Ben Kuiper, will keep track of the City of Helena Parks Department work on repairing and updating the courts.

Guest Speakers –

CMS (Communication and Management Services – involved with City Manager Hire) Jim Kerins, Lynn Exe

The City Commission has put together a study with Department Heads which includes priorities they feel are necessary in a City Manager. CMS is ready to start the recruitment process by

December 5th and will begin posting the position by December 12th. The posting will include salary, job requirements etc. CMS will promote having a national reach but will not be spending a lot of money on advertising.

Jim Kerins asks if the HCC's list of District Priorities (document sent to the Commission in October) should be presented and communicated to applicants for the City Manager position? Subject got changed, so few responses.

Margaret Strachan HCC District #3 is concerned about citizen participation in the process. She wants to confirm there will be plenty of public input.

Cole Rosling – HCC Chair – prefers a candidate who is interested in staying for the long term.

Nancy Perry HCC District #2 – asks why is CMS casting a nationwide net? Is that necessary? CMS answers – there may be a number of applicants that are familiar with, or who have worked in smaller Montana communities. CMS reiterates it does not intend to spend a lot of money on outreach/marketing. CMS doesn't want to rule out someone outside of Montana if they have knowledge of Montana law and familiarity with towns the size of Helena.

Nolan Harris - HCC District #2 Member - asks if CMS is giving preference to Montanans that apply for the job? CMS says some criteria may favor those with Montana law knowledge, procurement, contract and budgeting experience.

Michael Monaco - HCC District #4 - asks if the HCC has been involved with the hiring process of the City Manager before? John E. Andrew HCC District #1 - responds that yes, the HCC has been involved with the last two hires. John says the process was open with a structured format and questions and answers. The potential hires were able to interact with HCC members.

Jim Kerins – CMS – asks what type of input does HCC want? It should be interesting to see how the candidates interact with citizens and the HCC.

Lowell Chandler District #3 – feels it should be important that the new City Manager has successful grant application knowledge. This should be a priority for Helena. Missoula and Bozeman seem to be securing all the grants.

Cole Rosling – HCC Chair – would like more details on the role the HCC will play in the hiring of the City Manager.

Commissioner Logan states that the HCC has asked good questions tonight and the Commission will observe closely how the candidates interact with both the HCC and the public.

Commissioner Dean – agrees that longevity of a new City Manager is important. Often Helena is compared to Missoula and Bozeman, yet the population of Helena is so much less, and the city only has one grant writer. The average time a City Manager stays in their position is 2.5 years. It is important that the new City Manager is the right fit.

50:32 – 55:20 Screen sharing wasn't enabled due to Whiteboard lock up. Peggy B., Denise Barber and Diana Hammer could not share their screens. While re-watching the Zoom, one screen share did show up for about a second, then pop off.

Bylaw Committee Updates – Bob Habeck – Bob discusses the committees' changes and strike-outs. Everyone in room 326 can view Peggy's screen with the Word version of the document. Members at home have to refer to their own copy provided to them before the meeting.

Bob Habeck continues where we left off at last meeting. He discusses strike-outs, such as section in IV – restates everyone is welcome to attend meetings. Next, under section II, Budget Committee, Ben Kuiper suggests we strike out that the City Manager can prevent HCC members from contacting Department Heads directly. Nolan Harris agrees with this strike out. He likes the inclusion of the City Staff. Denise R Barber and Rachel Opakal would like to use the wording “may work with” instead of “coordinate”.

Diana Hammer – states in the past she has worked closely with staff during the budget cycle and she feels it is important to hear their needs/wants.

Bob Habeck – in Article VII the word “discretionary” was added. Expenditures will be approved by the HCC Treasurer along with the Executive Committee.

Bob Habeck – new addition – Article VIII. Official recommendations must be approved by a majority vote at an HCC meeting. The HCC only makes recommendations to the City Commission. Recommendations need to be put on the HCC agenda with at least 48 hours’ notice. They need to be open for discussion at a meeting with details and information presented.

Patricia Bik – says that the document does not mention that Independent HCC Districts can also make recommendations.

Diana Hammer & Bob Habeck – state that an individual or an HCC District can always make a recommendation to the City Commission, but they must say that they are not representing the HCC as a whole.

Denise R. Barber – is there ever a time when the HCC may want to act on Old Business?

Rachel Opakal – actionable items need to be listed in the Agenda

Bob Habeck – and they have to meet the 48-hour notice requirement.

Bob Habeck – take out “Old Business”, now referred to as “Unfinished Business”

Rachel Opakal – add proposed recommendation as they are not official until voted upon and approved.

Denise R. Barber – remove word official

Bob Habeck – remove word City in front of the word Commission.

Cole Rosling – asks about clarity on what constitutes a quorum and issues about membership. Discussion ensues and questions are answered – see new document.

Lowell Chandler – asks about voting by proxy? This is not allowed due to open meeting laws.

You need to be present, hear the public comment and participate in the discussion.

Bob Habeck – Article VII – Section I – Recommendations. The HCC does not allow proxy voting. Members must be in attendance (either in person or online) in order to vote.

Motion: (by Bob Habeck) to accept the HCC Bylaw proposed changes as presented. Pat Bik seconds the motion.

A verbal vote is taken: 23 yea, no nays, no abstentions.

Chair Cole Rosling asks Bob Habeck to explain the role of the Nominating Committee. It is decided that Denise R. Barber, Bob Habeck and Dylan Klapmeier will be on the nominating committee.

Reports of Officers, Boards, & Standing Committees

Chair Cole Rosling – he defers his report in the interest of time

Vice-Chair Dylan Klapmeier – excused from meeting, so no report

Treasurer – Nolan Harris – reports budget expenditures so far this year are display cabinet \$189.98. District #1 Outreach \$46.32, Display Window \$12.99. Will be approximately \$1000 to spend. He reminds HCC members they are encouraged to have Outreach events.

Secretary Diana Hammer – defers in the interest of time

Commission Attendees Reports

11/7 Lowell Chandler – Henderson Bridge Recommendation was discussed – looks like city will allocate money. There will be a design feasibility study.

11/16 Pat Bik – more discussion on the Henderson St. Bridge. City also discussed the 0% service line replacement program and it was suggested to no longer charge customers a fee for this.

11/21 Steve Allen – He was locked out of meeting, yet drove to City County Bldg, but meeting was already over.

11/30 Heidi Friedlander – she said it was interesting because she got to see how the Commissioners were allocating ARPA funds. There were many local nonprofits there advocating for their programs. Heidi mentioned she did share Dr. G's comment about including E. Helena in some of their future decisions.

Coordinator Report – Peggy B. mentions the Outreach Committee will be updating the display cabinet this weekend.

Committee Updates

Outreach – Emily Mowers – ArtWalk was a success. Location was great(at Birds & Beasleys). Reminder that in the spring, each district will be asked to plan a neighborhood event.

HOLMAC – TJ Lehman – absent from meeting

Civic Center – tabled until future notice

HPAC – Paige Myers - no meeting because of lack of quorum. HPAC body is still working on Centennial Park Panels.

Non-Motorize Travel – Lowell Chandler – Save Our Westside commented at this meeting about how important NMTAC is in regards to the newest version of the Westside Woods proposal.

Transp. Coord. – Joe Lehman – meeting in January – will report then.

Water Quality – Diana Hammer – meeting in January will report then

Citizen Cons. Board – Denise Roth Barber – This board will be extended. The City is considering a new resolution, but CCB did not yet have time to review it. Curbside recycling may increase in cost for users, it will go from \$8 to \$12 per month.

Library Board – Paige Myers – The Library has approved the Dolly Parton Imagination Library for children 0-5 years. Dolly Parton pays for the books and Lady Gianforte will pay for shipping.

Golf – Ryan Schwochert – absent from meeting

Fire Department – Elizabeth Gerhart – meeting Dec. 1st, so she will report next month

Parks – Ben Kuiper – Ben will keep the HCC apprised of progress on the Tennis Courts.

Ann returns to meeting to further discuss her plight with her home. The HCC says they will receive her letter and recommend that she utilize the services of RMDC, Good Samaritan, MT Legal Services, Family Promise, United Way, Attorney Stefan Wall is mentioned: 1 N Last Chance Gulch 442-1054.

New Business – New Topics for Discussion

How AirBnBs & VRBOs impact our neighborhoods

Paige Myers mentions what an AirBnB host needs to do? Forms? Pay taxes? Register? Does Helena have any regulations and do they enforce them?

Margaret Strachan says there are over 100 AirBnBs in the area. Is there a license requirement? What is legal and illegal about them? They are contributing to the City's housing shortage.

Emily Mowers says she believes they do have lodging taxes. This issue may be worth a recommendation from the HCC to the Commission.

Paige Myers requests a committee be formed to work on the AirBnB issues within Helena.

Cole Rosling suggests it is early for a committee as this is still just the information gathering stage.

Adjourn Meeting -9:13PM - Paige Myers makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, Diana Hammer seconds. Chair Cole Rosling adjourns the meeting.