



Helena Citizens' Council (HCC)

Minutes

May 24th, 2023, 7-9PM
Zoom only

16:58 Meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Ben Kuiper at 7:07 pm

Attendance: John E Andrew, John R. Andrew, Patricia Bik, Diana Hammer, Nancy Perry, Joe Lehman, Ben Kuiper, Nolan Harris, Paige Myers, Emily Mowers, Michael Monaco, Heidi Friendlander, Steve Allen, Bob Habeck, Susan Steffens, Chelly Hasquet, Peggy Benkelman (coordinator)

Excused: Margaret Strachan, Ryan Schwochert, Cole Rosling, Lowell Chandler, Margaret Strachan, Erinn Donnell, Denise Roth-Barber

A Quorum was established – yes

17:51 Approval of April 2023 Minutes – Ben opens the floor for comments/Discussion about April Minutes. None was had. Nancy Perry motions to approve the minutes and Pat Bik seconds the motion. All were in favor, non opposed. Motion passes and minutes are approved.

18:00 Public Comment – None

18:19 Guests: Amy Teegarden – *Fire Safe Helena* -Fire Safe Helena should have its big roll out in early summer. Amy T. is the interim director of Tri County Fire Safe Working Group. It received its non-profit status in 2017. It serves L&C, Broadwater and Jefferson counties. Tri-County has been the go-between for land management agencies and private landowners with forested land. The organization has received pass through grants and conducted outreach and education programs especially in the wildland interface areas such as North Hills and Birdseye.

Amy T. projects wildfire risk website on her screen:

<https://wildfirerisk.org/explore/overview/30/30049/3000023125/> Showing that Helena has a 65% higher risk of wildfire than other communities. The newly formed *Fire Safe Helena* was chosen by the City of Helena to receive ARPA funds which solidified the program. Ember storms are a real concern for ignition. They are what cause urban conflagration (an extensive fire which destroys a great deal of land or property). *Fire Safe Helena* has established 3 main goals:

1. Onsite Wildfire Risk Assessment (to Helenan's home – applications are necessary)
2. A Robust Outreach Program
 - a. Complete 200 assessments per year
 - b. Have 3 large Community Events (e.g chipper day)
 - c. Construct a strong Media/PR Campaign
3. Evacuation Preparedness – they will gather and compile info from assessments which in turn may allow them to obtain additional grant funding.

Fire Safe Helena has a steering committee composed of Jon Campbell (Fire Chief) Lewis & Clark County DES (disaster and emergency services) and John R. Andrew of the HCC.

Nancy Perry – HCC district #2 – asks when will the assessments start? Amy T. answers that the City needs to finalize the Draft Agreement/Contract. Maybe by the middle of June they can start and the grant will have been secured. They already have 5 applications.

Emily Mowers – HCC District #3 – asks Amy T. how she envisions how HCC can help and promote *Fire Safe Helena*. Amy T. says for HCC to network with its constituents, help channel communications, and perhaps HCC will have a role in special events.

Nancy Perry – District #2 – asks if *Fire Safe Helena* could attend one of HCC’s outreach events. Fire Safe Helena would give messaging on how neighbors can work together. Your neighbor’s property may put your property at risk, so we need to educate everyone and have them work together.

John R. Andrew – District #1 – says *Fire Safe Helena* is off to a soft start. Neighbors getting together for a neighborhood clean up would be great.

The remainder of the meeting was spent discussing and voting upon the HCC Budget Recommendation.

Treasurer Nolan Harris led the discussion as he moved through the document. The floor was open for HCC members to discuss and ask questions about the recommendation.

Bob Habeck – tells HCC members that they are free to add their ideas at this time. He says the work in the document is solid. Nolan Harris agrees.

Comments were made with changes to the document.

51:05 Nolan H. says he will add numbers to the Table of Contents when the document is completed.

53:57 Nolan Harris states the sentence: *overall funding request and capital improvements from the City of Helena are largely supported by the HCC from last year, should the sentence be left in the document?* Emily Mowers says yes and Diana Hammer agrees. Non are opposed to leaving it in. Sentence stays.

56:28 The ARPA funds survey will more accurately report survey results. Diana Hammer suggested that other non-profits be included in HCC’s support of ARPA funds placement. The survey taken by HCC members will be included in the document.

1:04:12 Ben Kuiper – wants to cut the sentence “do to more or less status quo” because the HCC has no stance on this. HCC members vote to cut the sentence.

1:11:46 Some confusion about a \$100K sustainability audit vs sustainability plan. Diana Hammer will research further and add the correct information to the document.

1:15:58 Remove Capital Fund request from document. All HCC members approve.

1:20:20 Fire Department Fund 013. Nolan asks the HCC if exact dollar amounts should be added? Ben Kuiper says it is better to not have specific dollar amounts. HCC members agree.

1:35:20 Transportation Fund 201 – Susan Steffens says the first paragraph is hard to understand it is “word salad”. Nolan Harris says he will clean up the language. No opposition to these changes.

1:41:21 – Delete “notable fund requests” and make it broader, by saying that HCC agrees with the Facilities Department requests.

1:45:23 – Emily Mowers requests to reword the part that says “HCC is disappointed” and have a more positive tone. All of HCC agrees and the section was reworded to say “HCC would like to see more additional sustainability items included in the future”.

Vice Chair Ben Kuiper calls for any changes, additions, deletions, extra ideas/comments to the recommendation document.

1:53:27 Paige Myers would like to have page numbers in the Table of Contents

1:54:17 Ben Kuiper makes a second call for any changes to the document

1:55:58 There is a motion from Nolan Harris to approve the Budget Recommendation with changes discussed. Pat Bik seconds this motion.

1:56:38 Ben Kuiper calls for a role call vote. The vote is 14 yea, 0 nay, no abstentions. The Budget Recommendation passes. The HCC coordinator will email the recommendation to Sheila Danielson (Finance Director), City Manager Burton, Mayor Collins, the Commissioners and the Clerks of Commission tomorrow morning May 25th.

Motion to Adjourn the meeting by Nolan Harris, seconded by Emily Mowers

2:04:23 Vice Chair Ben Kuiper calls the Meeting Adjourned at 9:00PM

Next Full HCC Board Meeting June 28th 7:00 PM in person room 326 or attend via Zoom