



Helena Citizens' Council (HCC)  
Monthly Meeting  
October 26, 2016 - 7:00 PM  
City/County Building - Room 326  
Helena, Montana

## ***MEETING MINUTES***

### **Attendance**

#### **Members Present:**

District 1 Paul Pacini, Sarah Sadowski, Pat Christian

District 2 John Rundquist

District 3 Sumner Sharpe, Gary Dalton

District 4 Tom Woodgerd

District 5

District 6 Terry Ray, Maureen Kiely

District 7 Bob Habeck, Denise Roth Barber, John Forbes

**Guests Present:** Brian Coplin, Help!; Cory Bailey and Jason Zander, Helena Police Department;

### **Call to Order, General Business and Announcements**

Vice Chair Sumner Sharpe called the meeting to order and all present were introduced.

Officer Cory Bailey reported that two more Helena Police Department (HPD) officers had been hired. The Police Department is reviewing applications to hire more officers. HCC members raised questions about abandoned cars, cars parked in the wrong direction, camping on city streets, noise, and junk on property. Bailey explained that the HPD doesn't have enough

officers to search for cars that aren't moving and encouraged citizens to initiate a complaint about abandoned cars to start the tracking process. Paul Pacini noted that the police have been very responsive to complaints about abandoned cars in his neighborhood. Bailey explained that a camper cannot be towed if a person is living in it; if the person can take care of them self, the situation is not a criminal matter and the HPD does not become involved. Elroy Golemon is the City of Helena's code enforcement officer. In response to a question, Bailey explained that a complainant will need to press charges if an officer doesn't witness a noise violation.

The minutes of the September 28 meeting were approved unanimously with the following corrections:

- On page 2 under "Civic Center Business Plan," identify Bridget Johnston as the contact person for the Civic Center planning process and provide Johnston's contact information.
- On page 3, first full paragraph beginning with "Terry Frisch," change "resolution" to "recommendation."

With respect to the budget report, Vice Chair Sumner Sharpe encouraged members to keep thinking of ways to get the word out about the HCC.

### **HELP! - Community Collaboration**

Brian Coplin, Director, HELP! presented information about HELP!. Coplin explained that HELP! is creating a community navigational system to match people to programs and programs to people. This involves creating a database and web portal and establishing a help desk for face-to-face assistance. Board members will be needed to attain nonprofit status.

Coplin distributed several handouts, including the following:

- Circle of Drowning Prevention
- HELP+ Sequential Intercept Map

- Helena Consented Referral System
- HELP!

Coplin suggested that interested persons contact him by email (50briancoplin@gmail.com).

### **Civic Center Update**

HCC members reviewed some of the ideas under consideration in the business planning process for revitalizing the Civic Center and bringing in more revenue. These include: hiring someone to be responsible for programming, using the Civic Center for additional types of gatherings like educational seminars; sponsoring a residency for a theater or dance group; bringing in big names to subsidize local efforts; and encouraging tour groups to visit the Civic Center. Paul Pacini attended a meeting with planning consultant Martin Cohen and also a focus group meeting. He emphasized that Cohen is aware of the significance of the Civic Center to Helena. Currently, no effort is being made to earn revenue. Shows are initiated by performers.

Sarah Sadowski attended the October Civic Center Board meeting. Angela Poole has been hired as the new Civic Center Manager. An Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant restroom has been completed on stage left. A significant financial investment will be required to comply with the fire code.

### **City Budget**

Sumner Sharpe distributed a handout prepared by Treasurer Dick Sloan and reviewed the timeline for the City budget process. Sharpe reported that Sloan wants the HCC to get involved with the budgeting process early. City departments begin preparing their budget requests in December and January. Sloan will work with HCC Coordinator Mary Vandebosch to schedule meetings with department representatives and HCC members in December. Members were urged to contact Vandebosch or Sloan to indicate their availability to participate in these meetings. Sharpe emphasized the importance of the HCC's role in preparing the budget.

### **Fact-Finding Teams**

## **Ponderosa Team-Montana Avenue Underpass**

Tom Woodgerd distributed a handout that he prepared, entitled “Montana Avenue Railroad Grade Separation in the 2104 Long Range Transportation Plan.” The [“Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan 2014 Update”](#) was adopted by the City Commission in 2015.” The MDT established statewide priorities. Helena’s Montana Avenue crossing was ranked #2 and the Benton Avenue crossing was ranked #3. Woodgerd proposed that the HCC promote baby steps toward making a Montana Avenue underpass project “shovel ready.” The costs of making the project shovel ready are not known. HCC members suggested that Woodgerd contact Lynn Zanto, Administrator of MDT’s Rail, Transit and Planning Division, to obtain more information about the steps necessary to make the project shovel ready and the associated costs.

HCC members discussed involving the county and reminding the state of the priorities it identified. Sharpe noted that a fuel tax, if approved, could raise revenue to provide matching funds.

## **Mourning Cloak Team-Cell Phone Use and Running Red Lights While Driving**

Denise Roth Barber distributed a report dated 10/26/2016 with the Mourning Cloak team’s findings on running red lights in Helena and cell phone use while driving. The HCC discussed whether or not to report the findings to the City Commission without a recommendation. Discussion among the members supported reporting the findings to the Commission. Barber will edit the report to change the audience to the City Commission and to thank the Commission for passing the ordinance that bans drivers from using handheld cellphones while operating vehicles.

## **Coordination**

Fact Finding Team Coordinator Paul Pacini reminded the fact finding teams that their efforts are intended to be short term (approximately one month), and are not intended to be long term research projects. A liaison (Chair, Vice Chair, or Coordinator Paul Pacini) has been designated

for each team. Sumner Sharpe expressed interest in revising the topics in January and encouraged members to bring forth new topics.

### **Nominating Committee for Council Officers**

Denise Roth Barber, Bob Habeck, and Tom Woodgerd indicated their willingness to serve on the nominating committee to be appointed in November.

### **HCC Representatives on Boards and Committees**

Lists of Boards and Committees were circulated for members to indicate their interest in attending meetings or serving as voting members.

### **Public Comment**

An opportunity was provided for additional public comment on items not on the agenda and within the HCC's jurisdiction. HCC member Sarah Sadowski announced that AERO (Alternative Energy Resources Organization) is working to secure resources to reengage the community in the climate change action plan and that Helena Food Share and the Governor's Office of Community Service AmeriCorps will be conducting "Doorsteps to Backpacks" -- a citywide food drive -- on March 8, 2017.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.