



Helena Citizens' Council (HCC)  
Monthly Meeting  
August 23, 2017- 7:00 PM  
City/County Building - Room 326  
Helena, Montana

## Meeting Minutes

### Attendance

#### **Members Present:**

District 1 Mary Ann George, Sarah Sadowski

District 2 Gary Spaeth, Tyrel Suzor-Hoy

District 3 Sumner Sharpe, Gary Dalton, Eric Seidle

District 4

District 5

District 6 Terry Ray, Maureen Kiely

District 7 Dick Sloan

**Guests Present:** Rose Casey and MC Beeby, Midtowne-Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association; Lieutenant Jayson Zander, Helena Police Department; Ken Wood, Assistant Chief, Helena Fire Department; Jonathon Ambarian, Montana Television Network

### Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

Chair Gary Spaeth called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and all present were introduced.

### **Applications for Vacancies**

Eric Seidle was appointed to serve District 3.

### **June 28, 2017 Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the June 28, 2017 meeting were approved as written.

### **Helena Police Department (HPD)**

Lieutenant Jayson Zander announced that the HPD is getting ready for back-to-school safety. There are four school resource officers and they will be watching for speeding and distracted driving in school zones. They are working with the news media on getting information out about back-to-school safety. The HCC Facebook editors will share HPD posts and related coverage.

### **Helena Fire Department (HFD)**

Assistant Chief Ken Wood discussed current Fire Department topics. In response to a question, Wood explained that City of Helena fire regulations generally match Stage 1 fire restrictions.

### **Access to Sixth Ward**

Rose Casey and MC Beeby, Midtowne and 6<sup>th</sup> Ward Neighborhood Association, discussed concerns about access to the neighborhood from Montana Avenue. They presented a resolution and a petition in support of improved access to the railroad business district from Montana Avenue that was signed by 19 businesses and organizations. They circulated a map of the Railroad Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District and noted that access is important to economic development in the TIF District.

They are recommending that the City bring affected interests to the table to address the need for improved access and traffic flow into the Sixth Ward from Montana Avenue. HCC members Gary Spaeth and Sarah Sadowski encouraged the Association to identify specific solutions.

Sadowski noted that specific bullet points can be identified based on previous studies (e.g., the Montana Department of Transportation has already evaluated the level of service).

Maureen Kiely asked about the interests of residents and noted that residents and businesses do not have the same interests.

Motion by Terry Ray, seconded by Mary Ann George, that the HCC request that the City address the need for improved access and traffic flow into the Sixth Ward from Montana Avenue.

Discussion on the motion addressed the impacts on schools, businesses, residents, and economic development. Motion approved with two abstentions, Maureen Kiely and Sarah Sadowski.

### **Jobs in Downtown Helena**

Vice Chair Sumner Sharpe distributed the following handouts: "Preliminary Report on Downtown's Loss of Blue Cross/Blue Shield Employees," "Preliminary Research Agenda for City Economic Development with Downtown Emphasis," and a Business Improvement District (BID) report of activity completed, underway and contemplated. The latter is a handout from the joint BID, Parking Commission, and City Commission meeting attended by Sharpe and Chair Gary Spaeth.

Sharpe highlighted two upcoming efforts involving the City Commission that the HCC may want to take part in or comment on: formation of a downtown TIF District; and updates to the Historic District Ordinance to address process and requirements.

He raised the issue of the city's role in economic development generally and, more specifically, in the development of jobs downtown.

## **Outreach**

The HCC decided to close the survey on September 30. Chair Gary Spaeth and Vice Chair Sumner Sharpe will write a letter to the editor or other opinion piece promoting participation in the survey.

## **HCC Budget**

Treasurer Dick Sloan reported that the HCC budget is in good shape and money is available for outreach and district gatherings.

## **Coordinator's Report**

Coordinator Mary Vandebosch explained that write-in candidates can file by September 5. The City Commission can cancel uncontested races and declare those who have filed to be elected by acclamation. The City Commission passed a Resolution of Intention to cancel the general election for districts 2 through 7 if they remain uncontested. There will be a public hearing on the cancellation of elections on September 11.

## **Reports from Fact-Finding Teams, Boards, Committees, Districts**

Sarah Sadowski reported that the Civic Center Advisory Board does not meet in July or August. Therefore, she has not had an opportunity to present the HCC's recommendations to the Board. She is advocating for giving public notice of the Advisory Board meetings.

Sadowski also reported that the Bentonia block party was held Aug. 4 and she distributed surveys.

Terry Ray reported that railroad crossing improvements have been made for the Quiet Zone. Inspections are required before implementation. He hopes the quiet zone will be in effect by December.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.