



Helena Citizens' Council (HCC)
Monthly Meeting
April 25, 2018
City/County Building - Room 326
Helena, Montana

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members Present:

District 1 Pat Christian, John Andrew

District 2

District 3 Sumner Sharpe, Gary Dalton, Eric Seidle

District 4 Tom Woodgerd, Doug Hunsaker, Jerrod Bevan

District 5

District 6 Maureen Kiely, Alyssa Townsend, Whitney Bausch

District 7 Dick Sloan, Bob Habeck, Denise Roth Barber,

Other Attendees: Marissa Rivera, Nancy Perry, Kori Dee, Tom Kilmer, Dave Maslowski, Andre Simons, citizens; Les Clark, Scott Birkenbuel, Montana Independent Living Project; Jayson Zander, Helena Police Department (HPD); Mary Vandenbosch, HCC Coordinator; Heather O'Loughlin, City Commissioner;

Call to Order

Chairman Sumner Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Appointment of HCC Representative

Maureen Kiely announced that the representatives of District 6 have appointed Whitney Bausch to represent District 6.

Public Comment

Tom Kilmer expressed his interest in addressing abandoned vehicles parked on streets. Marissa Rivera identified some suggestions for HCC publicity.

Commissioner O’Loughlin

Commissioner Heather O’Loughlin explained her overarching goals of thinking about a vision of what Helena should look like in 10-20 years and what we need to do to achieve that vision. She highlighted some current priorities for the Commission:

- Ways the City can be proactive with respect to economic development and affordable housing.
- Hiring a new City Manager. The Commission is soliciting proposals from “headhunter” consulting firms to conduct the process. They have asked prospective firms to identify a stakeholder feedback process. Commissioner O’Loughlin stated that it will be important to involve the HCC in this process.

Commissioner O’Loughlin stated that it is incredibly helpful when the HCC brings very specific recommendations to the City Commission.

Abandoned Vehicles

Lieutenant Jayson Zander reviewed the process for responding to complaints about abandoned vehicles. Vehicles include cars, trailers, and recreational vehicles. While enforcement of the ordinance is complaint-driven, the HPD will act on anonymous complaints. When the HPD receives a complaint, they mark a tire and write on the window. After 72 hours, the HPD returns to place an orange sticker which provides 5 days’ notice that the vehicle will be towed. The ordinance does not specify the distance that the vehicle has to be moved. If the vehicle moves, the HPD can’t do anything until the time frames described kick in. He noted that responding to crimes takes precedence over abandoned vehicle complaints, so HPD action may take longer than these time frames.

In response to a question about the effectiveness of the ordinance, Zander explained that the HPD’s role is to enforce whatever ordinance the City adopts. However, he noted it would be helpful to determine the goal of the ordinance and target the ordinance to that goal.

Pat Christian stated that there are three issues that should be dealt with in different ways: junk vehicles, winter parking that interferes with snow plowing, and storage of recreational vehicles and boats.

Gary Dalton stated that public education is 75% of achieving compliance.

Proposed Fire Levy

Dave Maslowski, Yes for Fire Safety, presented information on the proposed fire levy that will be on the June ballot. They are seeking \$900,000 per year; of this \$600,000 is for personnel and \$300,000 is for capital expenditures. He explained that all firefighters are trained emergency technicians and 75% of what they do is responding to medical issues.

Last year, the Helena Fire Department was delayed on 90 calls and unable to respond at all 19 times. The levy would provide funding to hire 6 more fire fighters, which would mean two more fire fighters per shift.

The City is still applying for a grant to offset some of these costs for a period of time. Commissioner O'Loughlin explained that the City has the option to reduce the millage levied if not all funds are needed.

Maslowski distributed flyers. More information is available at YesForFireSafety.com.

Survey Protocol

Bob Habeck, HCC Survey Coordinator, presented the proposed survey protocol. He wants to be in a position to survey the public on a moment's notice. Habeck emphasized he would work with HCC members on designing tools that best meet the needs of members investigating issues. HCC members can request a survey at any time. The topic, purpose, and scope of the survey will be defined by a problem statement. He stated that HCC members should vote on the problem statement. Habeck will summarize the survey results. The HCC coordinator will post the survey protocol on the HCC website and notify members.

Proposed Changes to Subdivision Regulations

Chairman Sharpe noted that Community Development Director Sharon Haugen contacted the HCC to get input regarding proposed changes to subdivision regulations, per the request of the City Commission. Maureen Kiely reviewed a document entitled "City of Helena Subdivision Regulations: Proposed Revisions to Public Improvement Installation Options" and attachments.

Motion by Denise Roth Barber, seconded by Doug Hunsaker, that the HCC oppose the proposed changes to the subdivision regulations. The motion was approved by a majority of the HCC.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the March 28, 2018 meeting were approved as written.

Suggested Agenda Topics

Denise Roth Barber requested that the next HCC agenda include a discussion of how and whether HCC members should identify themselves when presenting their opinions in public.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 p.m.