



**Helena Citizens' Council (HCC)
Monthly Meeting
June 27, 2018- 7:00 PM
City/County Building - Room 326
Helena, Montana**

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members Present:

- District 1 John Andrew, Mary Ann George
- District 2 Tyrel Suzor-Hoy, Nancy Perry
- District 3 Sumner Sharpe, Margaret Strachan, Gary Dalton
- District 4 Doug Hunsaker, Jerrod Bevan, Tom Woodgerd
- District 5 Carolan Bunegar
- District 6 Maureen Kiely, Alyssa Townsend, Whitney Bausch, Terry Ray
- District 7 Dick Sloan, Bob Habeck, Denise Roth Barber

Other Attendees: Lieutenant Jayson Zander, Helena Police Department (HPD); Brian Obert, Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC); Ed Noonan, City Commissioner; Sharon Haugen, Community Development Department; Mary Vandenbosch, HCC Coordinator

Call to Order

Chairman Sumner Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Appointment of HCC Representatives

Tyrel Suzor-Hoy announced that he has appointed Nancy Perry and Meg Bishop to represent District 2.

Public Comment

Community Development Department director Sharon Haugen announced that July 26 is the date of the next public meeting on the downtown urban renewal plan. Mayor Collins is hosting a community conversation July 23 at the Civic Center. The topic is disruptive behavior in the downtown area.

Commissioner Noonan

City Commissioner Ed Noonan expressed his appreciation for the HCC's participation in the city's budget development process and comments on the city budget. He reviewed his priorities, including the following:

- Helena Civic Center. He is advising manager Byron Dike on making connections at the national level. He emphasized that the Civic Center Board has done great fundraising; however, the Board does not advise staff on programming.
- Crosswalks and sidewalks.
- Snow removal. More money has been budgeted for snow removal next winter. An independent contractor will remove snow downtown. He is interested in reducing the number of emergency snow routes. Emergency snow routes must be plowed first. There are so many emergency snow routes that the remaining streets are neglected. No decision has been made about emergency snow routes.
- Defining ourselves as one community; and not as the City and the Valley.

Chairman Sharpe expressed interest in meeting with a representative of the search firm hired to search for a City Manager before the request for proposals is issued.

Montana Business Assistance Connection

Brian Obert, Executive Director, explained that MBAC is a not-for-profit regional economic development agency. He distributed a brochure about the organization and the "Helena Area Chamber of Commerce Trends Report" (Volume 3, 2018). The organization uses funding from the state and federal governments and members to assist businesses. Assistance provided includes:

- providing gap funds and direct financing;
- attracting businesses and the work force;
- identifying physical locations for businesses;

- administering a revolving loan fund for brownfields redevelopment;
- finding workforce housing;
- hosting SCORE volunteers who provide mentoring services to small businesses; and
- other problem-solving services.

They do not charge for most services.

Obert noted that downtown Helena has been identified as an Opportunity Zone. Under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, investors can avoid capital gains tax by investing in this area.

Vehicle Storage and Illegal Parking

Terry Ray distributed a memo dated June 24, 2018 re: vehicles stored and illegally parked on Helena's neighborhood streets and boulevards. He noted that this is one of the top issues that HCC members chose to work on. Terry met with the City Manager to discuss the information presented in the memo. City Attorney Thomas Jodoin and Helena Police Chief Troy McGee are working on revisions to the abandoned vehicle ordinance to tighten up loopholes. They will attend the HCC's July meeting. Ray also investigated programs in other cities.

Ray suggested that an information campaign include options for people to store vehicles legally. Members were encouraged to send ideas on this topic to Ray.

Lieutenant Jayson Zander described a new program he is working on to contract with towing companies to tow vehicles out of the city to a salvage yard. There is funding available from the state to reimburse the cost of towing the vehicles.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the May 23, 2018 were approved with one correction: Maureen Kiely was excused and did not attend the meeting.

HCC Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Maureen Kiely noted that the HCC budget includes \$400 per district for outreach and gave examples of good ways to use the money. The approved budget will be distributed at the next meeting. Tyrel Suzor-Hoy asked if there is a budget plan for FY '19. The budget will be distributed at the next meeting.

Coordinator's Report

HCC Coordinator Mary Vandebosch explained that she works 15 hours per week for two committees, including nearly 40 volunteers. Members are welcome to request assistance from the Coordinator; however, it is important to allow adequate turn around time.

Vandebosch will make copies of materials related to meeting agenda items. She encouraged members to include the following information with documents to be copied: who is the author; what is being requested of the HCC; and any other pertinent information needed to make a decision.

City Budget

Vice Chair Dick Sloan distributed a handout. He plans to update the HCC quarterly on the status of the city budget. He noted that the City has a fair amount of debt and it's costing the City about \$1 million/year to finance the debt. HCC member Terry Ray suggested that the HCC look at general-funded activities that could be enterprise-funded.

HCC Member Identification Guidelines

Chairman Sharpe reported that he did not receive any comments on the "Clarification on Membership Representation" document that he distributed. Comments are still welcome. These will eventually be included in updates to the HCC's operating procedures.

Proposed Revisions to HCC Bylaws and Purpose Statement and Guiding Principles

An email message from Secretary Doug Hunsaker presenting proposed revisions to these documents was distributed. Hunsaker explained that the HCC does not have the authority to sponsor; furthermore, he is concerned about liability. The issue arose when an HCC member approached the Executive Committee about an agenda item related to the HCC sponsoring an event (a community education program on fire safety). The Executive Committee decided to address this issue in the bylaws. No action was taken. The following points were brought up in discussion:

- Various opinions were expressed about the meanings of different words (sponsor, endorse, etc.).
- It is not necessary to adopt a policy in response to one situation. The question of HCC support for an event, proposal, etc. should be decided by the full HCC.

- If there is a concern about liability, the City Attorney should be consulted.
- Some members stated that the HCC should sponsor or endorse events and/or proposals
- Districts have been highly encouraged to host district wide events. Three of the District 7 representatives met and agreed that this community education program on fire safety would be a meaningful neighborhood event.
- Guidance should be provided about what the HCC can do.

Reports from Fact Finding Teams

John Andrew reported that Civic Center Manager Byron Dike developed a 5-year plan that focuses on projects, not programming. Andrew will circulate the preliminary budget.

Carolann Bunegar is interested in organizing another weed pulling event in July.

Agenda Items for Future Meetings

Chairman Sharpe stated that a special HCC meeting may be called to provide input regarding the search process for the City Manager.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.