



**Helena Citizens' Council (HCC)**  
**MINUTES**  
**July 24th, 2019 7:00pm**  
**City/County Building - Room 326**

**Members Present:** A quorum was present (7 members from 4 different districts = quorum)

District 1: John Andrew

District 2: Meg Bishop, Nancy Perry, Susan Lenard, Nick Sovner

District 3: Sumner Sharpe,

District 4:

District 5:

District 6:

District 7: Dick Sloan, Denise Roth Barber  
(Quorum present)

**Other Attendees:** David Knoepke (Street Superintendent), Ryan Leland (City Engineer), Kristi Ponzozzo (Openlands, Parks & Rec Director), Mary Craigle (Bureau Chief/Census & Economic Info Center MT), Colleen McCarthy (Partnership Specialist MT. Census 2020) Hugh Zackheim ( Citizen District 1)

**Members Excused/Absent:** Flannery Herbert, Eric Seidle, Gary Dalton, Margaret Strachan, Tom Woodgerd, Douglas Hunsaker, Dylan Klapmeier, Ben Kennedy, Whitney Bausch, Bob Habeck, Doris Davis

**Call To Order:** Chairman Sumner Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**Public Comment:**

- Meg Bishop and Susan Lenard requested that perhaps they could be given all the mailing addresses in their district (2) to utilize for mailing labels. Peggy will look into cost and availability.
- John Andrew would like more detail on the GIS maps – easier to read street names.
- It was noted that the HCC abandoned cars recommendations will receive City attention this Fall.

**Coordinator's Report:** Peggy Benkelman reported that the display board in City/County Bldg. added some interest out in the community. It will be taken down and displayed quarterly. Door hangers for City Growth Policy were distributed. The HCC website continues to be updated. She attended an Active Shooter Training as required by the city.

**Minutes:** Sumner Sharpe asked if there are any changes or additions to the June Minutes. Minutes stand as submitted – approved.

**US 2020 Census. Guest Speakers: Mary Craigle and Colleen McCarthy**

- A Power Point was presented. Why do we have a Census? Three main reasons: to acquire fair share of funding, for planning and apportionment/redistricting.
- Census is mandated by the US Constitution every 10 years. Is it safe? Private information is never published, it is for statistics only, it is a Federal Crime if privacy is violated.

- Why Montana? So our state gets its fair share of funding. Montana received \$2.5B which means \$20,000 of funding per resident per year,
- Most funding is for services such as childcare, matching funds, health, education, transportation and housing.
- Census Info used for: 1. Apportionment – Congressional seats (MT. needed 10,000 more in population to regain the seat it lost) 2. Redistricting, 3. Data (businesses utilize the census info)

### **Goals/Challenges of Conducting the Census:**

In 2020 a person can respond to the Census by phone, paper, and personal visit and for the first time: online.

March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 the Census will go live. Let's promote involvement with the Census: talk, join, reassure.

For more information contact: [www.census.mt.gov](http://www.census.mt.gov) Colleen is more than happy to come to businesses or organizations for presentations.

Motivating people to respond, assure confidentiality, educate about importance, and support communities with a "complete count committee". For example – tribes were severely undercounted in last census.

Colleen McCarthy asked HCC members to help reach out and have representation on committees. Some of the hardest persons to count in the Census are college kids, low- income persons, and small children.

### **Rebuilding Helena's Streets – David Knoepke(Transportation Systems Director) Ryan Leland(City Engineer)**

There are two areas of funding: reconstruction and rehab (this falls under maintenance). For example, Airport Road is a city/airport issue. It is getting milled and overlay for repair. The city does have a 2- year warranty on roads, so if something "settles" incorrectly, it can be repaired.

The percent of streets in Helena that are beyond maintenance is 25%. A matrix has been developed to help establish rebuilding priorities. The matrix information is not yet available online. All streets get the same valuation, but of course larger thoroughfares get priority and funding availability makes a difference. Right now, Rodney Street is first in line. It will be rebuilt in three phases from the bottom up, starting with utilities and could take five years to complete all three phases. Consultants will recommend gutters, sidewalks. Currently the City is in its public comment stage, so you are encouraged to phone Ryan Leland about ideas, such as Meg Bishop's idea of more trees on Rodney St. August 6<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm there is a public meeting about Rodney St. in the Helena Middle School.

Denise Roth Barber wondered about ADA compliance. David Knoepke replied that ramps will always be included in the sidewalks, but only on corners.

Currently the City of Helena is re-doing its engineering standards. The Standards will be able to be viewed on the City website. There will be flexibility in complete streets and deviations are possible. The City works with MDT (Montana Department of Transportation) and it is a harder, longer process to get street design approvals.

Sumner Sharpe asked about the schedule of street repair – David Knoepke stated it is ongoing. Some areas seemed to have gotten prioritized, but really there were sewer and water main breaks/repairs, so the repair of utilities took priority, resulting in required street repairs or rebuilding. Examples of this were S. Park Ave and Front St. There is a \$7m per year estimate conducted by a paving assessment company to bring Helena streets to *average* condition. How failed streets are repaired will be fitted into the matrix according to condition – on a 100>0 scale.

The public is encouraged to phone 447-1566 or leave a general comment on the form on the city website about street conditions or other concerns.

Boulevard Tree Comments: Property owners are responsible for watering boulevard trees. Trees on streets will be evaluated before construction. Kristi Ponzoso said there will be a rate assessment increase to pay for removing street trees that are likely to be infected with Green Ash borer and replace them with more diverse/hardy trees.

**Opening for HCC Rep. on HOLMAC** – members of the HCC unanimously supported having Nick Sovner be the HCC representative on the HOLMAC, replacing Denise Roth Barber.

**Conservation Board Update** – Denise Roth Barber stated that she went to a Growth Policy meeting and asked that the city include new language in it e.g. Solid Waste Management. The city is considering this addition as part of the Growth policy update.

**NW Energy/LED Lighting – John Andrew** presented information regarding LED city lighting. Two attachments were provided showing the detrimental effects on health and the surrounding environment. The City of Helena has already installed 400 Cobrahead bulbs. The city is not pursuing the smaller acorn lights (they too are not in compliance). John Andrew stated many neighbors complained that the lighting was too bright and shone in their windows. Citizens were happy about cost savings though, replacements with LEDs results in an energy savings of 40-80%. Luminaire glare has been a consistent problem for Cobrahead LED bulbs. North West Energy is most probably utilizing them because they are the most cost effective. These bulbs appear to generate excessive glare, not complying with the City's ordinances of Dark Skies and Light Trespass.

Denise Roth Barber said bigger cities have resolved these issues, and she feels Helena can do the same.

Hugh Zackheim comments: The HCC has addressed many of his talking points. The handout by John Andrew showing light spectrum in the Kelvin scale was most helpful. While NWE made a good business decision to replace the bulbs, it needs to conform to the Dark Skies and Horizontal Trespass ordinances of the city of Helena. There was a discussion at the Commission meeting about "What is a fixture" and NWE wanted to get away from ordinance compliance with the bulb vs. fixture issue. At the City Commission meeting, NWE representatives portrayed that they were helping out the city of Helena, yet Commissioner Halady stated having 0.5 lumens on private property violated the city ordinance – then NWE stated they made an error and later back-tracked. NWE did say there were ways to solve the issue of Horizontal Trespass. Dick Sloan said the city needs to be firm in its statements and adhere to city regulation.

John Andrew and Hugh Zackheim will continue to keep the HCC informed about the lighting issues.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Denise Roth Barber and seconded by John Andrew to recommend to the City Commission that NEW be required to install bulbs no greater than 2700 Kelvin for a warmer light and be in full compliance with City Ordinance requirements of Dark Skies and Horizontal Light Trespass. The motion was unanimously approved and will be sent to the City commission.

**Next Meeting: August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**Meeting Adjourned: 9:04pm**

DRAFT