



Helena Citizens' Council

Purpose Statement and Guiding Principles

September 28, 2022

1.0 Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Helena Citizens' Council (HCC or Council) is to: (1) review and recommend actions relating to the annual budget; and (2) make recommendations relating to the future development of the city. The HCC only makes recommendations to the Helena City Commission and may include appropriate notifications.

2.0 Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles are based on Article IV of the City Charter (Charter) and HCC Bylaws. The Charter and Bylaws guide HCC activities that support the Purpose Statement.

2.1 Upholding the Charter and Bylaws

HCC will uphold, in a consistent manner, the Charter, Bylaws, and all statutes, regulations, and legal policies applicable to elected officials. Within the bounds of these laws and regulations, HCC will strive to make recommendations that balance with a commitment to community benefit.

2.2 Working for the Future Development of the City

HCC recognizes its actions are intended to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of Helena residents, including a sense of well-being and community satisfaction. HCC recognizes Helena residents value a quality environment and community and encourages all members to share responsibility for protecting and sustaining our community. HCC encourages innovative thinking and seeks practical, long-term solutions that serve the public interest.

2.3 Disclosing Conflicts of Interest

HCC members understand that avoiding conflicts of interest is paramount to conducting our duties in an ethical and professional manner. Members who have an actual or perceived conflict of interest shall disclose and abstain from voting on issues or official recommendations. Specifically, the standard of conduct is to avoid any conflicts of interest between the business of the council and members for personal, professional, and/or business gain.

2.4 Member Issue Resolution

The Chair, in coordination with the Executive Committee, may investigate member behavior or activities that are found to be inconsistent with member expectations in 2.5 (IX) and take the appropriate action. Investigations with findings will involve the city attorney to ensure for appropriate legal procedures.

2.5 HCC Meetings

- I. HCC conducts its meetings using Parliamentary Procedure to accomplish its business discussions and recommendations. The Chair is responsible for running the monthly meetings.
- II. The Executive Committee will consider and approve monthly agenda items for which there is potential for action. An “Action” is defined as a recommendation to the City Commission. Time may also be provided for informational presentations when approved by the Executive Committee in advance of the meeting.
- III. The Executive Committee will encourage the Council's attention to items of concern from its membership by including “New Business” on each meeting agenda. Each unscheduled “New Business” item will be granted five minutes for presentation and discussion. Unscheduled “New Business” items that have used the allotted five minutes and need further discussion, must be scheduled at a future meeting under “Unfinished Business.”
- IV. To address more complex issues, the Chair may create an ad hoc committee to gather information for presentation to the Council.
- V. The scope of HCC will focus only on issues allowed by the Charter and Bylaws.
- VI. HCC members are expected to attend all monthly meetings, in addition to attending other administrative meetings, to the greatest extent possible. Members must notify the Coordinator and Chair of any anticipated absence.
- VII. Each HCC member is asked to attend at least one City Commission meeting each year.
- VIII. HCC members should advance topics of interest from their respective Districts. This may include, but is not limited to, reporting citizen complaints to the Council and/or facilitating discussions to address neighborhood issues.
- IX. HCC members are expected to actively engage in discussion, debate and voting in meetings; contributing dialog in a mindful and constructive way; listening carefully; challenging others sensitively; and avoiding negative behaviors.
- X. HCC members are expected to acknowledge final HCC majority or consensus positions or recommendations. HCC members are also expected to participate in the collective decision making and accept the majority decision of the Council.

2.6 Working with the Public

- I. HCC respects and encourages public input in all aspects of its work. HCC will provide the public with information on its positions, recommendations, and any other necessary information.

- II. HCC members are expected to be fully informed of community issues and should actively solicit public opinion by hosting or attending neighborhood meetings, returning phone calls, etc.
- III. HCC members are expected to become knowledgeable of city government processes, organization, and staff structure.
- IV. HCC members are expected to provide phone numbers, street addresses, email addresses, and other contact information so the residents of Helena can contact members regarding public concerns.
- V. HCC members are expected to act professionally and to represent themselves and the council appropriately at all meetings and other public forums.

2.7 HCC Member Expectations

- I. Voting memberships on boards, committees, or other organizations require representation by designated HCC members. Those members are expected to present a monthly report summarizing the meetings or activities, either during the monthly meeting if action needs to be taken by the Council, or by email to keep members informed.
- II. Non-voting memberships on any board or committee are encouraged, but entirely voluntary and dependent upon member interest.
- III. The Secretary and Coordinator will work together to encourage members to volunteer to represent the Council on all boards and/or committees where HCC has a voting membership. The Secretary and Coordinator will assist, as necessary, members to report to the Council on their actions.
- IV. In addition to monthly HCC meetings, members are encouraged to attend any city and administration meetings that are necessary or relevant to an ongoing committee, issue, or interest of HCC.
- V. HCC members are encouraged to participate in one external Board or Committee of interest and are expected to attend the meetings of their chosen boards. All external Board and Committee meetings require a brief (2-3 minute) written or oral report that can be presented at the following HCC monthly meeting.

2.8 Reaching Potential with our Members

HCC members are our most important asset. The Executive Committee empowers members to exercise professional judgment in carrying out their duties. HCC encourages the use of member expertise to find solutions to any challenges facing the city.