



**HELENA OPEN LANDS MANAGEMENT  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
SUMMARY  
November 9, 2021**



**GENERAL MEMBERS**

- Karen Reese, Chair
- Claudia Clifford
- Eric Feaver
- ~~Grant Jackson excused~~
- Joel Peden

**City-County Parks Board**

- ~~David McGuire excused~~

**Helena Citizens Council**

- T.J. Lehmann

**City of Helena Staff**

- Brad Langsather, Open Lands Manager
- Kristi Ponzoso, Director, P & R, Open Lands
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

**ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS**

**Helena Tourism Alliance Representative**

- Andrea Opitz

**PPLT Representative**

- Nate Kopp

**HOLMAC November 9, 2021 Meeting**

**Topic: HOLMAC**

**Start Time: Nov 9, 2021 05:15 PM**

**Meeting Recording // Time-Stamped Summary**

[https://zoom.us/rec/share/xYPGrE\\_4RvO81nTElO3fOHH-9ZLPDpSYz5lldMi7t2tMKiWp4rqLdDfy8BxVIUsP.ml9BW8Gjf9VP6frA](https://zoom.us/rec/share/xYPGrE_4RvO81nTElO3fOHH-9ZLPDpSYz5lldMi7t2tMKiWp4rqLdDfy8BxVIUsP.ml9BW8Gjf9VP6frA)

**Call to Order TS 00:03:01**

- + Chairperson, Karen Reese called the November 9, 2021 HOLMAC meeting to order at 5:31 pm. A quorum was present. Karen did announce that she needs to leave the meeting at 6:25 pm due to a conflicting meeting.

**Welcome/Introductions/Visitors**

Tyler Wock, Gregg Wheeler, Kevin League, Joan Miles, Jeff Bradley, Tony Jewett, Raymond Ray, Bookkeeper, Email Harry, Jess, Norane Freistadt, Tony Zammit, Ken Eden

**Minutes**

- + None. Time-Stamped Minutes have been posted.

**HOLMAC Action Items**

- + None.

### **New Business *TS 00:05:19***

1. Environmental Assessment Presentations
  - + DeFord Bike Skills Course EA with Maps
  - + Whyte Property EA with Maps
2. Updated HOLMAC 2021 Listening Sessions Comments
3. HOLMAC Vote on Presented Projects ***TS 01:07:42 (See Attached)***

### **Subcommittee(s) Report**

- + None.

### **Public Comment**

### **Future Agenda Items**

- + Wrap-Up of Last Season
- + Current Project Update

### **Adjournment**

### **ADA NOTICE**

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## **HOLMAC Vote on Presented Projects TS 01:07:42**

**Claudia:** Would you like to take comment and make a vote - it sounds like City Staff wants to forward the working group proposal for DeFord, the Whyte Proposal and the trail assessment proposal by Mr. Jewitt.

**Joel:** I suggest a vote, but I would also suggest that we vote on each project individually.

**Claudia:** that would make sense

Kristi recommended someone craft a motion.

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### **WHYTE PROPERTY PROPOSAL**

**Eric** moved that HOLMAC recommend that the City commission vote positively on the Whyte trail project as proposed by staff. Claudia added that as a friendly amendment to that, Claudia would like to add that they (the City) do some outreach with Mr. Peden and the disabilities community outside of the cities ADA committee on the segment of it that has to do with accessibility trails. Eric stated he certainly does not disagree with that so if nobody else minds, we should just add that on.

**Claudia:** are there any comments from any members?

**Joel:** was that motion to vote on each project separately?

**Claudia:** yes, so now the motion by Mr. Fever is to support the proposal on the Whyte property. Joel seconded.

-  Claudia – Yes
-  Eric – Yes
-  Joel – Yes
-  TJ - Yes

**Claudia:** the Whyte Property Proposal gets our support.

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### **DEFORD PROPOSAL**

**Eric:** I am going to move that HOLMAC recommend that the staff go back to the drawing board and consider more seriously how it could implement the alternative 1600 foot pedestrian primary trail along DeFord.

**Claudia:** ok – do I hear a second on that proposal? This is essentially a proposal not to approve the current version of the working group DeFord proposal.

**Eric:** that would be correct and stated he would add that they could come back to the next HOLMAC meeting in December with some further insight as to how a pedestrian only trail could be developed as the alternative report requested.

**Claudia** seconded. She then asked if there is comment.

**Eric:** my only comment is there is a lot of controversy here and uncertainty on how committed the City in this case is to a trail that is truly a pedestrian only trail and I've heard nothing but folks telling me it is seriously needed and it's a relative flat trail so its not vertical – its one that makes sense in the context of things as we look at such as ADA or universal access trails in our community. I think we have some already- it depends on how you look at the LeGrande Cannon for example, but the new trail on Mount Helena certainly is not flat and if we are going to have a charging station or the contemplation of a charging station, what would be the purpose of the charging station if it is not to assist folks that might be in a wheel chair or some other, if you will, handicapped vehicle of sorts. So I just feel there needs to be further consideration of how we proceed forward on this particular trail project.

**Claudia:** I agree with that comment. Other comments?

**TJ:** I do think that we should not forget about the working group that was put together that had representation from each user group. So I know that the City and the community did work hard at that working group so I would like to see this move forward. I think it covers a good chunk of what user groups are doing on DeFord. I know we can't make everyone happy, but I really don't want to see portions of user groups get pushed down on to Davis road. That is a scary and dangerous road obviously. So I would approve the City moving forward with this, but I know that is what some on this committee are not feeling at this time.

**Eric:** Again, I appreciate your comments and nobody likes to be foreclosed at the end of what might be a long process they thought they were part of. My motion is that the City come back to HOLMAC in a month after further consideration of how they address this issue because I think it is an issue and its not going to get better and I am informed by Brads comments about Brooklyn Bridge. I doubt very many handicapped people are going to come streaming off Brooklyn bridge in whatever vehicle so if we are going to see a lot more bicycles coming down the road, I fear for any kind of pedestrian path right now that we would permit bicycles on ever surviving a future along that trail – along Davis Gulch there. So I think we need to be more pro-active as to how we approach this particular issue.

**TJ:** Eric, can you tell me what your fear is. I am kind of confused.

**Eric:** I will just use it in more generic sense. I think there is a need for a pedestrian trail, a flat trail, a trail that allows people who have some disabilities to enjoy and one that is easy to access and its one that has been discussed at length and so I don't actually have to talk about the merits of the trail as proposed by the handicapped community but to just simply say that I don't think it should be put aside here because there was what, a group that met and decided that it didn't fit into their plans going forward. I think that's the

process of any kind of community, that there are, if you will, breaks along the way, whether full consideration has been given to where we might go down the road.

**Claudia:** Mr. Peden – do you have anything to add before we take a vote?

**Joel:** Yeah – you know I just – again, I think in the overall picture, we can do better than what this proposal is. Yes the working group did an evaluation, but I think it also has to be noted that that working group was heavily leaning towards bicycle riders and I don't believe there was a fair representation on that committee to be able to have an honest and true discussion on a pedestrian only trail and I would support the motion.

**Claudia:** so I will add too that I just feel like finally the disability community brought forward a proposal and we just haven't thought out and given enough consideration on what would be best for trails that meet the need of accessibility. I think we even had some controversy over the last attempt to do that on Mt Helena and that's not good. So I agree with the motion to take a step back and rework this idea. At this point I will take a vote unless there is any other comment.

**Claudia:** the motion before you is to basically not support moving forward the DeFord proposal and to rework it as a proposal.

-  Claudia – Yes
-  Eric – Yes
-  Joel – Yes
-  TJ - No

**Claudia:** so on that proposal, you have our recommendation as a committee. I will move on to Mr Jewitt's proposal. Is there comment about the trail assessment proposal that the City would like to bring forward?

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## TRAIL INVENTORY PROJECT

**Joel:** I make a motion to move this proposal forward. Eric seconded.

**Claudia:** Is there comment? She added that it is one of those comprehensive pieces of information that we need to have always before us as we look at these major projects. How do they balance where we are in terms of trails and trails maintenance and trail usage? It provides the essential background information for making these kinds of decisions whether it is as an advisory committee or a staff, its good information to have. I know the City of Missoula has felt that is a good project that they did as an accessible project.

**Mr. Jewitt:** appreciates the willingness and open-mindedness of Kristi and Brad in looking at the project he presented and acknowledging that it can add value to the conversations we will have about the open trails and space ahead. Thank you.

**Ken Eden:** it's a great idea, long overdue, and very well-done. Lots of detail and lots of thought. It would be a real plus.

**Claudia:** will now take a vote on support for forwarding the trail inventory proposal by Tony Jewitt.

**Jeff Bradley:** Has concerns of this. It does not seem like the proposal fits under the Chapter 7 of the Open Lands Plan. When you look at the proposal overall, it includes a number of ideas around trails and a number of other components that make it confusing as to what the end product is going to be. There is also some language in the proposal about bringing things into structural compliance and having stability standards, which he is not familiar with as someone who has done some work with trail builders in the past (phrases he has heard before), and there are components that don't seem to add up in a proposal that would fall under the Chapter 7 plan. He feels there is a lot of it that is good, and he 100% agrees with, but he also thinks there is some ambiguity that would difficult for some on what would be included.

Claudia: we are taking a vote on supporting the Trail Inventory Project presented by Mr. Jewitt.

- ✚ Claudia – Yes
- ✚ Eric – Yes
- ✚ Joel – Yes
- ✚ TJ - No

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**Kristi: This is the information that we will take to the Commission: *TS 012:29:27***

This is what we will add to information we take to Commission

1. Proposal 1: Whyte Property Proposal: HOLMAC supports moving forward with the Whyte Property Proposal with a unanimous vote. Claudia, you proposed an amendment, but I don't think you voted on that. Kristi has the basic information that HOLMAC is moving forward with the Whyte Property Proposal - **Four members in support.**
2. Proposal 2: DeFord Proposal: HOLMAC does not recommend supporting this project and to rework it as a proposal – **Three members in support, One member is not.**
3. Proposal 3: Trail Inventory Project: HOLMAC supports moving forward with that project – **Three members in support, One member is not.**

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## **CHAT COMMENTS**

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|----------|---------------|---|
| 01:03:39 | Jeff Bradley: | Brad - there are a couple of new grant sources that FWP is now offering.  |
| 01:03:56 | Jeff Bradley: | So more opportunity for the city trails!  |
| 01:09:53 | Robert Ray:   | I like the Wyle Property proposal. The trail spider web up there needs to be improved to a more discrete and less confusion situation.                                  |
| 01:19:09 | Jeff Bradley: | Unfortunately my mic isn't working. Thanks to the city staff for taking public comment on these projects and working on the EAs for these. I do hope that the city will |

reconsider the phase 2 for the ADA trail on Mt Helena. The Plan to move forward on the Whyte property looks good, as does the DeFord Project.

01:29:40 Jeff Bradley: I am disappointed that the current DeFord project is not approved by HOLMAC. I understand the interest in a pedestrian only trail, but I don't want my year old daughter to be on the road with me when on the DeFord trail

01:29:54 Jeff Bradley: Also - point of order - the chair cannot second a motion

01:30:39 Eric Sivers: As I remember and understand, commission direction from last year's process was for a working group to construct a recommendation for the DeFord area. I don't see how this is consistent with commission direction.