

Helena Citizen Conservation Board

Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2022

Board Members Present (8 out of 14 members required for a quorum):

- 1) Diana Hammer, Chair
- 2) Mark Juedeman, Vice Chair
- 3) Val Stacey, Vice Chair
- 4) Ann Brodsky
- 5) Patrick Judge
- 6) Elizabeth Grant
- 7) Lucy Lantz
- 8) Brian Solan
- 9) Patrick Judge
- 10) Becca Boslough
- 11) Steven Costle

Board Members Not Present: Patricia Heiser (excused), Denise Barber (excused), Carlin Onstad

City Staff Present: Ed Coleman, Jacki Pierson, Kim Carley

Members of the Public Present: Cora Helm, Dr. Gregory Thomas, Bekka Stone, Anita Lowe

1. **Call to Order:** Noting the Quorum, CCB Chair Diana Hammer called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm. She welcomed all participants and noted that Patrick Judge is now officially back on the Conservation Board as representative of an environmental organization. He was appointed by the City Commission at its Monday meeting (January 10, 2022). The Board is now back at full capacity with 14 members.
2. **Minutes:** Dick moved to approve the minutes as submitted; Mark seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
3. **Presentation by Jeremy Drake of Zero Waste Associates**

[A .pdf of this presentation has been shared with the Board]

Zero Waste Associates (ZWA) is under contract with the City of Helena to develop the Helena's Strategic Plan for Waste Reduction (City Resolution #20643) to meet Helena's goal of 50% reduction by 2040 with an interim goal of 35% by 2030. He introduced the ZW Team: Jeremy Drake, Project Manager; Ruth Abbe, Asst. Project Manager; Gary Liss, Initiatives Research; Amanda Waddle, Data Analysis; and Richard Anthony, Existing Initiatives Research. Ruth, Gary, and Rick have been mentors for Jeremy and has been 'bitten by the Zero Waste bug' and never looked back.

The ZWA approach is stakeholder-driven to build community buy-in for a menu of options to achieve the City's waste reduction goals.

Phase I – Waste Assessment and Outreach & Engagement (Dec-March 2022)

Phase II – Draft Strategies for Waste Reduction (Feb-April 2022)

Phase III – Finalize Strategic Plan for Waste Reduction (May-June 1, 2022)

Helena Citizen Conservation Board

Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2022

Currently, compiling the Waste Stream Assessment for Helena and beginning Community Outreach and Engagement. Planning a Community Kick-off Meeting for February 17, 2022 and other community meetings. Outreach includes a 'Be Heard Helena' community survey.

Next steps: Working with the City, the CCB Waste Committee and with the community to identify a 'Menu of Waste Reduction Options' to pursue for Helena and include in the Draft Strategic Plan.

Discussion:

Q from Mark Juedeman: Are you also considering reduced revenue associated with reduced waste disposal?

Response from Jeremy Drake: Interesting conundrum. From conversations with Pete Anderson, head of the City's Solid Waste Division, he understands the funding mechanism is in place but there could be an opportunity to re-envision how those funds are used. Ed Coleman added the City and County are beginning a revision of their Integrated Solid Waste Master Plan (ISWMP), guided by a Steering Committee [Note: Denise Barber is the CCB rep. on the Steering Committee.] and the ISWMP will be the mechanism about how to pay for services for the next 30 years. Yes, waste disposal does bring in revenue but the focus of the Strategic Plan for Waste Reduction is on waste diversion. Ann pointed out that the Resolution adopted by the City Commission directs the City Manager to be looking at how to provide waste services within the City and referenced the RFP which includes the task of analyzing potential funding mechanisms. Ed noted that the City and County have a joint-operation to manage waste and recycling and the Strategic Plan is a City plan. The Plan will look at costs and various options for waste diversion. The Strategic Plan will help inform the ISWMP with costs, policy, and program options. ZWA plans to deliver a Plan that will provide options for even going beyond the current waste reduction goals.

Q from Mark Juedeman: Is the CO2 equivalent calculation based on embodied carbon diverted?

Response from Jeremy Drake: The EPA WARM model (<https://www.epa.gov/warm>) is the tool ZWA uses to calculate the CO2 equivalent using a life cycle analysis for the materials (extraction, production, distribution, etc.). There is another methodology, Consumption-based Accounting, which is being adopted by more cities. Very significant difference between Methods. EPA in 2009 did a Sector-based analysis (e.g., Transportation Sector) and then looked at the Systems that support Food Production, Heating and Cooling, etc. EPA found that more than 50% of emissions are related to consumption – based on moving the stuff we consume around (producing, transporting, using, disposing, etc.). If we want to reduce emissions, we really need to look upstream and reduce consumption.

Q from Liz Grant: What have you found so far with the "Waste Stream Assessment" and how you plan to share that information with the public?

Helena Citizen Conservation Board

Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2022

Response from Jeremy Drake: The Waste Stream Assessment is focusing on these metrics:

1) Total tons of waste to the landfill per year from the City of Helena (currently about 20,000 tons/year) including the more difficult piece of how much waste is disposed in the landfill from private and commercial ‘self-haul’ entities. This will provide a better overall sense of the amount of waste disposed of from Helena.

2) Another metric is pounds of waste/person/day does each Helenan produce? The average in the US is 4.5 pounds/person/day. This will provide an important baseline towards waste reduction goals. It is not enough to simply to count how much we’re diverting (e.g., recycling, composting). The bottom line is reducing how much is sent to the landfill. Using 2019 data to set baseline.

3) Waste Composition Study – Helena hasn’t conducted a waste composition study so we’re using a recent Missoula Waste Composition Study (February 2021) as a comparable proxy. Missoula’s Study showed that more than 50% of what is sent to the landfill is compostable material (food scraps, yard materials, paper, etc.). Could meet Helena’s waste reduction goal of 50% by 2040 by simply addressing the compostable materials.

During the February 17, 2022 community kick-off meeting, ZWA will share its findings re: what they have learned so far: tonnage, pounds of waste/person/day, and waste composition. Diana asked if Missoula has a yard waste diversion program similar to Helena’s and is the comparison valid? Jeremy responded that the City of Missoula operates a convenient, long-term composting facility in addition to two other organics collection services. He feels the Missoula Waste Assessment is comparable to Helena’s system.

Q from Gregory Thomas (member of the public): How much of the Waste Reduction strategies might focus on dietary changes (e.g., away from processed, prepared, non-biodegradable packaging-intensive foods)?

Response from Jeremy Drake: Zero waste is one piece of the larger sustainable communities puzzle – along with clean energy, community gardens, etc. – and sees synergy with healthy food choices and an opportunity for shared messaging. Diana added that this Board is focused on actions and recommendations related to climate change and one of the biggest impacts we, as individuals can make daily has to do with our food choices and eat more locally grown, plant-based foods (less meat). Consider Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) for the foods we eat.

Q to the Board from Jeremy: Input and opportunities, hopes and dreams for the Strategic Plan? Any ideas for what might work in Helena? Low-hanging fruit? Wishlist items?

Response from Cora Helm (member of the public and the Waste Committee): The public outreach related to the Strategic Plan can be a springboard for raising awareness, getting into our schools and really talking about healthy eating choices and reducing food waste.

Q from Diana Hammer: In your experience, what are some waste reduction programs that have been most effective and well-received by the public?

Helena Citizen Conservation Board

Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2022

Response from Jeremy: An obvious one is looking reducing the amount of compostables going to the landfill – big part of the waste stream and everyone could participate.

Q from Ed Coleman: Do you know if there are any municipalities that segregate certain currently difficult to recycle items into certain areas of the landfill for future ‘mining’?

Response from Jeremy: No, not really. Following the Zero Waste hierarchy, that would fall under ‘Redesign’ (manufacturing/production redesign).

Patrick noted that there has been a lot of discussion re: source separated vs. single stream with pros/cons for each. Some creative approaches by other communities such as compromises such as ‘dual stream’ (e.g., Bellingham, WA). Jeremy is really impressed with John Hilton’s Helena Recycling ‘5 stream’ approach and is also very impressed with his single stream bales of recyclables. Hilton is having good success (low contamination) with the single stream pilot with County residents. Ann added that there will be an addendum to the Strategic Plan addressing options for single, dual, source-separated recycling in Helena.

Liz asked about reuse and repair opportunities – how might we involve thrift stores and Helena ReStore?

Jeremy responded that these are part of the solution as they are already diverting through reuse. He asked if there are Repair Cafes in Helena? Diana responded that Repair Cafes and Tool Libraries have been discussed and there is interest but have not been organized. Ed added that Helena does have active bicycle repair – Queen City Bikes and The Garage. Diana pointed out to Jeremy that the CCB has two student members, Lucy Lantz and Carlin Onstad, who are High School students and member of their respective ‘green groups’ and that they could also be key allies for outreach and education, especially in the schools. Ann said there is an opportunity to have CCB members and as many members of the community respond to the survey re: waste reduction.

Diana thanked everyone for the productive, interesting discussion and turned the discussion to the next topic: Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Draft Report presented by Patrick Judge.

4. Helena’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Draft Report – Patrick Judge

[A .pdf version of this draft report has been shared with the Board.]

Patrick (even before he was officially back on the Board) has been compiling this data for inclusion in the 2nd Annual Sustainability Report. When he served as Sustainability Coordinator, Patrick prepared the 1st Annual Sustainability Report (2020), as required by City Resolution. This draft has been reviewed by the Energy and Transportation Committee and he thanked the Board for the opportunity to present the Draft Report on Helena’s Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Inventory. The 2020 Report was based on 2019 data; the 2021 Draft is based on 2020 data. This is a continuation of the 2009 Climate Action Plan and showed that between 2001 and 2007, there had already been a 20% reduction in energy

Helena Citizen Conservation Board

Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2022

use and greenhouse gas emissions associated with City Government. Another goal in the 2009 Climate Action plan was to achieve another 20% reduction by 2020.

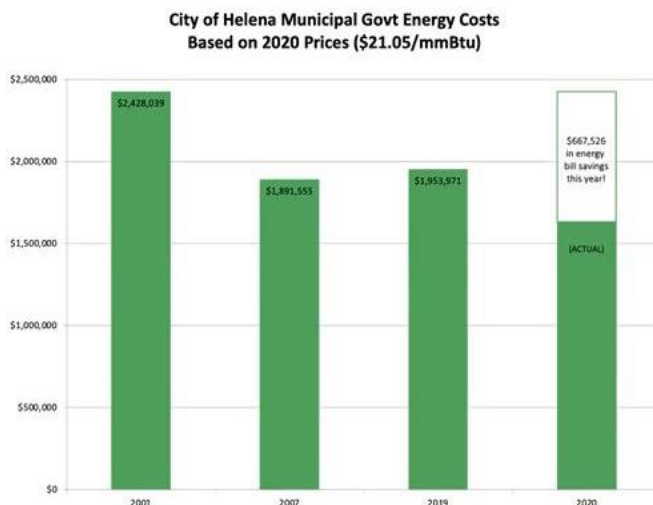
- **2009 Climate Action Plan Goals:**
 - Reduce energy use “20% by 2020” from 2007
 - Reduce carbon “20% by 2020” from 2007

- **Results:**

	2001	2007	2020	% Change
Energy (mmBtu)	115,341	89,856	83,631	-7%
CO ₂ e (U.S. tons)	12,691	10,397	7,231	-30%

The City pays more than \$1 million/year for its facilities – more opportunities for energy conservation and efficiency.

Avoidance of 31,710 mmBtu as compared to 2001 usage levels saves the City (and us as taxpayers) \$667,000 annually! (based on the 2022 average price of \$21.05mmBtu)



These numbers could be artificially low for 2020 due to COVID-19 and 2021 had some harsh weather (e.g., cold winter, drought and increased use of the Missouri River WTP).

Good news! In conversation with Troy Sampson, Facilities Department Manager, the City just signed a 3-year contract with Dude Solutions for Facility Assets Management and Energy Tracking software – making it easier to obtain and analyze energy data.

We have an opportunity to publicize that 1) the City has met the carbon goal from the 2009 Climate Action Plan; and 2) the City is saving taxpayers considerable money every year.

Q from Diana: What is the status of the Community GHG Emissions Assessment?

Helena Citizen Conservation Board

Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2022

Response from Patrick Judge: The information was pretty high level (NWE re energy use, MDT data re: fuel usage, and landfill modeling data).

Q from Ed Coleman: The City is interested in doing a more in depth analysis and possible white paper on Helena's energy and water use – any suggestions about who might be able to help?

Response from Patrick: There are many knowledgeable firms – identify through an RFP?

Comment from Dick Sloan: The City has done an excellent job here. The State is a major energy user in Helena with all the State buildings, employee commuting, etc. Is there a way to look at energy usage in the Valley and outlying areas as well to get a better handle of total emissions?

Response from Patrick: Good point. Just looking at number of gallons of fuel sold in Helena may not capture all the commuters and it may pick up those fueling up and travelling through Helena.

Patrick re-iterated that this information could/should be shared more broadly. Diana and Ann agreed. Ed will follow-up with Jake Garcin, PIO, and talk about how to do that.

5. Officers' Report – Diana

Diana noted that Holly Chandler has resigned and we wish her and her family well, yet we are disappointed to lose such a promising Sustainability Coordinator so quickly.

In response to a Board member's request, Diana asked the Board for members' thoughts re: changing the meeting start time to 5:00 pm, instead of 4:30 pm. Most felt 4:30 was preferable so there will be no change in meeting time (remaining at 4:30 – 6 pm on Thurs.).

6. Report from the City – Ed Coleman

Sustainability Coordinator - The City is also sorry to lose Holly Chandler. She received a warm welcome from City staff – many sought her out to share various ideas for increased stewardship and sustainability (insulating buildings, changing out boilers, putting up solar panels, etc.). They see the need for Sustainability Coordinator to coordinate these efforts. The City will be first hiring to backfill his former position as that person would supervise the Sustainability Coordinator. He understands that there is interest in a full-time (1.0 FTE) Sustainability Coordinator but the position was only funded in the FY22 Budget as a part-time position (.5 FTE). There is plenty of work for a full-time Sustainability Coordinator so either need to change the budget (difficult) or add additional duties (perhaps in conjunction with other Departments) to justify a 1.0 FTE position. Diana asked if there might be enough cost savings due to the length of time the position was vacant (between Coordinators and until a new one is hired) to support a full-time position. Ed responded that they need to follow the Commission's direction for it being a part-time position in FY22. They do intend to put in for a full-time position for the Sustainability Coordinator during the next budget cycle, perhaps in conjunction with another Department. He is committed to finding the

Helena Citizen Conservation Board

Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2022

right person for this challenging, diverse position. Diana noted that the CCB is on record supporting a full-time Sustainability Coordinator position. Ed agrees that there is plenty of work to justify the City having a full-time Sustainability Coordinator.

Electrical Vehicle Charging Station Project – found a vendor; got legal review; planning a walk-through with Third Element (electrical contractor) and then will order the EV Chargers.

The other projects are on hold for now, until some of these positions are filled.

Ed noted that Denise Barber is the CCB representative (Ann Brodsky is alternate) on the Steering Committee to update the Integrated Solid Waste Master Plan. The CCB will have input into the ISWMP. The Strategic Plan for Waste Reduction is going well and that should dovetail nicely with the ISWMP.

The City has contracted with Better Roots Composting and 406 Composting for residential compost collection. Those agreements are multi-year and should continue until the ISWMP is ready for implementation.

Diana thanked Ed for his help (and for doing three jobs currently!) and reiterated that the CCB is also interested in having a full-time Sustainability Coordinator position. Ed noted that Diana has already made the recommendation via email to advertise for a full-time position.

Clarification: the 2009 Climate Action Plan recommended a full-time Sustainability Coordinator position; no action until the CCB was created in 2017; the plan was to have a full-time Sustainability Coordinator jointly funded by the City and County; County did not fund its share so the City went ahead independently with a half-time Coordinator in recent budgets. There could be an opportunity now to advertise for a full-time position within the new Budget cycle.

Q from Patrick: Did the administration of the Zero Interest Loan Program transfer from Community Development to the Sustainability Coordinator? Patrick felt that that would be too much additional work for a part-time position. Ed responded that no, it did not.

7. Sustainability Reports + Committee Reports

Diana noted that it is 6 pm and in the interest of time, asked for only any urgent updates from the Committees. The Water, Communications, and Waste Committees passed at this time.

Energy and Transportation Committee –

Mark Juedeman reported that there will be a Passenger Rail Forum re: a possible route in southern Montana. The Forum will be held on January 25 at 7 pm via Zoom, presented by Sleeping Giant Citizens Council with assistance from Resilient Helena and others. Mark encourages all interested parties to attend and will share a link.

Helena Citizen Conservation Board

Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2022

Mark also noted that he and Pat attended a meeting that Holly arranged with a group, Psapling, proposing aesthetically pleasing structures as alternatives to traditional rooftop and pole-mounted solar panels – John Mues and Nate Blanding. Great renderings of Memorial Park and Bustops – potential application in City Parks and other public areas. He and can share their presentation. Patrick suggested he share this presentation with Ed, Kristi Ponozzo, Parks Director, and others. Diana added that since the City spends more than \$1 million in electricity costs annually, this could be another opportunity for the City to save resources – energy and money. Ed thinks the structures look great and likes the concept; wonders about wind? Mark mentioned that St. Peter’s Health might be interested and will forward the information to Liz Grant.

8. Emerging Issues/Other Business

There is a Board position open for Secretary. That person would be responsible for taking notes and preparing the Draft Minutes. Please consider whether you might be interested in this position, and we can discuss at our next meeting.

9. Announcements

In addition to the Passenger Rail Forum, the City of Helena and Resilient Helena are working together to bring Chuck Marohn, Founder of the Strong Town movement to Helena. He thinks a lot about how to develop incrementally in financially robust and resilient ways. He was named by Planetizen as one of the most influential urban planners of all time. He will be speaking at the Civic Center on February 2, 2022 at 6 pm.

Reminder: Upcoming Waste Reduction Community Kick-off Meeting on February 17th at 4:30 pm.

Diana will include links to the upcoming events in an email to the Board.

Anita Lowe mentioned that the Montana Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate have created a Sustainability Coordinator position (10 hours/week and paying \$23-\$25/hour). Duties would include newsletter, new members, etc. Currently advertising. Diana welcomed Anita, another physician at St. Peter’s Health.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

10. Closing

Diana also announced that the next regular CCB meeting will take place Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 4:30 pm only via Zoom. Please contact her, Mark or Val with any agenda items and let them know if you cannot attend. With no further comment from the Board, staff, or public, Diana adjourned the meeting at 6:10 pm.

Minutes prepared by Diana Hammer.