

# Helena Citizens Conservation Board (CCB)

Meeting Minutes – February 10, 2022

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

- 1) Diana Hammer, Chair
- 2) Mark Juedeman, Vice Chair
- 3) Denise Roth Barber
- 4) Ann Brodsky
- 5) Patrick Judge
- 6) Elizabeth Grant
- 7) Lucy Lantz
- 8) Brian Solan
- 9) Patrick Judge
- 10) Patricia Heiser

**Board Members Not Present:** Val Stacey (excused), Becca Boslough, Carlin Onstad, Steven Costle

**City Staff Present:** Ed Coleman, Kim Carley

## **Members of the Public Present:**

- 1. Call to Order:** Noting the Quorum, CCB Chair Diana Hammer called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm. She welcomed all participants.
- 2. Minutes:** Pat offered a few amendments. Ann moved and Mark seconded the motion to amend the minutes, as suggested by Pat, and those were approved unanimously. Ann moved to approve the minutes as submitted; Brian seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

### **3. Report from the Public Works Department (PWD) - Ed Coleman**

Ed Coleman mentioned that Leea Anderson, formerly with DEQ and most recently with the Dept of Ag, joined the City PWD as the environmental engineer and will take on some of the Sustainability Coordinator (SC) tasks. The other good news is that the PWD found a way to turn the SC position full-time by taking on some of the recycling responsibilities from Kim Carley.

When it's ready, Ed will send the SC job description to Diana who will share with the Board so we can help with the recruitment.

We finalized a contract with Jenny Garcin, formerly county Public Information Officer (PIO) and will be the PWD's PIO.

We continue to work with Zero Waste Associates (ZWA) on the Strategic Waste Reduction plan. Over 30 people have signed up for the meeting and over 100 people filled out the survey. Working to connect interested people with ZWA.

Diana suggested that flyers be put up at the Transfer Station's recycling center. Ed will send Kim the flyer and Kim will make copies and post them there and have on-site staff to pass out flyers.

The first meeting of the SW Master Plan committee is tomorrow (2/11/22). ZWA has many ideas and is doing a great job of reaching out to the community. We want to build community support because it's critical that people want to support the waste reduction actions (preferable over a regulatory approach).

The EV charging stations hit a snag with finding spots for installation that are ADA compliant but the City is working on that with City Transportation and, while a delay, should be resolved.

Mark: Where will they be located?

Ed: The 6th Ave parking garage, the Gatchell garage by Great Northern, and the Jackson St Parking garage by Taco del Sol. At these garages, there is surveillance and they are somewhat protected by the elements. The chargers are slow, 4-6 hours to get a full charge, so having EV Charging Stations in parking garages where folks may be parked for longer periods for shopping, etc.

Pat: I hope down the road we can get a fast charger in the 6th ward area by Vanilla Bean.

Ed: This is a pilot project so yes, hopefully we will have more as funding allows.

We have a bunch of ARPA projects, with \$13 million to improve our infrastructure, including \$8M for our Water Treatment Plant at TenMile.

We hired a consultant to do a rate study for water & waste water so rates will likely increase. Diana has indicated that the CCB supports a tiered water rates system, especially during drought conditions. We use 3M gallons of water/day in the winter and 15M/day in the summer.

PWD also has a water facility Master Plan RFP currently advertised and is reviewing submittals from an RFP for a wastewater plan.

Someone had an accident and drove through the fence out at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and crashed into the facility so PWD and DEQ are working on a bypass so repairs can be made to the UV Treatment Phase of the WWTP.

Ann: What is the status of the follow-up press release on the kickoff meeting?

Ed: I approved it so it should be on the calendar.

#### **4. Review and Acceptance of Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report – Pat Judge**

Based on the powerpoint presentation to the Board last month, Pat asked the Board to approve the report. Perhaps send it to the Commission, write an OpEd, etc. Main thing is for the public to know that these reports do lead to positive outcomes and that we have achieved some of the environmental goals while also achieving some substantial financial savings (\$670,000 every year!). Mark moved to accept and approve the report and give approval to distribute to entities in the City for dissemination, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Pat & Diana will work with Ed C to ensure sufficient dissemination. As roles and responsibilities are developed for the full-time (FT) SC position, Mark expressed his hope that the work Pat has done is considered. Diana suggests that there may be other savings that have yet to be measured and evaluated and we should continue to look for opportunities to increase efficiency and savings. Denise added we should continue to get the good news out to the public.

## **5 Officers' Report – Diana**

Diana asked if anyone is interested in being CCB Secretary. Denise volunteered. (Thank you!)

Our letter requesting the City Commission consider expanding the Board was shared with the Commission at a recent meeting. No action was taken then but that is the next step. The Mayor encouraged the Commission to do the right thing and take action.

Ann: When it does go before the Commission, we should be there to testify and show our support.

Mark asked if there is anything we need to do; Diana is going to follow up with Dannai to see when the issue will come before the Commission.

Ed: The Commission will consider that request when they have the bigger conversation about all the Boards.

## **6. Committee and Project Team Reports**

### Waste

Denise: The public waste plan kick-off meeting is next week. Ann will share the link with the CCB. Denise asked CCB members to please attend and send it out to your network, on your social media, etc.

Ann: Jeremy Drake of ZWA did make an announcement about the meeting to HomeTown Helena, where 70 people were present. He will be presenting to HomeTown Helena again. ZWA is interviewing many stakeholders, gathering much info. There will be another community meeting March 16 via Zoom.

Denise: The City is heavily promoting the event, with lots of posts on FB.

Ann: Many individuals are filling out the survey and hope more businesses fill them out as well.

Both compost companies - 406 Compost and Better Roots - have signed their contracts with the City so they will now be able to operate over the next 2 years.

### Energy & Transportation

Mark: We did not meet this past month

Pat: There is a Resilient Butte organization now.

### Communication Committee

Liz: We met this week and have developed an Events calendar for members to populate. Working on our priorities for the year. The goal is for the Board to write quarterly OpEds on relevant topics. Focus of the Communications Committee is to establish communications materials - policy, templates, contacts, etc. in support of the other Committees.

Liz walked the Board through the calendar and asked for input from the Board. Several Board members expressed appreciation for the calendar. Ann suggested it be included with Board meeting notices so Board Members have current reminders.

Pat will draft an OpEd around the Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report

Ed asked that we run it by the PIO too so that the CCB is in alignment with the City to ensure consistent messaging.

Diana: Perhaps a joint OpEd between the CCB and the City? We do need to make sure we are accurate so having the City review it is important.

Denise: As an advisory Board, our job is to advise the City, but we are a separate entity. The CCB can take positions that may not be in alignment because we are not a City body.

Ed: Just let Jake know what we're doing. Coordination and collaboration is important.

Denise: I just want to make sure that we don't fall into a mode where we have to seek the City's approval before we put out an OpEd.

Ed: Just keep us in the loop. You can put out an OpEd that is not aligned with the City, but if we are kept in the loop that would help. Keeping the City informed can help the City help us too. He sees his role as working together collaboratively.

Pat: In this particular instance, I'd value Jake's review of my draft OpEd, would welcome his constructive feedback, and believe everyone's interests are aligned on this topic.

Ann: Our charge as the CCB is to make recommendations to the Commission.

Diana: The Water Committee had a good experience working with the City to get the WaterWise Brochure reviewed by the City (and offered helpful edits) and ultimately, the City did agree to have its name/logo on the brochure. Had they not, we would have been free to publish on our own but we welcomed the collaboration with the City (including distribution).

### Water

Diana: The City of Helena has been invited to participate in the Wyland National Mayor's Challenge for water conservation presented by the Wyland Foundation and Toyota. Diana will send a link out that has a water footprint calculator which calculates your water usage based on lifestyle, your diet, how much you drive, etc. Ed told Diana that the City is planning to sign up for this challenge and the Water Committee will coordinate with the City and help promote.

We are still working on a water-wise garden tour. It will be virtual with the option of seeing the gardens in person. Hopefully it will be ready in March. Also planning to do some education and

outreach in conjunction with the Lake Helena Water committee and the Water Quality Protection District on water conservation, the Water Challenge. Finally, we will be following the City's work on the tiered water rates.

## **7. Emerging Issues/Other Business**

Ann: The City Budget deliberations are coming up. Are we planning on making budget recommendations and how are we going to engage in that process?

Ed: If it's related to PWD, please reach out to me. I can help with facilitating other departments, like Parks, also. We are paying \$15,000 to haul glass to Salt Lake City, UT so that impacts our budget. We are going to continue to recycle glass, it's in our budget.

Diana: Will Ash Grove be accepting Helena's glass soon? The issue remains with the flow restrictors. Ash Grove even stopped taking Helena Recycling's glass so the city is partnering with him to get the loads down to SLC.

Ed: Our Solid Waste folks are trying to figure out how to address this issue.

Kim: City and Helena Recycling are going to take a tour of Ash Grove, which is willing to spend money to help solve the problem and pay for equipment. There are posters on the glass recycling containers to remind people to remove flow restrictors. Lids, corks, Maker's Mark (red wax) are all problematic.

Mark: There is a density difference between the plastic and glass so there is potential for Montana State students to do a capstone engineering project around this. Mark will send contact info to Ed if he has any at MSU and MT Tech. Diana suggested Carroll College might be interested too and she has worked with the Senior Engineering students on projects in the past and will send contact info to Ed.

Diana: Back to Ann's point re: the Budget, perhaps each committee could consider ideas for the budget, items that we would like to see funded.

Committee priorities and work plans for 2022: Each committee to please review their work plans from last year and start working on them. Develop a 2022 work plan and identify items the Committees need to be working on this year. Perhaps an in-person Board retreat in April.

Denise: Can we consider meeting in person?

Diana: I checked with the City and since the City Commission and other Boards are still meeting remotely so it's still early. So, let's revisit at the March meeting - perhaps we can in April?

**8. Announcements** There were none.

**9. Public Comment** There was no public comment.

**10. Next Month's Agenda for Thursday, March 10, 2022**

**11. Closing** Diana thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 5:42 pm.

*Minutes prepared by Denise Barber*