

Citizen Conservation Board (CCB)

DRAFT Regular Board Meeting Minutes

September 9, 2021; 4:30 PM

Hybrid Meeting held virtually via Zoom and in-person (Room 326 of the City-County Building)

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

- 1) Diana Hammer, Chair
- 2) Mark Juedeman, Vice Chair
- 3) Valerie Stacey, Vice Chair
- 4) Dick Sloan
- 5) Ann Brodsky
- 6) Denise Roth Barber
- 7) Elizabeth Grant
- 8) Lucy Lantz
- 9) Makenna Sellers
- 10) Brian Solan
- 11) Patricia Heiser
- 12) Steven Costle
- 13) Becca Boslough

Board Members Not Present:

Carlin Onstad (excused)

Val Stacey (excused)

City Staff Present:

Ryan Leland, Kim Cross, Kim Carley, Matt Culpo

Members of the Public including Cora Helm, Patrick Judge, Dr. G, and other interested parties

1. Call to Order:

CCB Chair Diana Hammer called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm, noted the Quorum and welcomed all participants.

2. Minutes:

Makenna Sellers moved adoption of the August minutes with edits (noting that Liz Grant seconded the motion to approve the August minutes) and Liz Grant seconded the motion, and the motion passed with one abstention (Ann Brodsky). Diana shared the approved version with the CCB.

3. Diana introduced the Guest Speaker, Matt Culpo, Stormwater Engineer, City of Helena.

Matt began with an overview of the history of stormwater regulation from the Rivers and Harbors Act (1899) and the Water Pollution Control Act (1948) through the 1972 Clean Water Act and the 1987 Amendments, leading up to the 1990 Phase 1 (Cities over 100,000) Implementation of the NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) and Phase 2 in 1999 (Helena part of Phase 2). In Helena, the stormwater and sanitary sewer (blackwater) systems are separate. (FYI, Mark Fitzwater spoke about the City's wastewater program at the March 2021 CCB meeting).

Helena's stormwater is discharged to Ten Mile and Prickly Pear Creeks; both are CWA 303 (d) listed waters – meaning these waters are 'impaired' for their designated uses.

Helena's discharge permit's technical requirements include six Minimum Control Measures (MCM):

1. Public Outreach and Education
2. Public Involvement/Participation
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
4. Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control
5. Post-Construction Site Storm Water Management for New Development & Redevelopment
6. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

MCM #5 – Green Infrastructure

This applies to any new development or redevelopment > 1 acre; this ensures control to prevent or minimize water quality impacts. City has a stormwater ordinance. Monitors discharges for total suspended solids (TSS), pH, P, N, Zn, Cu, Pb, Oil and Grease and Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD).

City has several large stormwater detention ponds – Nature Park, Kmart Ponds, Davis Gulch Ponds, Henderson Ponds, etc. Helena is pretty unique and in a favorable position in that all stormwater water is treated and discharged to groundwater/infiltrated (with one exception); does not go to surface water. The exception is Crystal Springs Creek – this is the only Water of the US and has jurisdictional wetlands (Van Hook) which are federally-regulated – this connects to Ten Mile Creek in Helena. It's possible that Crystal Springs Creek could be conservation easement and connected to Henderson Ponds, other public lands and to the Centennial Trail.

Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development

Reflects a fundamental change in approach to managing storm water. Old: collect and transport off-site and down gradient as quickly as possible; New: collect and utilize on-site as a valuable resource – “slow it down, spread it out, soak it in.”

Benefits of Green Infrastructure (infiltrating stormwater)?

- Reduces downstream flooding
- Reduces the size and cost of municipal infrastructure
- Improves water quality
- Increases groundwater recharge
- Increases streamflows and reduces stream temperatures during seasonal lows
- Reduces the 'urban heat island' effects
- Ex: rain gardens, natural and constructed wetlands, bioswales, tree trenches, infiltration basins, rainwater harvesting (e.g, rain barrels), porous pavement, and retention ponds.

Green Infrastructure Design Manual for managing stormwater – developed by larger cities in MT (including Helena):

https://www.helenamt.gov/fileadmin/user_upload/Public_Works/Utility/Documents/BMP_Manual.pdf

Rain Garden Flyer:

https://www.helenamt.gov/fileadmin/user_upload/Public_Works/Utility/Documents/Rain_Garden_Flyer.pdf

City is looking at ways to make this information more readily available to the public and developers, redevelopers. On average, there are probably about 10 Green Infrastructure projects in Helena annually. Ann asked if the City has considered policies mandating green infrastructure. Matt responded that the City has a Stormwater Ordinance and that leads to Design and Engineering Standards; the City's Growth Policy and Community Development all factor into the City's Green Infrastructure and stormwater management program. Win-win for developers to take the landscaping in place and build on that for their required stormwater

4. Update from Ed Coleman

- Sustainability Coordinator. Re-advertised for the .5 FTE position as the position was not filled after the first advertisement. Advertisement closes 9/21/21. Mark commented that he felt we had a commitment that the position could be re-advertised as a full-time position if we weren't able to find a successful candidate by advertising for a part-time position. Disappointed to hear it's being readvertised as a part-time position. Ryan responded that the current City Budget only provided for a part-time position and to change that, it would be necessary to go back to the Commission to amend the budget. Diana commented that the CCB has and will continue to advocate for a FT Sustainability Coordinator.
- RFP for the Strategic Plan for Waste Reduction – announcement has gone out; closes on 10/1/21. No proposals so far.
- EV Charging Stations – extended to September 2, 2022 to allow for time to work out the contracts/details. Next step: meet with DEQ.
- Do we want to continue to meet in person or hybrid meetings? Think about this...

5. Review and Discussion of the Draft Letter with Recommendations to Commission to extend the existence of the Conservation Board beyond January 2023 – Makenna

Thanks to Makenna and Val for drafting the letter. The CCB discussed the letter. Mark suggested we could better represent the community with the addition of two At-Large Members. Ann mentioned that there could be staggered terms in the future. Makenna made the motion to revise the letter to add two additional At-Large members (amend Section 1 of the Resolution) in addition to asking the Commission to amend the existing Resolution to extend the Board (Section 5). Mark seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Makenna made the motion that the CCB submit the letter as revised to the Commission; Denise seconded. Ann commented that we need to not only adapt to climate change but also slow climate change. Note: Resolution 20347 re-committed the City to combatting climate change and the Paris Climate Agreement; Resolution 20375 established the CCB. The motion passed unanimously. Diana will revise the letter as directed, sign, and submit to the Commission on behalf of the CCB. (Letter was sent to the Commission 9/13/21.)

6. Presentation of the Draft CCB Communications Policy – Lucy

Comments incorporated from the draft shared at last month's meeting; looking for additional suggestions about how to revise the letter. Ann has concerns about running materials by others for approval. Brian encourages CCB members to suggest actual language changes. Send comments to Brian and he'll coordinate with the Communication Committee to revise and share with the CCB.

Water Committee – Diana

Proceeding with the WaterWise Garden Tour – self-guided and virtual tour. Proceeding with the draft xeriscape plan for the Law and Justice Building.

Waste & Recycling Committee – Ann

Ann and Diana met with the City staff re: RFP for the Strategic Plan; she's very happy with the RFP that was sent out and hopes to have CCB represented on the review team for the proposals. She's also hopes to have CCB represented on the Steering Committee advising on the update to the ISWMP/Waste Master Plan. Ann and Denise are speaking about Waste Reduction to the Sleeping Giants Citizens Council on 9/13/21 and the next Waste Committee meeting is 9/14/21.

Energy & Transportation Committee – Mark

Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority – Paul Paccini, a public member of the Energy & Transportation Committee, is trying to put together a public meeting to help encourage the L&C Commission to join the Authority. There is a real possibility to

Tree Planting Team – Diana

Carlin and Diana went door-to-door in the 6th Ward to encourage residents to participate in the City's tree planting program – collaborative effort with City, CCB, Growing Friends and the 6th Ward. Tree planting is underway! The 6th Ward has about 50% less canopy cover than other parts of Helena and for this reason has been identified as a priority area for tree planting (equity).

Communications Committee – Lucy

In addition to the Communications Policy, creating a climate change-theme for the window display for the Goodkind building for October and November. Hoping to partner with HHS and CHS green groups. Patricia has Carroll students who could help as well. Want to focus on Energy, Transportation, Water, and Waste – send ideas, please.

Emerging Issues/Other Business:

Diana: Climate Change Letter – hope to have a draft for early/mid-November.

Ann: If there is a speaker for the October meeting; concerned that we have adequate time for adequate discussion for the communications policy. Diana responded that yes, Kim Carley is speaking at the October meeting. Diana will follow-up with Mark and Val.

Makenna: Having problems finding the City's Sustainability information... Diana responded that the City is re-vamping its website and has been talking with Dannai Clayborn and Jake Garcin about the status. Diana has been concerned about public access and meeting the spirit of the public access requirement, even if we are technically meeting the requirement by having the information available on the City's website.

Announcements:

Makenna announced that she has taken a new job and can no longer serve as a Representative of an Environmental Organization and will be resigning from the CCB. We'll miss you, Makenna. Thank you for all you've done as a valued member of the CCB.

Public Comment:

Diana invited anyone on the call, including the public, to share any other comments or questions they might have. There was no public comment.

Next Meeting:

Diana announced that the next regular CCB meeting will take place Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 4:30 pm in person and via Zoom. Kim Carley, City Recycling Coordinator, will be the speaker. Please contact her, Mark or Val with any agenda items and let them know if you cannot attend.

Adjourn:

With no further comment from the board, staff, or public, Diana adjourned the meeting at 6:15 pm.

Minutes prepared by Diana Hammer.