

## **Helena Citizen Conservation Board (HCCB)**

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2020; 4:30 PM

Meeting held virtually via Zoom

### **Board Members Present (7 out of 13 members required for a quorum):**

Denise Roth Barber, Acting Chair (at Lisa's request)

Ann Brodsky

Diana Hammer

Patricia Heiser

Mark Juedeman

Shane Sater

Makenna Sellers

Richard Sloan

Brian Solan

Valerie Stacey

### **City Staff Present:**

Pete Anderson, Solid Waste Superintendent

Ryan Leland, City Engineer

Patrick Judge, Sustainability Coordinator

### **Others Present:**

Cora Helm, Interested Citizen

Kathy Juedeman, Energy & Transportation Committee Member

Kelly Robson, Interested Citizen

Amanda Schwark, Interested Citizen

Gregory Thomas, Interested Citizen

Emily Woodland, Interested Citizen

### **Call to Order & Welcome:**

Denise Roth Barber called the meeting to order at 4:43 pm. She welcomed all participants, and introduced the board members present.

Patrick Judge gave the board vacancy update: Brian Fadie's departure created an opening for an "Environmental Organization Representative," which will be advertised soon.

### **Minutes:**

Mark Juedeman moved that the August 13, 2020 meeting minutes be approved as written.

Richard Sloan seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Works Presentation:**

Ryan Leland presented the updated cost estimate for the warm storage building. Costs continue to climb (due to supply chain shortages in lumber, steel, etc.), with a price tag that is now approaching \$2 million. Public Works is not comfortable proceeding with the project at that expense level, but will potentially revisit the project later this winter if materials become more affordable. This reduces some pressure on the HCCB to make a quick recommendation to the Commission about the relative merits of the project. Ryan had forwarded the latest design document to the board. Mark Juedeman

suggested that the design be changed to make the larger portion of the roof south-facing, to aid with solar-production.

In general, the Public Works Department has been busy, having started or completed roughly 20 projects this summer. A similar number of additional projects are in the design phase. Many of the projects are of interest to the HCCB, such as:

- **Water conservation.** Several recent infrastructure upgrades are saving the City considerable quantities of treated water -- roughly 860,000 gallons per day (Tenmile to Baxendale pipe replacement, lining of the Hale reservoir, etc.).
- **Wastewater treatment plant methane capture.** 80-90% of the methane that is produced is captured and burned on-site for heating purposes. The new digester cover will enhance collection and storage. Additional efforts were made to use the methane for electricity production, but the quantities of gas weren't large enough and the gas wasn't clean enough to make that work.
- **Water meter change-outs.** Improved water meters are being installed at residences throughout town, as part of a regular upgrade that occurs every 10 years or so. The new meters are better able to detect leaks & drips and can send alerts to the City and the homeowner, so they can be responded to quickly thereby improving water conservation. The City is also installing backflow preventers at homes that don't have them. These are part of the code requirements for new homes.
- **Transportation projects.** The new pedestrian/bicycle path along the east side of Benton (west side of Bill Roberts) is underway and will help facilitate non-motorized transportation. Water and sewer are being installed in the Knight/Josleyn area. Getting these homes off septic and well will improve water quality (nitrates) and also allow for more in-fill development.

Mark Juedeman asked about the 0% interest loan program for water service line replacements (similar to the sidewalk and renewable energy loan programs, with a ten year payback on the property tax bills). Ryan said you can email him to see if your home needs a new line, or you can just wait until you start seeing lots of pavement cuts in your neighborhood.

### **Committee & Project Team Reports, and Sustainability Coordinator's Report:**

Ann Brodsky reported on the "Community Conversation on Reducing Helena's Waste Footprint" Zoom Webinar forum that was held on August 18, 2020. The event was very successful, with 4 main presenters, good media coverage, and over 50 people in attendance. There will be a follow-up conversation that is more targeted and participatory. Ann suggested that some kind of study or strategic plan may be an important next step. The waste committee has been working closely with the Public Works Department and Solid Waste Division.

Diana Hammer reported on the Water Committee's plan to organize a series of six workshops on water conservation. She's been working with Lisa Fairman, Stan Bradshaw (who chaired the Helena Climate Change Task Force), and others. The 2009 Climate Action Plan set a goal of reducing Helena's per-capita water consumption from 175 gallons-per-day to 100 gpd. The Water Committee would like to "pilot" the workshop series with HCCB board members and others before rolling it out to the general public next spring or summer.

Diana also reported that, before COVID, the Education and Outreach Team had been working on general strategies for communicating to the public, including templates for a consistent "look" for HCCB materials. The team has not met recently.

Mark Judeman gave a progress report on the draft letter endorsing the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority. He had circulated it to board, and incorporated the feedback he got. Ann Brodsky moved that the letter be put into final form (on HCCB letterhead and with Chair Fairman's signature) and sent to the County Commission and cc'd to the City Commission. Makenna Sellers seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Patrick Judge reported on other City energy-related work, including updates on:

- electric vehicle charging stations

- proposed City-owned 50 kW solar electric system
- negotiations with NorthWestern Energy, to help implement the 100% Clean Electricity Resolution
  - "Utah Model" (HB 411, Utah legislature 2019)
  - Green Tariffs
  - Helena Pilot Project (distributed storage)

Patrick also mentioned his interest in energy-tracking software as a possible budget item for FY2022.

### **Landfill Tour:**

The group settled on Friday, September 25 at 10:00 am. Pete Anderson said the tour typically takes 1.5 to 2.0 hours.

### **Other Announcements:**

Makenna Sellers welcomed everyone to register for, and attend the upcoming Bill McKibben Zoom talk: "Turning the Corner on Climate Change." Northern Plains Resource Council will be hosting the event on Monday, **October 5th**, from 5:00-6:00 pm. More information is available here:

<https://northernplains.org/bill-mckibben/>

Diana Hammer announced that the Montana Climate Solutions Report has been released, and that it's goals are very complementary to Helena's "100% clean electricity by 2030" goal. Specifically, the goals for Montana are:

- 1) net carbon neutrality for the electricity sector by 2035
- 2) net zero emissions from all sources by 2040-2050.

Diana also announced an upcoming Resilient Helena Zoom meeting scheduled for Wednesday, **September 30th** at 7:00 pm. The focus will be Helena's Local Food System. More information is available here:

<https://resilient-helena.org/events>

Mark Juedeman announced that the Montana Passenger Rail Summit will take place Thursday, **September 17th** from 10:00-1:00 pm, with nationally-recognized presenters. More information is available here:

<https://montanapassengerrailsummit.org/>

Diana invited the new board members to introduce themselves more fully. Shane Sater said that he is a junior at Carroll College majoring in Environmental Science. He has worked as a field ecologist with Prickly Pear Land Trust, and has interests in food systems, botany, ornithology, and landscape ecology. He's looking forward to learning more about HCCB, and contributing to its work. Brian Solan is a mechanical engineer with a professional focus on energy conservation and renewable energy. He has been with the energy services company Ameresco for ten years, and would like to help out with the Energy Committee of the HCCB.

### **Public Testimony:**

Denise Roth Barber invited the public to share any comments or questions they might have. There was no public testimony.

### **Next Meeting:**

Denise Roth Barber noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place Thursday, October 8th at 4:30 pm, and that the meeting will likely take place via Zoom again.

### **Adjourn:**

With no further comment from the board, staff, or public, Denise adjourned the meeting at 5:50 pm.

### **Addendum:**

On 9/25/20, members of the HCCB attended a tour of the L&C County Landfill.

**Minutes prepared by Patrick Judge.**