

Helena Citizen Conservation Board
Hybrid Meeting: in Room 426 of the City-County Building and via Zoom
August 11, 2022; 4:30-6:00 p.m.

Noting a quorum, Diana Hammer opened the meeting at 4:32 pm.

Board Members Present:

1. Diana Hammer, Chair
2. Mark Juedeman, Vice-Chair
3. Patrick Judge, Vice-Chair
4. Denise Roth Barber, Secretary
5. Ann Brodsky
6. Becca Boslough
7. Steven Costle
8. Liz Grant
9. Patricia Heiser

Excused: Brian Solan, Dick Sloan

Public Works Dept.: Leea Anderson, Jacki Peterson

Public: Dr. Gregory Thomas

2. Review and Approval of July 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Mark moved and Patricia seconded the approval of the minutes as shared.

3. Report from the Public Works Department (PWD) – Leea Anderson

Sustainability/Recycling Coordinator Position: The position has not yet been filled. PWD did make an offer to one of the applicants, who then turned it down after receiving a counter-offer from their present employer. The PWD is working now with HR to determine next steps to fill the position.

EV Charging Station: Bill Roberts golf course was selected because not only does The City own it, the DEQ grant requires that the parking lot meet the slope and grade ADA compliance requirements (one of the biggest issues with the other sites). In addition, the site is readily available, wider variety of users, and it's a secure location

50KW Solar system: Northwestern Energy (NWE) lost the City's net-metering application (although the check was cashed so the City knows NWE received the application). They are

working with NWE on what to do next. Once approved, PWD will go to the Commission for approval to get the grant. October 31, 2022 is the targeted project completion date.

4. Officers' Report – Diana/Mark/Patrick/Denise

Diana: the Executive Cmte met last Friday and discussed: 1) Status of the letter to the Commission asking to extend and expand the Board; 2) there are 3 current board openings: 2 student positions and the water/watershed position vacated by Val Stacey who resigned this past month; and 3) the CCB retreat. Diana called the Mayor about the Extend/Expend letter and he said he would bring it up at the next admin meeting Aug. 17th. Diana is unable to attend so Mark (tentatively) offered to present the CCB's position to the Commission; Patrick and Denise offered to be his backup.

Denise: most of our efforts to get on the agenda have been unsuccessful because we have tried to do so by working through city staff. Yet we are charged with advising the Commissioners and Mayor. Going forward, she suggests that we work directly with the Commissioners and Mayor.

Diana invited the Interim City Manager Tim Burton to this CCB meeting. He was unable to attend and instead invited her to meet with him; Mark and Diana will meet with him on Monday, Aug. 22nd.

Ann B: how do we best advise the Commission? It is not clear. And how do we better communicate with the PWD to know of and provide input on the various educational materials?

Leea: Regarding the strategic waste reduction plan, we are already implementing public education and outreach, part of the 1st phase. But we cannot work on the curbside recycling program until the Master Plan is developed. Also, the City is working on some water and wastewater videos which will be coming out soon. Ben Rigby is presenting at the Lake Helena Watershed Festival on Saturday, August 27 at Women's Park. Lots of fun, family-oriented activities.

Leea asks that if CCB meets with the Departments to please let her know.

Diana noted that there are many opportunities for closer communication and coordination among the CCB and the City.

Retreat: The Executive Committee is thinking that the Board would break out into Committees and then re-convene as a full group to develop short- (next several months) and long-term (next couple of years) goals.

Denise: let's examine the Board itself: for example, consider whether or not we are having enough impact, and how we can have more impact, be more effective. And discuss our expectation of what it means to be on the Board, and member involvement.

Mark: What are some strategies and tactics to work more effectively with the Commission? Are there policies we want to recommend, implement? For example, what policy can we promote to upgrade to EV the City's Vehicle Fleet?

Leea: The cost of EVs and lower maintenance and repair are good selling points. She has had more success promoting EVs for their low-use vehicles in a more round-about way.

Mark: if the City passes a resolution saying new vehicles must be EV unless there is sufficient reason not to....

Leea: It may be faster to do it that way but it will be unpopular. It's easier to get people to do things if it's their idea.

Ann recommends that the Energy and Waste committees work with the PWD to discuss this further.

Leea: Suggest that we meet first with the Sustainability Coordinator who can then bring the info to the various Departments.

Patricia: What about opportunities for climate action and infrastructure through the recent Inflation Reduction Act bill that just passed? What will be happening at the City level?

Leea said she has gone through the entire bill (!) and shared the following:

City-applicable Grants

Waste: Solid waste/Recycling Infrastructure and Reduce/ReUse Education Grants

Going live in the 4th Q of 2022, ~ November

Water Recycling for WW Treatment Plant

State Clean Drinking water revolving fund for lead serviced pipes

Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block grants

The bill also has funding for nonprofits and universities too

5. CCB Retreat – focus and intention + date/time

- What we are as a board and how to be more effective.
- Member involvement and participation
- Strategy and Tactics for how to move things along, be more involved
- Policies we want to recommend
- Break out into Committees and develop short-term and long-term goals

Date and Time: Still TBD

6. Unfinished Business

Denise: Perhaps the Communications Committee could work with the MT Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate on the upcoming event here in Helena. Diana noted that Anita Lowe is on the Board from MPHPC and will follow-up with her and Liz.

Denise asks about the Meeting Minutes: How much detail do we want in the meeting minutes? Perhaps discuss at the September meeting or at the Retreat? Diana suggests that we look for a 'sweet spot' between super sparse and super detailed notes.

7. Committee & Project Team Reports

- Water - Patricia/Diana
 - WaterWise Posters are displayed in the GoodKind Building through August
 - WaterWise videos are still in the works
 - If there are issues with the City over-watering, irrigating during rain, etc. Leea asks us to please report on the Beheard Helena. The City is Rain sensors are being installed (2-3 so far) so that the sprinklers don't go on when it rains.
 - Lake Helena Watershed Festival, Aug. 27, 9 am -1 pm in Womens Park
 - [article by John Krigger](#) in the IR about water conservation
 - 4-5 people attended the pilot in-person water tour - went really well
 - Leea is working on the online story map/virtual tour
 - Xeriscape Demonstration Garden is in at the Law and Justice Center; Water Committee drafted language and the City is preparing education materials re: turf alternatives and xeriscape landscapes with native, drought-tolerant species.
 - Continuing to consider water rates and to follow the water rates study
- Waste – Ann/Denise

- Ann B: Does City PWD have to wait for approval of Waste Reduction Plan from the Commission?
Leea: No, we're proceeding with the Education. We have amped up our education and outreach (which we already planned on doing)
 - Ann and Denise met with Commissioner Logan last month. Sean would like to have a survey of the citizens to gauge their support for the universal curbside recycling program (and subsequent increase in fees)
 - Denise and Diana were interviewed by Nolan Lister of the IR about the Strategic Plan for Waste Reduction so hopefully there will be an article soon
 - Solid Waste Master Plan Steering Committee - Scope of Work has been the focus of the biweekly meetings held so far but that has been finalized; unsure of schedule moving forward.
- Energy & Transportation – no report
 - Communications – no report

8. Emerging Issues / Other Business

Denise: Meeting Minutes , how detailed? - discuss at Sept meeting

9. Announcements

Mark: Montana Renewable Energy Association - Clean Energy Fair in Butte this weekend at the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) Campus. Electric Vehicle (EV) exhibit.

10. Public Testimony - None

11. Action Items from this meeting

- Denise: Meeting Minutes, how detailed? - discuss at Sept meeting
- Ann: Board expansion - revisit it
- Sept 12 is next Commission meeting after next week's Admin Mtg where the Commission could possibly discuss Board extension, expansion

12. Agenda for Next Month's Meeting - Thursday, September 8, 2022

Meeting was adjourned at 6:06 pm.