

Minutes of the Helena Citizen Conservation Board Regular Meeting

March 10, 2022; 4:30-6:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call and Welcome

Noting the Quorum, CCB Chair Diana Hammer called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm. She welcomed all participants.

Board Members Present:

1. Diana Hammer, Chair
2. Mark Juedeman, Vice Chair
3. Val Stacey, Vice-Chair
4. Denise Roth Barber, Secretary
5. Patrick Judge
6. Lucy Lantz
7. Becca Boslough

Board Members Not Present: Ann Brodsky (excused), Steven Costle (excused), Elizabeth Grant (excused), Brian Solan (excused)

Also in attendance:

City of Helena: Leea Anderson, Ed Coleman, Jacki Pierson, Kim Carley
Helena Civic TV

2. Review and Approval of February 10, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Dick Sloan moved to approve the minutes as submitted; Mark Juedeman seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Report from the Public Works Department – Leea Anderson and Ed Coleman

- EVCS (Electric vehicle charging stations): locations have been determined - 6th Ave, Northern and Jackson Parking garages. Each garage will have 2 adjoining spaces on the ground floor that meet ADA requirements.
- Solar project: Helena was granted the universal systems benefits grant through Northwestern Energy (NWE) for the solar project at the City Transportation shop, 3001 E. Lyndale. The city is working on a request for a bid to go out soon. Bidding for this project is open only to renewable energy qualified installers, and the city hopes for a good response to the bid.
- Annual sustainability report: Pat Judge sent an email regarding GHG emissions. Leea will talk with Patrick and get any additional information needed for that report.

- Strategic Waste Reduction Plan - public kick off meeting was held on Feb. 17th. Next one is Mar 16, to review the list of strategies drafted so far.
- The green tariff renewable rate option. Leea is having scheduling issues but trying to get the folks together. (Pat J mentioned that the next meeting between NWE, local governments and the consultants, Energy Strategies from Salt Lake, is Mar 21st and encouraged Leea to join that and future meetings.)
- The energy storage pilot project: NWE is conducting research & development (R & D) in Helena, related to battery storage. Paid for by NWE, there is no cost to the city, and NWE is on its own timeline. NWE has conducted R & D already in Bozeman and Missoula. Helena's is on hold however due to inventory and supply issues. They are a long way out. NWE may have to shift from a large battery storage unit to smaller ones placed strategically. Mark J noted there is a local advisory committee that was organized around that - and asked if the City will involve that committee. Leea responded - yes, once the supply issues get sorted out a little bit more (issue is supply of large batteries). The city will stay in touch with NWE to keep the ball moving.
- The City facilities' energy efficiency and energy performance contract – this is regarding the energy audit and tracking for city facilities, initiated by Pat Judge. Leea is working with Troy Sampson and Scott Burke to identify the next steps to try and figure out how to track the energy usage at municipal facilities.
- Ed needs names of folks from Carroll and MSU from CCB folks regarding developing ways to remove the plastic flow controls of glass. Mark said MSU is looking into a capstone project around this. Diana will get Ed the name of her contact at Carroll College.

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

Status of letter sent to the Commission asking them to extend the CCB and add more members: the City Commission is busy with getting Director positions filled so this has been backburnered. Positions that need to be filled: Parks Director, Community Development Director, City Attorney, Sustainability Coordinator, and the City Manager.

Also, Ed C. noted that turning the Sustainability Coordinator position into a full-time one was supported by former City Manager, Rachel Harlow-Schalk. The fate of that decision is now up in the air, as the City looks for a new manager.

5. Unfinished Business

- OpEd drafted by Pat Judge re: GHG Emissions and Savings to Taxpayers has been sent off for publication in the IR.
- We have reserved the space again in the Good Kind building for the month of April. Any volunteers to help create that display? No one volunteered...
 - Ed C: the City was approached by Brooke Jenkinson, of Better Roots Composting - who has artistic, creative abilities. She may be interested.
- Board Retreat in April
 - Mark J: it would be helpful to wait until we know how long this Board is going to exist, beyond the Dec 2022 sunset. But one argument for meeting sooner would be to discuss the City's Budget priorities.
 - Diana: CCB should probably start talking about the Budget and CCB priorities in April so we're ready to recommend in May/June.
 - Ed C: the city is currently working on the budget now, but is not

sure when it will go to the Commission (which will need to adopt the budget by late June at the latest).

- Pat J: May or later would be better for a Retreat
 - Denise: Maybe schedule for this summer or September, after we heard about the term of the Board and the Sustainability Coordinator position.
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- World Water Day is Mar 22nd. Water Committee is planning to write an OpEd promoting water conservation.
 - Mayor's City of Helena Water Conservation challenge runs through April. PWD will submit an application, after receiving support from the Mayor. Will get digital media materials to put on the website and share with the CCB. Diana suggested an insert in the April water bill about conservation and the Mayor's water challenge. If it's too late to get in the April insert, May would be good too and Ed C agreed.

6. Committee & Project Team Reports

Waste - Denise

The big update is the upcoming March 16 meeting conducted by Zero Waste Associates to review a list of the ideas generated thus far. Denise encouraged members to promote the meeting as well as provide input via the 'Be Heard Helena' page.

Also, the solid waste master plan committee has now met a few times. The City has put out an RFP to hire a consultant, which is open until Mar 25. The selection of the consultant is then targeted for late April/early May.

Energy & Transportation – Mark/Pat

Committee met on the 3rd of March. Wide ranging discussion between Pat, Brian, Dick, and Mark, which included conversations about:

- the budget, including the FTE Sustainability Coordinator and where it should be located. Ed C had provided a written report on energy and transportation, which was very helpful.
- the impacts of open meeting laws and how it will affect the Committee.
- Discussed Pat's GHG emissions OpEd
- Finally, discussed the electrification of the City's fleet and how to promote the City's use of electric vehicles. Brian shared some info on funding from the DEQ for an electric street sweeper. Pat mentioned that Helena had applied for that funding. Ed announced that the City did get the grant for an electric street sweeper, which was welcomed news. Diana noted that the Police Dept is going to or has purchased hybrid vehicles. The City only has the single plug-in hybrid, used for the City-County mail delivery, which they may swap out.

Communication Committee - Lucy

Have not met so no report out at this time

Water – Val/Patricia

- The Committee is busy figuring out the logistics for an in-person WaterWise

Garden Tour throughout Helena, and they are hoping to get the online water-wise tour before they launch the in-person one. They plan to collaborate with other local businesses and nurseries, as well as the Lake Helena Watershed Group and the Lewis and Clark County Water Quality Protection District, which want to funnel money into this partnership for water conservation workshops.

7. Emerging Issues / Other Business

Advisory Board Training in February (link previously provided via email): presented information on general workings and expectations of Advisory Boards. Ashley Kent of MSU Local Government Center presented the training. Of particular note: Open Meeting rules.

The Open Meeting requirements apply to Committees of the Boards. Open Meetings means they are publicly noticed, an agenda posted, and minutes are taken. Notification = a minimum of 48-hour notice of meetings on the City website. Jake Garcin, the City's PIO, has been putting our notices and materials on the CCB page of the City's website. It is not clear however if minutes need to be posted. The CCB does post theirs.

[Diana's Post-Meeting Note: According to the Local Government Center at MSU, minutes need to be stored electronically by the City and retrievable, if requested.]

Diana laid out 3 Options to ensure Committee compliance with Open Meeting Rules:

1. The CCB could have a working session meeting and a separate meeting, like how the School Board and the City Commission operate.
2. The CCB has a longer monthly meeting that includes Committee meetings.
3. Each Committee can set regular meetings, publicly notice them, post agendas, and take minutes.
4. Other Ideas? Denise suggested considering removing committees and having informal working groups report out at the monthly full Board meetings.

Discussion: Dick asked if that was being done to avoid public participation as it seems to go against the spirit of the public notifications. He wondered if conducting regularly scheduled Committee meetings would work better to meet the requirements. Val agreed with Dick and suggested it might result in more interest and awareness and generate greater public involvement if the committee meetings are on the City's website. Denise disagrees with the decision to apply this requirement to Committees and doesn't mind working around it. She also said she wonders if this an attempt to minimize the effectiveness of the organization. She welcomes public participation but questions the logistics of complying. Val asked if the term 'Committee' was the trigger or is creating a subset of the Board (by whatever name). Diana learned that it's not the term Committee per se, it's that the Board (a publicly created body) created a subset of that public body, so the public has a right to know about it and participate in meetings of these bodies, if they so choose. Dick suggests it is not that hard to publicly notice Committee meetings and thinks having Committees really helps focus the work of the CCB.

The discussion continued (for another 10 minutes) around these ideas and concerns. The conversation then turned back to the options for CCB.

Patrick prefers Option 1 – separate working session and public meetings.
Val suggested break-out groups could save time.

Denise is concerned about making a quorum if we start meeting twice a month. Diana said the Water Committee is entirely comfortable publicly noticing its regular meetings. Pat suggested paying attention to the Committee membership to allow greater flexibility. Dick says the simplest option is to notice Committee meetings so the public can participate. Diana asked for ideas about how to manage this as a board in a workable fashion? Val is fine with any of the three options proposed. Dick agrees. Mark too.

No consensus was reached. Diana tabled the conversation for now and proposed the Board, perhaps the Executive Committee, figure out a path forward with the requirements soon.

8. Announcements

Diana mentioned that a Sustainability Fair is planned for Saturday, June 11; the Board may want to have a table or participate in some way.

9. Public Comment - None

10. Agenda items for Thursday, April 14, 2022

- Budget – priority items for each Committee
- Re-visit question about Committees and compliance with open meeting laws

11. Adjourn. Diana thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 6:10 pm.