

Helena Citizen Conservation Board
June 14, 2018, 4:30 pm
Field Trip to Helena Recycling, 3 Industry Loop, East Helena
(Pat's notes)

Attendance (quorum, with 7 of 12 board members)

- Denise Roth Barber
- Ken Knudsen
- Greg Ross
- Sarah Norcott
- Richard Sloan
- Patrick Judge
- Ann Brodsky
- John Hilton, Owner

General Notes

- City Manager Ron Alles last day is June 29
- Sarah Elkins (city staff person for this board) last day is July 6

Tour Notes

- Currently has approximately 6 employees (+ Gabi the cat, to help scare the mice away)
- Currently has approximately 800 customers (hoping to get to 1000 soon)
- 60 new customers in the last couple of weeks, after the glass program was launched
- 4 trailers to collect from the various curbside routes (and a software program to coordinate it all)
- Serves Helena, the valley, East Helena, some customers in the S. Hills, etc.
- The building is 1.5 years old -- includes a baling machine but they have to tie the bales with wire manually. They're hoping to get an auto-tie baler.
- John's employees pull out a lot of trash, and work diligently to keep their bales "clean"
- It's a challenging business -- commodity prices fluctuate, trucking costs are up 150%, etc.
- It's important to try to keep everything dry, his buyers have probes to sense moisture of a cardboard bale, and there are price deductions for that
- Helena Recycling could handle, and would love to have more volume
- It's a complex set of relationships among the different entities in the area
 - (Transfer station stuff goes mostly to Pacific, except plastic)
 - (Matt Elsaesser started up 406recycling, largely focused on electronics)
- John's not a fan of "single stream" recycling (labor intensive, moisture issues, etc.)



- Butte's program, run by AWARE, shut down, and stakeholders are trying to figure out a solution



Paper

- Shredded "white" office paper from the State, etc. is very valuable
 - Recycled into paper, toilet paper, etc.
 - Pastel colors are fine
 - Bright colors (fluorescents, golden rod, etc.) are not ok
- Iron Mountain bought Records Management, and are now the only shred company?
 - Helena Industries shut down
 - Maybe West Mont could help with processing?
- Books can be recycled as office paper, as long as the spine & cover are removed

Cardboard

- Bales consisting of mostly corrugated are more valuable
- Some paperboard content is ok, but it lowers the value
- Egg cartons get tossed out

Aluminum & Tin (steel) Cans

- They have a machine to sort those (magnetically)
- Cans can be crushed or not (it maybe saves his trucks a little space, allowing them to stay out longer)

Plastics

- 1s and 2s only
- John's actually ok with lids



Glass

- Ash Grove is applying for a permit amendment to expanded their glass intake from 250 to 800 tons-per-year
- Helena Recycling collects glass as a service to their customers but they don't get paid for it by Ash Grove
- Curbside customers are limited to just 1 bin of glass per pickup these can get heavy!

