

Citizen Conservation Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2018

Room 326, City-County Building, 4:30 PM

1. Introductions – Staff, Board Members

In attendance: Liz Fuller, Hannah Cail, Brian Fadie, Sarah Norcott, Patrick Judge, Greg Ross, Dick Sloan, Diana Hammer, Lisa Fairman, Ann Brodsky

Resources: Sarah Elkins, Kim Carley, Pete Anderson, Troy Sampson

2. Board Nominations/Vote

Patrick motioned – Ann, seconded

Hannah Cail – Chair, Brian Fadie & Dick Sloan – Co- Vice-chairs

Full consensus

3. Organization Purpose Statement Discussion, Committee/Topic Recommendations

- Community education (water & energy conservation, renewables, recycling)
- Data collection & analysis strategies
- Energy (efficiency, renewable, building codes)
- Public/Private Partnerships (energy & water conservation strategies)
- Water (storm water management, waste water treatment, city use, building codes, etc.)
- Transportation (emissions, efficiency, non-motorized, multi-modal etc.)
- Goals (Paris Accord)

It was suggested the group look at 2009 goals in conjunction with Paris Accord goals, and answer the question, where are we now?

Diana suggested the educational aspect be part of the purpose statement because it's key aspect of public/community involvement outside of city activities.

Patrick suggested re-subscribing to an energy use & greenhouse gas assessment tool for data collection and analysis of programs. He said at some point, the city subscribed to ICLEI, the [International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives](#). Sarah will create a proposal to present to the city manager for consideration; the product that comes with the subscription to ICLEI is [ClearPath](#). **The group agreed to request the City Commission both re-subscribe to the tool, and to expedite performing an updated assessment.**

The newly elected leadership team will create a few versions of an organization purpose statement, and a list of potential committee topics to present to the group at the April meeting for discussion.

4. Review of Sample By-Laws, Discussion Plan for Next Meeting

Ann Brodsky volunteered to work with Hannah on drafting by-laws for the group.

5. Recycling in Helena, Status Update: Kim Carley – City Recycling Manager, Pete Anderson – City Solid Waste Superintendent

The city has expanded programs over the past 4 years, including a new curbside program (private/public partnership), multiple commodities (electronics, scrap metal, used motor oil), green waste, and re-started recycling plastics in cooperation with the SAVE group (city supported with personnel and equipment/containers), and has continued following SAVE's dissolution.

They completed a full solid waste assessment/efficiency study in 2014, and many recommendations have been implemented, including a cooperative agreement for a city/county merge of local landfill facilities, and cross-referencing/training equipment and staff to be more efficient. (Full list on [this link](#).) The city started tracking recycling around 20 years ago, and now consistently tracks diversion rates.

Recycling is volatile because markets for those recycled commodities are volatile. The city budgets approximately \$500,000 annually for recycling (personnel, equipment, public/private partnerships). One year ago, corrugated cardboard would generate \$150/ton (city receives \$60-\$80); today it's \$25/ton, and the city pays the difference for transportation. In this case, it costs the city far more than revenue is generated. In 2014, plastics generated revenue of \$13,000, as of 8/21/2017, it's not marketable at all. Pacific Steel no longer accepts it. Helena Recycling has received 30 tons from the city, charging the city \$100/ton to bail and store it until the market recovers. China is rejecting plastics; we can no longer rely on that market. Our contamination rates are too high for their current policy.

Glass is recycled via Ash Grove Cement; it supplements the silica material in their products.

Newspaper and cardboard have been the most consistent revenue generators, all commodities are down right now, Pete expects this to bounce back at some point.

This month, Helena Recycling made requests for some changes to the city-subsidized contract with them. The city currently pays \$4/mth/customer. They requested purchasing lids for containers to keep materials from getting wet or blowing out onto the street (city buys containers; cost is proposed to increase from \$15 to \$17.25 each.) Customers currently pay \$10.95; there is a proposal to increase that to \$13.20 to cover the cost to accept glass and add lids to containers. It has not been decided whether the city or the subscribers will cover the cost difference.

It was requested that research be collected that might compare Helena's active residential recycling participation with other similar sized communities. Helena is at around 7% participation in the curbside program, and it is difficult to measure overall participation (other

than diversion rates) because of the many offsite recycling containers our residents use. The offsite containers are very popular, and there has been some discussion of expanding them because they're much more cost effective than curbside recycling. However, expanding offsite recycling centers can have a negative impact on curbside participation.

Measuring effectiveness of recycling must include: Environmental impact of not recycling, financial cost of recycling, environmental impact of recycling in terms of transporting commodities, etc.

There were 177,000 vehicle transactions at the transfer station in 2017. 75% of Scratchgravel residents use the transfer station; roughly 50% of city residents use their permits.

Pete can provide data in terms of use of the transfer station by property owners/permit owners, vs. recycling transactions, etc. City residents pay \$179.10/year for all solid waste services.

In 2014, staff proposed building our own bailing facility to maximize return on commodities, and remove the middleman/processor, the commission did not agree.

6. Municipal Facilities Energy Efficiency Status Update: Troy Sampson – City Facilities Superintendent

(See attached list.) Room 326 was renovated in 2012, and in 6 years, no LED fixtures have needed replacement or maintenance.

An emergency generator was installed at the City-County building; it was purchased for IT servers for city/county government, and for law enforcement.

In 2007, a 70-ton chiller was installed on the roof to create a centralized cooling system. That project is in its final phase, to be completed by next winter. Up until recently, the facility has been using up to 120 window air units for the building, installing in them in spring and removing them to store in off-site storage from late September. These units damage window frames and limit energy efficiency due to the imperfect fit in the windows.

In 2009/2010, we switched from higher wattage bulbs (T8) to lower (T5) to conserve energy, which saved in cooling costs in the summer as well. That goal to replace bulbs is no longer relevant, and more LED applications are being used to replace older and failing lighting.

We installed all LED, remote controlled, complicated system in the Civic Center ballroom upper mezzanine. It requires a lot of maintenance, simplicity would have been better. Staff learned a lot of lessons in that implementation.

Staff was asked if city building standards comply with LEED standards for new construction for city facilities (golf) and/or new private construction. Sarah E. will check with the building division and ask for a representative to speak to the group at a future meeting.

Northwestern Energy discussion, re: Streetlights: Sarah E. said that there had been many discussions at commission work sessions regarding the potential to replace streetlights with LEDs. Almost all streetlights in the city belong to, and are maintained by NWE. Some reasons they have not been changed are:

- Technology isn't standardized yet, they're hesitant to implement something without knowing it's long term sustainability
- Technology hasn't kept up with compliance rules regarding lumen standards for streets
- Expense to replace entire street lights, and potentially have to add more, depending on light requirements

Brian asked if the PSC can approve or encourage use of LEDs in street lights. Sarah N. suggested the PSC regulates rates, not necessarily materials/equipment. When regulating rates, the PSC decides whether or how NWE can pass along costs of implementation to customers. Sarah E. will check in with NWE about sending a representative to speak on that topic at a future meeting.

7. Next Meeting

April 12th , 4:30pm, City-County Building, Room 326

Organization Purpose Statement Discussion, Committee/Topic Recommendations will be distributed to the group by April 1st or 2nd

Hannah and Sarah E. will put the agenda together and distribute it.

Sample By-Laws – Hannah & Ann will use the sample to create draft by-laws for the group. (by April 1st or 2nd)

Resources to invite: Water, wastewater

For future meetings – transportation, e.g. fleet (Ben & Kathy?), building division, NWE, county (Laura Erikson, Roger Baltz, Jennifer McBroom)

Sarah E. will share upcoming meetings and communication regarding subdivision regulation discussions coming up this year.