

CITY OF HELENA
City Commission Meeting
April 19, 2021 - 6:00 PM
Zoom Online Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/95286401246>

(00:03) Call to Order and Roll Call

(00:41) Mayor Collins requested City Clerk Clayborn call roll call: City Attorney Jodoin, City Manager Harlow-Schalk, Commissioner Haladay, Commissioner Dean, Commissioner Logan, Commissioner O'Loughlin and Mayor Collins all responded present. All participated virtually via Zoom.

(01:06) Pledge of Allegiance

(01:31) Minutes

- A. 7-13-20 Regular City Commission Meeting
- B. 8-24-20 Regular Commission Meeting
- C. 8-31-20 Special Commission Meeting

(01:57) Consent Agenda

- A. Claims

(02:58) Commissioner O'Loughlin moved to approve Consent Agenda Item A. Commissioner Haladay seconded the motion. The motion passed 5:0.

Bid Award

- A. **(03:30) Rodney Street Reconstruction Bid Award**

Transportation Systems Director, David Knoepke gave a presentation on the Rodney Street Reconstruction Bid Award.

(05:08) Commissioner O'Loughlin questioned if Rodney Street was being considered as a potential project to receive some of the federal funds that were intended for Helena. Director Knoepke confirmed the Rodney Street project would be considered for those funds however, he could not say definitively since the City was still waiting to receive those federal funds.

(06:33) Discussion was had between City Manager Harlow-Schalk and the Commission regarding supplanting and whether a project that was already budgeted for could also have the federal funds applied to it.

(10:00) Commissioner O'Loughlin asked Director Knoepke if he could offer any insight as to why only one Bid was received. Director Knoepke acknowledged it was his department's hope to receive more Bids, but confirmed this pattern was similar to that of other municipalities and credited in part, the limited construction season in Montana.

(11:47) There were no public comments.

(11:57) Commissioner Logan made a motion to award of the Rodney Street Phase-I Reconstruction Project, City Project #19-39, to Helena Sand & Gravel in the amount of Two million six hundred sixteen thousand six hundred ninety-six dollars (\$2,616,696.00). Commissioner Dean seconded the motion.

(12:22) Commissioner Haladay expressed his excitement to finally see this project be approved and stated it outlines a good example of how long a project like this can take to come to fruition.

(13:18) The motion carried 5:0.

- B. **(13:37) 2021 Chip & Seal - Bid Award**

Transportation Systems Director, David Knoepke gave a presentation on the 2021 Chip and Seal Bid Award.

(16:18) Commissioner Dean questioned when the project would start and how long it would take to complete. Director Knoepke confirmed the project would begin in mid-July and was projected to be completed within three weeks.

(17:26) There were no public comments.

(17:33) Commissioner Dean made a motion to award the 2021 Chip Seal Project #TSD-32 with Additive Alternate #3 to the lowest, responsible bidder, Helena Sand and Gravel for the amount of \$414,781.79. Commissioner Haladay seconded the motion. The motion carried 5:0.

(18:16) Communication/Proposals from Commissioners

(18:29) Report of the City Attorney

(18:40) Report of the City Manager

City Manager Harlow-Schalk updated the commission on the following:

1. **(18:49)** A reminder for the community of what was discussed at the Administrative Meeting regarding E-Bikes and E-Scooters as they relate to the City Code and ADA compliance.
2. **(20:10)** Civic pride and spring clean-up would like to remind citizens to clean up their sidewalks.
3. **(20:45)** There will be a publication on business assistance information regarding COVID-19 funding pending survey results on ***Be Heard Helena***. There will be an open house on May 5th to further discuss this information with guest speaker, Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) Coordinator for Lewis and Clark County, Alexa Noruk.
4. **(22:50)** City Manager Harlow-Schalk thanked Commissioner Haladay for his comments regarding the Rodney Street project.

(25:15) Communications from the Helena Citizens Council

HCC representative, Dylan Klapmeier gave a report.

(27:32) Commissioner Logan asked Mr. Klapmeier if the HCC was present on social media and to remind the public what the HCC website was. Mr. Klapmeier stated Helenacitizenscouncil.com was their website and they could also be found on Facebook.

There were no public comments.

Regular Items

A. Consider Adoption of 5-Point Intersections Study

(28:33) Transportation Systems Director, David Knoepke gave a brief introduction on proposal to adopt the 5-Point Intersection Study.

(29:24) The project manager, Scott Randall with Robert Peccia and Associates gave a presentation on the 5-Point Intersection Study.

(39:04) Commissioner Dean asked Mr. Randall how the proposed intersection would impact bicyclists and pedestrians. Mr. Randall went into detail how a pedestrian and/or a bicyclist would utilize a roundabout as a point of crossing. He went on to say it was the discretion of the pedestrian to look both ways and there would be signage indicating to vehicles that they must stop for pedestrians.

(41:14) Commissioner Dean asked Director Knoepke what the holdup was for completing the centennial trail project. Director Knoepke gave an explanation regarding the delay citing reasons such as funding and an outdated master plan for the revitalization of the 6th ward. In conclusion, Director Knoepke acknowledged the project was still ongoing and moving forward.

(47:12) Commissioner Dean asked Mr. Randall the next steps were and if they were reflective of what the community wants as well as maintaining the guidance set out by MDT. Mr. Randall confirmed they worked with MDT throughout this process and they believe the recommendations outlined within the study are implementable.

(50:15) Discussion was had between Commissioner Haladay and Mr. Randall regarding the initial discussions with MDT that resulted in the launching of the study with the goal of determining the overall cost and having an implementable plan that MDT would deem appropriate. It was determined in those early discussions that MDT was unlikely to fund the project and it would likely need to be community driven and somewhat grant funded. Discussion was also had about the potential to address the railroad crossing on Montana Avenue.

(59:18) Discussion was had between Commissioner O'Loughlin and Mr. Randall regarding the first 5-Point intersection located Downtown. Commissioner O'Loughlin questioned if the proposed plan were to still include a traffic light at the intersection of 11th and Cruse to which Mr. Randall explained the new plan would not require a traffic light but believed they could go either way with it.

(01:00:17) Commissioner O'Loughlin asked Mr. Randall if he had any recommendation on whether there were pros or cons if the City tackled just one of the 5-point intersections first. Mr. Randall confirmed the 5-point intersection along highway 12 was a long-term vision citing it would take many years to complete whereas the downtown 5-point intersection was more locally driven and could potentially be short-term.

(01:02:49) Commissioner O'Loughlin asked what the ramifications would be if a lane of traffic were to be ultimately closed and redirected similarly to how Missoula closed a portion of Van Burren a few years ago. Mr. Randall confirmed this has been discussed but ultimately if they were to close a portion of Helena Avenue, the concerns would have less to do with traffic and had more to do with closing off that unique corridor.

(01:06:00) Commissioner O'Loughlin asked Mr. Randall if he believed the roundabout option would create more objections from MDT conceptually compared to that of another design. Mr. Randall stated he did not, and that it would likely do the opposite citing roundabouts go with MDT's *Vision Zero* initiative in that they reduce fatal and serious crashes. Mr. Randall also stated they presented a number of options to MDT with the roundabout being their top choice.

(01:07:30) Commissioner Logan asked Mr. Randall what feedback he had received from the 6th ward community relative to public engagement. Mr. Randall stated they met with them on multiple occasions and directed the commission to review their summary on this in the study for further information. In general, Mr. Randall stated the community indicated the existing configuration works as a barrier, specifically that not being able to turn left off of Lyndale creates an obstacle to their development plans going forward.

(01:09:18) There were no public comments.

(01:09:30) Commissioner Haladay asked Mr. Randall if there were any discussions with MDT regarding the turn bay onto Boulder Avenue throughout this process. Mr. Randall confirmed it did and explained that MDT did not have any plans on closing that at this point.

(01:12:14) Commissioner Dean moved to adopt the 5-Point Intersections and Corridor Connections: Multimodal Traffic Study and its recommendations. Commissioner Logan seconded the motion. The motion carried 5:0.

- B.** Consider acquiring tax lien to begin the tax deed process on property that is necessary to maintain existing access road to Lower Hale Tank.

(01:13:32) Public Works Director, Ryan Leland gave a presentation on the consideration of acquiring a tax lien to begin the tax deed process on property that is necessary to maintain existing access road to Lower Hale Tank.

(01:15:30) There were no questions by the commission for Director Leland.

(01:15:40) There were no public comments.

(01:16:05) Commissioner Haladay made a motion to approve the request from the City of Helena to begin the tax deed process on property that is necessary to maintain existing access to the Lower Hale Tank. Commissioner Dean seconded the motion. The motion carried 5:0.

- C. Consider a Resolution of Intention to Create Special Improvement Lighting District No. 399 in the City of Helena, Montana.

(01:17:00) Finance Director, Sheila Danielson gave a presentation on a resolution of intention to create Special Improvement Lighting District No. 399 in the City of Helena, Montana.

(01:19:05) Commissioner Dean asked Director Danielson where the 15-day window to protest originate from. Director Danielson explained the time frame was set by the Montana Code Annotated (MCA).

(01:19:55) Commissioner Dean asked if property owners do have questions, who should they contact to learn more about the proposal. Director Danielson confirmed that property owners could contact her directly and they can also sent their protest letter to the City Clerk's office so that it can be considered and included in the record.

(01:20:40) Commissioner Haladay asked Director Danielson if the legal ad outlining the process for calculating the individuals cost per square footage was the only method being used to provide notice to the impacted property owners. Director Danielson explained they were providing legal notice in the Helena IR as well as sending out each property owner an individual letter with the resolution and information included.

(01:21:45) There were no public comments.

(01:22:00) Commissioner Haladay read a noted disadvantage from the packet that stated:

"Property owners may determine the creation of the Lighting District to be a cost burden. Northwestern Energy will have to continue to absorb the cost of installing and maintaining lights."

Commissioner Haladay asked Director Danielson to explain what it would mean if a sufficient number of property owners protested and whether they would get the district and would not have to pay for it. Director Danielson explained that the resolution of intention would get tabled and it can't come forward before the commission for a six month period of time. Director Danielson went on to explain this was a special circumstance due to the lights already being there for more than fifteen (15) years and the property owners have yet to be accessed for the cost of the lights. In conclusion, Director Danielson stated that she expected this would come as a surprise to the property owners and should enough people protest it would result in the resolution of intention being tabled until a later date.

(01:23:36) City Attorney Jodoin confirmed the 6-month timeframe was correct.

(01:23:58) Commissioner Logan made a motion to approve a Resolution of Intention to create Special Lighting Improvement District No. 399 in the City of Helena, Montana and to set a public hearing date of May 17th, 2021. Commissioner O'Loughlin seconded the motion. The motion carried 4:1 with Commissioner Haladay opposed.

Public Communications

(01:25:08) There were no public comments.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the City Commission, the meeting adjourned at 7:25 PM.

ATTEST:

MAYOR

CLERK OF THE CITY COMMISSION