



**HELENA OPEN LANDS MANAGEMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SUMMARY
December 11, 2018**



City of Helena

CITY MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE:

- Betsy Ross
- Eric Sivers
- Jeff Shirley
- Karen Reese

CITY OF HELENA STAFF REPRESENTATIVES:

- Brad Langsather, Open Lands Manager
- Greta Dige, Code Enforcement
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

CITY-COUNTY PARKS BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:

- Ross Johnson

HELENA CITIZENS COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE:

- Denise Roth Barber

ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS:

Helena Tourism Alliance Representative

- Andrea Opitz

PPLT Representative

- Evan Kulesa

LOCATION: City-County Building, Room 326

TIME: 5:30 Pm – 7:00 pm

Call to Order

Welcome/Introductions/Visitors: Nick Sovner, Barry Hood, DD Dowden, Kim Wilson, Claudia Clifford, Robert (Raz) Rasmussen, Doug Habermann

Minutes Approval – November 13, 2018

- With no corrections, Jeff moved to approve the November 13, 2018 minutes. Ross seconded. Motion carried.

HOLMAC Action Items

New Business

Parks and Recreation Report – Brad

Review of Draft RFP (Request for Proposal)

- Brad distributed copies of a draft RFP. Because the timeline has been expedited, Brad created this draft RFP and the committee will spend this meeting going through the rough draft.
- This rough draft was designed from multiple municipalities parks plans. We are unique in the sense that we will only be evaluating one chapter of our plan (Chapter 7, Recreation Plan) of the 2004 plan. This chapter is attached to the trail system and trail recreation. We won't be revisiting some of the items in the 2004 plan which includes, but may not be limited to:
 - Archery Range (we have extended their lease for 5 years)
- This RFP will stay specific to trails, trailheads, and trail related goals, objectives, and concerns.

- In that spirit, the draft RFP outlines to the perspective consultants the type of items they will be expected to focus on and work with. As part of the process, we decided to form a committee (HOLTAC - Helena Open Lands Trail Advisory Committee) which will be responsible for working through this process and getting the consultant to the point where he/she can do a rough draft of the updated work plan which in turn will be distributed to the community. At that point, the community will provide input and that information will go back to HOLTAC. HOLTAC will take the information provided and work it to the point where it is presentable to the City Commission for adoption. The document Brad distributed outlines some of the processes the consultant will need to go through. The consultant can elaborate on this outline. Each one will have a different take on how they respond to the RFP.
- Brad also included in today's packet a copy of the timeline that you will find within this document. The timeline includes the following:
 - ✚ RFP Distribution / Mid-January 2019
 - Question Period / 02.15.2019
 - Response Period / 02.20.2019
 - ✚ RFP Proposals Due March 1, 2019
 - Notify / 03.06.2019
 - Interviews / 03.13.2019
 - ✚ Contract Award / Late March 2019
 - Kick Off / Early April 2019
 - Plan Adoption / Late June 2019
- The goal is to have the committee in place by early April. The consultants will take control of the process once selected. Brad recommendation is to meet on a weekly basis so they can continue walking through the process without a lot of time lapse. HOLMAC will be asked to provide a representative to the group. The key qualities of this representative is to have an extensive background in the open lands system or is willing to spend time getting ready for the process. He/she will also need to have the time to commit to the process. Brad is not opposed to two representatives; however, he feels it is best to have one committed representative.
- We are going to stay specific to having a working outline rather than being caught up in managing some of the "fluff" of the plan. We will be very specific to trails and trailheads. Updating maps and resolutions can be done through our office.
- Brad is open to suggestions from HOLMAC for additional items to be included. This is why we won't send this out to the consultants until late January.
- We may end up with adding some time to the timelines based on what the consultant's request.
- The committee then took time to review the timeline.
- Brad is unsure how the interview process will take place – whether HOLTAC interviews the consultants or city staff performs the interviews. The goal is to have a kick-off in early April.
- We will continue to move ahead with normal maintenance items so we may not meet the June deadline.
- HOLTAC: Brad attached a copy of potential stakeholders to serve on HOLTAC. The letter went out to 20 stakeholders. Brad reached out to Evan as well. The list was combined. It contains anyone interested in Helena open lands in the past decade. If we get 15 members, that will be great. Serving on HOLTAC is a large commitment. Each group was asked to send one representative. Brad also attached the outreach letter that went out to each potential stakeholder group. These were the names we had in our database. There may be additional changes. It is open up to other stakeholder groups. Brad was asked if "Joe Citizen" can serve on HOLTAC. Brad stated that we thought of that

and that decision has not yet been finalized. We have put together an extensive list of those who have attended HOLMAC meetings. We do need to be careful to not get the group too large. We may need to reach out to citizens with a stake in open lands if our stakeholder group ends up being too small.

- Ross then reminded the group that within the timeframe, there is a period for public input.
- HOLTAC's job will be to make certain the consultant covers **all** areas of concern.
- The HOLTAC meetings will be public. All information pertaining to the HOLTAC meetings (agenda's, minutes, meeting dates, announcements, etc.) will be posted to the Parks and Recreation page. Greta will handle this. Evan stated PPLT can help get the message out (via social media, website, etc.).
- When we sit down with the consultant, the process will be fairly structured. The consultant will set a subject matter for the night's meeting so we work through an accomplishment list. When Brad looked at the process, it makes sense to split this out geographically.
- Example: When looking at trails – you put a trail in front of the group, and each trail item/trailhead will have a management plan for the next 5 years. These will be items we have already identified. Whether this comes out in the end plan is unknown. The staff recommendation may be no action. If the group feels they are comfortable with that recommendation, the committee will put this item to the done bin and move on. Many of our trails will move through this process rapidly. Issues will be confined to major reroutes or change of use. They won't be minor maintenance items. We won't be working through signage. We will not be revisiting the Beattie Street Trailhead nor will we be revisiting the directional trail. Those are completed, done decisions. We may work with wrinkles associate with those items but we are moving on to new items. We will also work through the policies that have arisen in the last 14 years.
- City staff will be in attendance to start the process and assist with technical questions.
- Some recommendations may include the installation of pet waste stations, trashcans, etc. There will be many trails that will simply need normal maintenance.
- Brad was asked if there will be separate meetings that deal with policies. Brad stated some of the policies are overarching the entire system (i.e., deciding where we are at with e-bikes). That will apply to the whole system. The recommendation may be moved that they can only be used on specific trails. Other items will be trail-specific (i.e., winter grooming of trails for fat tire bikes).
- Denise stated as she understand the process, the consultant would, in the early stages, try to identify what policies the public wants to consider or revisit. That is correct. Brad received a suggestion today that perhaps there needs to be a public meeting prior at the kick-off stage to get ideas that wouldn't come from the stakeholder groups. Brad feels this is a good suggestion.
- There are some new items/issues: e-bikes is a new item since 2004. There hasn't been pressure to revisit horse usage. There is no hunting or angling on open space. There may be some new items that may come out of the public meeting.
- When you read through the RFP, one of the deliverables is to update the state of the trails today. This information will most likely come from surveys. Some of this may also come from a public meeting.
- Raz asked Brad if this process is in regards to just city lands. Brad stated yes. Some of the items mentioned in the 2004 plan included federal land. The federal government manages their own land. There is an item in the RFP where the consultant is required to meet with the forest service and BLM (Bureau of Land Management) to make sure everyone is on the same page. There may be some trail issues that affect both the forest service and BLM that come out of this process. Unless

these entities want to enter into a MOU with the city, we cannot make decisions on forest service land or BLM land.

- Evan stated that so much of what we decide in trails and recreation on open lands impacts other resources. Is there going to be a way to maybe update (not the complete) weeds plan, but perhaps weave this process in? From a weeds standpoint, there should be recognition that they are a disturbing activity and a policy put in place on how to rectify the problem. Brad stated he does not want to divert from wildlife and forestry issues. Weeds is a constant management issue. Brad reminded everyone that we are to stay specific to the recreation section of trails. The weeds program currently in place can address weed issues that are trail related.
- Citizen DD Dowden has concerns of how we would update section 7 of the plan and not the rest of the plan that has not been looked at since 2004. She feels there are many pieces in the entire plan that are very applicable and need to be readopted by the city. Her other comment is regarding the stakeholders – has the Native Plant Society been invited to serve on the stakeholder group. She also recommended we send an invitation to the Last Chance Back Country Horsemen to serve as a stakeholder. There are big concerns about wildlife and elk habitat especially in the winter. Brad stated that was considered but equestrian use was banned several years ago. He added that these points are well-taken, and he is not opposed to adding more stakeholders. Brad reiterated that we don't manage wildlife species. The goal within city limits is to deemphasize wildlife habitat so we are not drawing wildlife into the community. As far as our big game species, parks department ends up referring those issues to fish and game or contacting the animal control officer. We really don't fill a wildlife management role. When HOLMAC tried to, we got pushback from FWP. Brad did invite the Audubon group to have a representative on HOLTAC.
- The directive from the commission is to update the Section 7, Recreation component of the work plan. Brad stated there are a number of reasons for this specifically. First is the financial aspect of taking on a project like this. While the open lands department is not struggling financially, we are getting to the point where that could potentially happen. We have had such an acceleration of other costs over the past few years. We are trying to keep this process at reasonable costs. In the city, we spend a considerable amount in planning efforts. If the recreation trails and trail use is the issue, than that is what we need to address. We can get caught up in items that we can't address (such as wildlife issues).
- Brad anticipates that the cost for the consultant could be up to \$30K.
- The question was asked, what can be done to recognize the fact that weeds need addressed? Brad stated that when you delve into other subjects you will have to have people committed to an extended period of meeting time as a committee.
- The city will continue to address other issues such as weeds, etc. Brad added that if HOLTAC determines that an issue with a particular trail needs addressed (such as elk habitat in the winter months), and the committee decides we should close the trail in the winter, then the decision to close said trail could be something that is included in the plan.
- Citizen Claudia Clifford asked Brad for clarification on what he meant when he stated we will not be revisiting Beattie street and the directional trail; however, Helena Hikes had brought up concerns about this and suggested some mitigations for those concerns, particularly around the Eddy McClure trail. Would this fit under the scope of this project? Brad stated yes - those are the types of issues that would be looked at. The impact of Eddy West and what are we going to do when we exit the trail will be the types of issues discussed to lessen that impact. Some of these suggestions may come from city staff and then the group will need to work through those suggestions on how to address the issue.

- In response to question Citizen Nick Sovner asked, the new Parks and Recreation Director position will be hired once the new City Manager arrives. Nick stated he thinks it is interesting this process is moving forward without a new parks director. Brad stated this process is moving forward because we were pressed to move this process forward. This is the task that Brad was given by the City Manager. Craig Marr is the interim Parks Director. They wanted Brad to get the process going.
- Citizen DD Dowden suggested that perhaps the stakeholders could split into groups and look at specific sections of the plan and then bring suggestions forward. Brad stated this is a good suggestion.
- The reason this is an area of concern is this is the chapter that is creating the most interest right now. Forestry was a decade ago. Pet issues were also a concern.
- Brad asked HOLMAC members to get additional suggestions/items for the RFP to him as soon as possible so he can get them included in the document. He is also open to additional stakeholders that may be interested in the process.
- Brad would like recommendations back by mid-January.
- This RFP document has not been posted yet.
- Betsy asked Brad if he sees this final update to the plan guiding the future of an annual work plan. Brad stated yes. It will be strategically added in the work plan over a 5-year period. If we have an emergency situation, we will deal with that as it comes. But again, we don't want to get caught up in the day-to-day maintenance of trails.
- New trail ideas will be introduced as a topic and HOLTAC will then work through that idea. This would also include a reroute idea.
- Denise didn't see the business community represented. With Tourism Alliance on the list, Brad felt he has met that group representation. Denise suggested representation from the chamber. Brad stated that might be a good idea. Andrea suggested the Business Improvement District (BID). Denise suggested someone from the real estate community. Brad stated these are all good ideas and added he reached out to the Helena High Outdoor Club. Jeff then stated that that concern (real estate community) may fit better in the growth policy update which will have a recreation component as well. Denise agreed with that.
- Brad – much of this list was derived by those groups that showed an interest in trails. Denise added that the public will have an opportunity to weigh in. Brad hopes the public comes to the meetings. Denise stated she hopes these meetings will be recorded – not just audio recordings. Brad doesn't have an answer to that. Someone could even record the meeting on their phone.
- Please reach out to Brad with suggestions of additional stakeholder groups (Evan suggested a representative from people with disabilities. Brad stated this is a good point. Evan also suggested reaching out to someone from Montana Independent Living Project (MILP) and perhaps Karen Lane. She may have some ideas.
- Is there a way to bring neighborhoods into the group? Perhaps through Helena Citizen's Council. It was suggested each district have a meeting within their neighborhoods and collect comments and concerns to present to HOLTAC.
- Brad stated he will be reaching out to the county as well. We have a significant footprint in the county now (Jefferson County).
- Denise – PPLT's trails map is amazing. Since many more eyes will be looking at this update, will we be able to see clearer maps where we see where the property ends? Can we have a property map showing city, state, and forest service boundaries and property? Brad stated we will work on aerial images that are clear.

- Brad included Helena National Forest as a stakeholder. It is difficult for representatives from BLM to travel from Butte.
- Brad will research lists of consultants who work through this type of process and will reach out to them for a proposal.

Reports from Subcommittees

- Weeds – Greta
 - None.
- Report from PPLT
 - Evan – PPLT is working on maintenance items on city lands.
 - While PPLT does a considerable amount of trail maintenance, there is also discussion about weed control efforts (weed pulling and packing them out).
 - PPLT is in the middle of a public comment period for the open space bond request that PPLT submitted to complete the acquisition at 10-Mile Creek Park. Evan stated people didn't see a need for ADA trails until one was put in.
 - They are also working on trail etiquette messaging via social media and community outreach.
- Cultural Resources
 - None.
- Wildlife
 - None.
- Forestry
 - None.

Public Comment

Next Meeting Date: January 8, 2019

Future Agenda Items:

- RFP Process
- Donaldson Property – Folf Course
- Review of Forestry Projects and Trail Maintenance

Adjournment:

With no further business, the December 11 HOLMAC meeting adjourned at 6:52 pm.

ADA NOTICE

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Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in the city's meetings, services, programs, or activities should contact Sharon Haugen, Community Development Director, as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for the requested accommodation, at any of the following: Phone: (406) 447- 8490; TTY Relay Service 1-800-253-4091 or 711 Email: citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov, Mailing address & physical location: 316 North Park, Avenue, Room 445, Helena, MT 59623.