



**CITY OF HELENA
ADA Compliance Committee
March 19, 2024, 1:30 p.m.
Zoom Online Meeting;**

**City-County Building Room 326
Zoom Online Meeting; <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88566400673>**

Members Present: Jim Whaley, Deborah Lane, Jacob Krissovich, Jeannie Ranard, Melinda Reed

Members Absent: Gina Lytle, Bobbie Kalfell

Staff Present: Ellie Ray, Anne Pichette, David Knoepke, April Sparks

Call to Order and Roll Call

(0:10:17) The meeting was called to order and roll was called.

Minutes

(0:11:56) Minutes of the January 16, 2024 meeting were approved.

Regular Items

A. ADA Concerns/Complaint Status Report

(0:12:17) Ms. Ray noted that there had not been any complaints received since the last meeting. She noted that there had been an email received from Vice-Chair Lytle the previous week, which detailed concerns about snow and ice buildup in the angle parking spaces and the access aisle in front of the job service building. Ms. Ray reported that she contacted the State of Montana, and they were aware of the situation and would be more vigilant on the maintenance of these spaces. Chair Whaley stated that his understanding is these is an on-street parking spot that is ADA, but even though it has a sign, it likely does not meet ADA standards as there is a natural cross slope and does not meet standards because of this. Ms. Ray mentioned improvements that had been done to Front Street and asked if those had changed the status of the parking space. Director Knoepke said he would have to go look at the space himself. Chair Whaley noted that slope is a challenge in a lot of streets in Helena. Ms. Ray asked Director Knoepke to address maintenance of street angle parking spaces throughout the city. Director Knoepke stated that city plow trucks cannot get into the angled parking spaces to clear snow, and the department has been working on creating maintenance agreements with adjacent property owners, as angle parking is technically a request by that adjacent property owner and needs to be considered by City Commission.

B. Update on July 2022 enforcement recommendation

(0:16:43) Ms. Ray stated she did not have an update different from the January meeting. Director Knoepke gave a brief update on what is happening with code enforcement as a whole, not just those dealing with ADA violations, and hope to bring it before the Commission in early summer to consider. Director Knoepke explained the process of taking an item like this before the City Commission after asked about process by Mr. Krissovich.

C. Transportation Systems Department presentation

(0:22:05) Director Knoepke went over the city's snow removal policy, noting that if there are any complaints about sidewalks the most efficient way of reporting it is through the My Helena app. He also explained the process after a complaint is received. Chair Whaley commented that while he appreciated the dilemma in creating the snow berms, and did not have any solutions to offer, but noted that having a ramp cleared does not benefit a disabled person if a snow berm is present, and sees this as an escalating issue as more ramps are put in. Director Knoepke acknowledged this issue and stated that the department is exploring ways to mitigate it. Chair Whaley stated a desire to see efforts to reduce snow berms near places of business and medical facilities that may be a priority for wheelchair users to visit. Mr. Krissovich stated that his primary concern was with crosswalks and asked for more information about the equipment Director Knoepke had mentioned, and if there are any cities that are a good example of clearing the wheelchair curb cuts. Director Knoepke described and explained the different snow removal equipment. He also stated that there is a YouTube video from Ottawa, Ontario showing their snow removal equipment used on sidewalks, and gave more information about other things that other cities have implemented along with the challenges involved with each. Director Knoepke also gave more information on how policy for snow plowing has evolved here, and responded to several follow up questions about snow removal issues.

(0:38:33) Director Knoepke continued with a presentation about the Citian Adapt software being used by the department, giving examples of how it will help with continuing to work towards accessibility goals. Chair Whaley asked a question about allowing for wiggle room in design. Director Knoepke acknowledged that there is some wiggle room in designs to account for human error. Director Knoepke continued his presentation, noting that many of the non-compliance areas in the city are in the older sections. He continued to demonstrate the tools of the software for the Committee, and described how it will be utilized by the department to inform their work. Some members of the committee asked some questions about sidewalks, and the sidewalk summits. Director Knoepke stated that this software would be used as a tool in identifying areas in need of attention, as well as acknowledging some limitations in the data gathering process. He continued with information about upcoming projects and regular maintenance activities the department will be working on.

(1:02:11) Ms. Ray asked Director Knoepke if he would be available to come give an update on the enforcement discussion at the July meeting. He said he could. Ms. Ray asked if there information online about submitting complaints via the My Helena app, and Director Knoepke stated that people could call the city streets division if anyone is having issues on the app.



Public Comment

(1:05:24) Dr. G provided public comment thanking Director Knoepke for his update and to Commissioner Reed for her efforts.

Member Communications / Proposals for next Agenda

(1:06:24) The next scheduled meeting date was noted as being May 21, 2024. Committee members were instructed to send any proposed agenda items to Chair Whaley prior to the next meeting.

Adjournment

(1:06:58) Meeting was adjourned.