

Helena Citizen Conservation Board

April 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting was convened at 4:31 pm and **Roll Call** was taken

Members present:

Mark Juedeman
Denise Roth Barber
Dick Sloan
Jason Selong
Devon Malizia

Members excused: Diana Hammer, Lori Fitzgerald

Public Present: Cora Helm

PWD staff present: Leea Anderson, Miranda Griffis, Jacki Pierson

2. Review and Approval of March 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes (Minute 1:45)

The City wants all advisory boards to have, at a minimum, the timestamps associated with each agenda item as part of the meeting minutes. The CCB will follow that format, though will add additional notes as well.

Since it may be another year before the City is ready to post Advisory Board meeting recordings, it was suggested that the CCB post the recordings on a member's personal Dropbox account, to share with the members. However, those recordings will not be available publicly. So, until the City has a way to make the recordings publicly available, the CCB will continue to take minutes as it has in the past, and will include timestamps for when those recordings are eventually posted on to the City's website.

Denise noted that it is very challenging to be given directives from the City when it is not ready or able to handle the directives. Leea responded that going forward, the City will not issue directives until they are ready to fully execute them.

Dick moved and Devon seconded that the March Meeting minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Officers' Report (Minute 8:20)

Meeting minutes - see above

New Board members: There are still 3 positions on the Board to fill: 2 youth and 1 at-large.

Leea said that the City was still waiting for the HCC rep to be accepted by the Commission. However, Mark and Denise both noted that, per Resolution 20792, which was passed unanimously by the City Commission in January, the HCC does in fact have a representative on the CCB. “The Citizen Conservation Board is hereby established and shall be comprised of the following individuals, each of whom must be citizens of the City of Helena: One(1) Helena Citizens Council Representative **to be appointed annually by the HCC membership**, with no representative serving consecutive terms.”

The HCC provided the City with the name of its representative (Denise Roth Barber) at the same January meeting the Commission passed the Resolution re-establishing the CCB.

Leea noted that she was told that the HCC positions on all advisory boards have been put on hold until the Commission attends a Board training. Denise responded that since the CCB serves at the pleasure of the City Commission, it needs to comply with the official position taken by the Commission, as described above. Therefore, the appointed HCC rep (Denise) needs to be added to the roster of CCB members on [this page](#), as well as re-instated as a member of the Integrated Solid Waste Master Plan cmte, unless and until the Commission formally amends the resolution.

Regarding the current vacancies, no new applications have been received to date, but several applications were distributed to interested individuals at the Helena Job Fair earlier this month. Hopefully, the City will receive applications from those. Leea does not know about the timing but as applications are received, they will be forwarded to the Commission.

Mark also mentioned that the May 11th Board training conflicts with the regularly scheduled CCB May meeting. Further, several members were going to miss the May 11th meeting so the decision was to reschedule the CCB meeting to May 18th. Leea verified that Room 426 was available that day.

4. Report from the Public Works Department – Miranda Griffis and Leea Anderson (Minute 17:30)

The link to the March 22nd Sustainability presentation to the City Commission is on Public Works’ [Sustainability page](#).

Board Training: The City and County Commission Offices will host a training session for all board members, staff liaisons, department heads, and elected officials on **May 11, 2023 from 5-8pm in the Civic Center Ballroom**.

Sustainability Plan Audit (SPA):

The City has found \$100K in its FY23 budget for the SPA, which will be a 10-year plan that will review the City’s facilities and properties to determine what is needed to reduce energy and water consumption, installation of solar and EV charging stations, etc., based on both the City and the public’s use. The goal is to have a road map, or a Capital Improvement Project, for the next 10 years. It will be a holistic master plan for the City’s entire operations. It was based off of the City of Ithaca NY’s RFP, though will be tailored to Helena. Ithaca just did an RFP for a very similar project and Ithaca is a comparable city, with 32K-35K people and a lot of older buildings. The City will put out an RFP for \$100K+, and has the available funding to do so now.

There will be a 5-member panel for the contractor selection and a CCB rep will be one of the five. But beyond that, there will not be a lot of public involvement once the contractor has been hired, since this is an assessment of the City’s functions. That is where the Contractor comes in. This will not be a Climate Action Plan, it is rather a Sustainability Audit, and as such, there will be no recommended

policies or positions in the SPA, unlike the ISWMP.

Rough timeline: the RFP will be finalized by the end of next week, approved by the end of April. After a 3-4 week open RFP process (~end of May), the bid closes, and then the 5-member panel will be created. So at the May meeting, the CCB rep needs to be selected.

Sustainability items in Draft FY24 Departmental Budgets

Mark asked for a list of sustainability items that will be in the various department budgets. The Commission did ask for a separate stand-alone sustainability budget but that is not exactly possible. So instead, there will be designations in the various dept budgets that have a Sustainability component.

Leea noted that all departments present their budgets on the City of Helena's website here: <https://helena.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/>. The proposed dept budgets, and the Dept presentations of those budgets, should be available a week prior to the meetings.

Public Works Dept (PWD):

No new sustainability projects are recommended in the PWD's FY24 budget, which will be released to the public a week prior to the May 10th Admin meeting.

General Fund:

The City is asking for another \$60K to be added to the revolving loan program (for residential rooftop solar projects) from the General Fund Cash Reserves (see the "[FY24 Community Program Funding from Gen Fund Cash Reserves](#)" attachment). This was presented to the Commission at the City's 4/10 Admin meeting

The Facilities Dept

The Facilities Dept's proposed budget, which will be presented to the Commission at the **April 19** Admin meeting, can be seen [here](#).

Sustainability items proposed by the Facilities Department are:

- Law & Justice xeriscape garden. The Dept is asking for \$20,000 to expand the xeriscape project at the Law & Justice Center. (p. 28 of the 'FY24 Preliminary Facilities Budgets Combined.pdf', found in link above)
- LED lighting retrofit of 2nd floor of City-County Building
- Fire Station #2 LED lighting retrofit
- Fire Station #1 boiler replacement with high efficiency boilers
- City Shop boiler replacement with high efficiency boilers

New Bylaws

They are drafted but are still with the legal department. Leea is hoping they will be out before the May 11th Board training.

Miscellaneous Discussions

The new EV street sweeper will be charged at the Transportation Shop, where the EV charging station, which should be up and running by end of April, will be. The sweeper was purchased largely through a DEQ grant, so the DEQ has asked that a sub-meter get installed, so that the City can document how much energy the sweeper is using.

Once the solar project is up and running, Jake Garcin, the City's PIO, is going to make a public announcement through a TV spot and elsewhere.

Mark also asked about when the CCB will make its annual presentation to the City. Denise suggested that we wait until we have officers and allow for more time for the 3 vacant positions to be filled.

Water Meter Replacement Program: Denise asked what percentage of the residential water meters have been replaced so far. Leea has those figures from the Capital Improvement Plan, which she will send the CCB. The City is in Year 2 of the 7-year meter replacement plan. The City is looking at rolling the Meter Replacement Plan in with the Lead Service line inventory program.

The City's Annual Sustainability report will consist only of what was stated in the 2017 Resolution 20347, "requiring the preparation of an annual report to document specific activities implemented by the City, track greenhouse gasses, energy usage, and other resources such as water and recommend future sustainability measures for the City of Helena".

Following up to the question was raised at the March CCB meeting about a discrepancy in some figures re: water usage in the 2021 Sustainability report< Leea said the report has been updated and appendices have been attached. That report is on the City's Sustainability page [here](#).

Leea did discover a mistake in the calculations that were used in the original report, which has since been corrected. Going forward, Leea and Ben want to separate out residential base use (i.e. low water use months) from irrigation (summer) months. They also want to break out the City's usage of water to see how effective various measures are (for ex, soil moisture meters). They also want to break out some of the bigger facilities and commercial use, so the City can do more targeted outreach and be able to better determine the impact of various efforts. Those calculations will be made in the 2022 annual report.

Speaking of, once all the data is in from the DEQ, Miranda will start working on the 2022 Sustainability report, which will ideally be done in the fall so that it can then inform the following year's budget discussions and activities.

Solid Waste Master Plan Survey - 1,500 responses have been received so far. The first public meeting, held April 11th, did not attract a lot of attendees (7 to be exact, five from the County).

The City also put in a new dropoff location at the old Valley Excavating pit off of McHugh. There are concerns about visibility and litter. The City is looking for one more, perhaps on the West side, if they can find a location.

5. Unfinished Business (Minute 1:19:43)

Vote for Officers at the June or July meeting.

6. Emerging Issues / Other Business (Minute 1:20:44)

- Denise mentioned that she attended the Resilient Helena's WaterWise workshop, which was, attended by ~45 people. Jason Selong also attended the meeting which was very informative.
- Leea also encouraged people to sign up for the Mayors Water Challenge.

- Denise asked about the status of the City's new water billing process, so that consumers could better track their water usage over time. Lee responded that a new utility billing system is projected to go live in the spring, summer of 2024. Tyler Technologies is contracting with the City for a whole new system for the finance dept, HR, utilities, etc. In the interim, the City Utility Billing Dept can give you all of your past bills.

7. Announcements

Latex Paint exchange is starting this Friday

8. Public Testimony (Minute 1:27:54) NONE

9. Action Items from this meeting

- Leea will
 - put a note on the CCB's web page that if anyone wants a recording of the meeting minutes, they can contact the PWD.
 - email us DEQ's solar assessment.
 - send the CCB the figures re: the water meters that are in the CIP
 - inquire about a new water usage bar graph for the City's new billing system

10. Agenda for Next Month's Meeting – May 18th, 2023

The meeting was moved from May 11th to May 18th, to ensure a quorum and to not be in conflict with the May 11th Board training.

Agenda Items:

- Choose a CCB representative to serve on the SPA consultant selection committee
- Review of bylaws, if they are available
- Recap of the May 11th Board training
- Report out of the ISWMP Cmte May meeting
- FY24 Budget Recommendations

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm

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