

Helena Citizen Conservation Board

AUGUST 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes

The Meeting was held in Room 426 of the City County building and via Zoom.

Link to recording:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/6i0mnWgObFsspGXsfLECTg2E7K8DjqRL62Dai9D6pzS_B-kji36gkeQSmwOySprB.Zwr2L7IHrFzIQz_9

1. Roll Call and Welcome (4:35)

- Members present: Diana Hammer, Mark Juedeman, Dick Sloan, Devon Malizia, Jason Selong
- Members excused: Lori FitzGerald; Nora-Paige McFadden new member not present
- Public present: none
- City staff present: Leea Anderson, Miranda Griffis, Jacki Pierson

Diana reported that she was asked to run today's meeting, as Denise is no longer chair (removed from the CCB), and Mark had several other commitments/conflicts.

Board members complimented Miranda on her recent sustainability newsletter

2. Review and Approval of June 8, 2023 minutes (7:00)

Mark moved and Devon seconded the approval of the July meeting minutes. Motion was approved unanimously.

3. Public Testimony (7:26)

None noted. Diana commented that the suggestion to move public testimony up on the agenda was made last meeting and this topic will now be first on the agenda going forward.

4. Guest Speaker: Natalie Myer, Bozeman Sustainability Program Manager (7:45-46:15) PowerPoint attached

Natalie provided a broad overview of Bozeman's Climate Plan update (adopted 12/2020), with emphasis on efforts made in the past 4 months. She noted that 38 of 64 actions are underway, with emphasis on city buildings but goals for the entire community. Topics included the newly built Bozeman Public Safety Center as a non-export facility, training and education provided on heat pumps, rebate incentives, and water conservation efforts (that the board was highly complimentary of). Questions were asked regarding the Gallatin Valley Sensitive Lands Protection Plan for wildlife corridors, and how the Bozeman climate plan was developed. Natalie also shared the Bozeman Climate Plan dashboard that has been developed to update the public on their progress.

5. Officers Report (52:10)

No official report, as the officers did not meet. Main issue is that the board needs a new chair with the removal of Denise.

6. Report from the Public Works Department–Miranda Griffis and Leea Anderson (52:48)

- Miranda reported that the Integrated Solid Waste Master Planning Committee will be meeting in the next few weeks, so the board should consider selecting a new CCB member to participate in that.
- Miranda stated that she and Jake recently made some educational recycling videos for the public, with the goal to reduce bin contamination/mixing of plastics, removal of lids, etc.
- Miranda stated the Helena Household Public Waste Event is scheduled for October and asked the board for ideas to improve turnout, as it is a very expensive event if few folks show up. Devon suggested focusing on certain neighborhoods, vs the greater city of Helena, to encourage competition and attendance. Diana suggested reaching out to the high schools' chemistry classes, which could also encourage interest in becoming a youth member for the CCB. Miranda reported that there will be a Pesticide Event at the Fairgrounds in September, and perhaps attending that could foster some ideas.
- Miranda reported that she has reached out to several engineering firms regarding the Sustainability Audit and feels like they will receive more proposals by the new deadline of Sept 6 than they did initially.
- Miranda reported that Leea has submitted the NRY for the solar grant, at a minimum of 25 million dollars.
- Diana asked if the plan that is hoped to result from the audit will be broader than just fixing city buildings. Mark offered that other locations have utilized energy performance contracts, which would also pay for facility upgrades vs pitting those against other renewables needed. Leea interjected and stated the city has already done much of the low hanging fruit of renewables, and now needs to focus on facilities first. They do not want to explore an energy contract and plan without knowing what is needed initially to upgrade city buildings. Mark still felt like this audit will not result in a plan, to get to clean energy by 2030, or actually

have a climate plan. Dick suggested that in certain cases (like Bozeman) it may require building new structures, vs trying to fix very old ones.

- Miranda stated she plans to circulate her sustainability newsletter monthly.

7. Unfinished business- Election of a new chair (1:09)

Diana asked if any current member would be interested in becoming Chair. Mark at this time will remain Vice Chair. Devon stated we need more folks to choose from, and she was unable at this time to take on the chair position. Both she and Jason stated they may consider it next year. Diana agreed to continue to run the meetings until her term is up in February. She submitted her name as Chair, and it was passed unanimously by those present.

Mark commented that the small number of participants on the CCB has been very limiting. Diana agreed that there used to be 14 individuals in the past, and now the new bylaws may drop it to 9. Miranda also stated all boards may no longer have youth members, due to lack of interest. All agreed that lower numbers makes it difficult to be effective.

8. Emerging Issues/New Business (1:14:46)

None

9. Issue Reports (1:15)

- Energy and Transportation (1:15:06)
Mark reported that E&T is still trying to get a work group together but things have been delayed due to his travel. They hope to meet next week.
- Water Conservation (1:16)
Devon reported that this weekend is a Watershed Festival at Women's Park. There will be a waterwise display, with ideas to reduce yard footprints and provide ideas for landscaping. There is also a 2 event rain barrel workshop planned for the spring that Preserve Montana would like to host.
Devon then brought forward some new business about proposing new development standards, much like Bozeman has achieved. New subdivisions need more waterwise guidance for landscaping, using native grasses vs turf, etc. Jason stated that efforts of this type have produced a good result at the Grizzly golf course, which was well seeded and has not required water all summer. The city should lead by example and consider the same approach for municipal and commercial buildings, such as Shodair.
Leea stated that all new subdivisions must pre-apply with the city, and at that time they receive recommendations for use of native grasses, xeroscaping and other waterwise efforts. She noted that currently Bozeman is in a water crisis and is able to require these approaches. In Helena there is also the challenge of

subdivisions that start in the county but then get annexed in, making it difficult to request or require changes after the fact. She suggested that the group review city code regarding parking, trees, etc before coming up with a policy proposal. Diana offered that Montana City has a fire-wise display for the public, and that Commissioner Logan is aware and supportive of such efforts. Diana suggested that our own Helena Fire Dept building has great visibility and could do a similar display for public education purposes.

- **Waste Reduction (1:32)**

Diana stated that Denise had circulated the timeline and PowerPoint from the Integrated Solid Waste management planning group efforts to members for review. She also pointed out that this group will need a new member from the CCB to participate since Denise can no longer hold that position. Dick voiced interest, Mark moved for him to be appointed and Jason seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

10. Announcements (1:34)

Members were reminded of the Watershed event at Women's Park this weekend, as well as the Clean Energy Fair in Billings

Diana confirmed that the CCB still has 2 Youth vacancies, and one other At Large member vacancy to fill.

Mark commented that Denise had sent a letter to the City Commission regarding concerns with the proposed Bylaws and Board Resolution, but no response has been received.

11. Action items from this meeting

- Diana will serve as CCB Chair until her term ends in February 2024.
- Dick will serve as the CCB representative on the Integrated Solid Waste Management planning group.
- Members to consider and recruit potential members for open positions

12. Next Meeting: Thursday, September 14, 2023 @ 4:30 pm

13. Adjourn (1:36:25)