

Helena Citizen Conservation Board

July 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes

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

Link to recording: [Zoom Recording](#).

1. Roll Call and Welcome (4:33)

- Members present: Denise Roth Barber, Mark Juedeman, Lori FitzGerald, Devon Malizia, Jason Selong
- Members excused: Diana Hammer, Dick Sloan, Nora-Paige McFadden
- Public present: Dr. G; Bunny Rutledge, Intern, Prickly Pear Land Trust (PPLT)
- City staff present: Leea Anderson, Miranda Griffis, Jacki Pierson

Brief introductions were made and it was noted that a new at large member has been appointed (Nora-Paige McFadden).

2. Review and Approval of June 8, 2023 minutes (4:35)

Mark moved and Denise seconded the approval of the June meeting minutes. Motion was approved unanimously.

3. Officers Report (5:00)

No official report. Denise and Mark confirmed that most of what they wished to discuss will be in new business.

4. Issue Reports (5:02)

- Waste Reduction (5:03)

Denise updated the group on the Integrated Solid Master Plan Group meeting on 7/12. Goal is for the plan to be completed and ready for public comment in April 2024. Plan is in Phase 2, where six options are being put together for the public to review. Denise will circulate a draft of the options to the committee members for awareness.

Denise also shared that Ann Brodsky and Cora Helm are working with an employee of St. Peter's Health on 'Harvest of the Month' Program and currently working to develop compost education materials that can be presented in the public schools to kids and also hospital employees.

- Energy and Transportation (9:01)
Mark reported that E&T is trying to get a work group together to meet the first part of August. E&T is a citizen's group that brings ideas to the commission, comprised of community members and interested folks from the CCB. Denise cautioned that there cannot be a quorum of the CCB at these meetings. Mark will send the invite to interested members.
- Water Conservation (11:56)
Devon reported there were no updates for the group. She will be meeting with the PPLT on another project that needs signage and will see where the Justice Building signage is in the process.

5. Report from the Public Works Department–Miranda Griffis and Leea Anderson (13:10)

- Leea reported that the solar project was completed 6/28/23, and in June it generated 9009 kWh. When the website is updated with this information, a press release will go out.
- Electric chargers are all installed at Jackson Street parking garage, but are not usable until they get NW energy meters and WiFi extensions. They are locked and signs say not to use them. Striping, decals and arrows are mostly complete. Mark commented that the app Plug Share is useful for finding charging spots. Decals and signage are still needed at Bill Roberts Golf Course.
- Denise inquired if the \$300,000 of ARPA funding that Commissioner Logan requested was approved. Leea said it should be part of the city budget that was passed, and put into a 440 fund for capital improvement.
- Miranda reported that the RFP for the Sustainability Audit deadline was 6/28/23. There is a meeting next week to evaluate proposals.
- Mark asked about a meeting that occurred with City Manager Burton and the Mayor and interested parties regarding the city's climate action plan and the sustainability audit. Those present remarked that the audit is not a plan, and that IRA money should be requested now for any improvements needed down the road, before this funding is depleted. Leea confirmed that current IRA funding should cover the city's 2009 climate plan as well as any new recommendations from the audit.
- Mark inquired if the 2009 plan was considered adequate, or needed some updates. Leea stated the core of the plan is still valid, but it was initially too project specific, with some action items being not feasible or legal. She felt that the sustainability audit should function to bridge any gaps that the 2009 plan might have. Mark pointed out that the audit will only address city buildings, and not other community efforts, and Leea agreed it will stay within the realm of city operations. She explained other funds were applied for by the state and received (~3 million) and those are primarily designed for towns without a climate plan at

all. Leea felt that other boards were adequately dealing with community efforts to reduce greenhouse gasses, etc such as the non-motorized group, and perhaps working with them would be useful to obtain funding for parts of the 2009 plan that do not have to do with city operations.

- Bunny inquired whether there was guidance on how often a climate action plan needed to be reviewed and updated, and Leea confirmed there is none, and there is no actual requirement to have a plan at all.
- Group discussion over the scope of the Sustainability Audit, which is focused only on City operation and funding available via IRA, much of which is federal formula-funding eventually available via the State (managed via the Department of Environmental Quality).
- Denise asked if there were IRA, BIL (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) or other funds that could be available for Cities that already have a plan and she and Leea suggested that the Energy and Transportation (E & T) working group coordinate with Lowell Chandler and the Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Board. Mark will follow-up and begin with the draft E & T Work Plan, 2009 Plan, etc.

6. Unfinished business (46:07)

None

7. Emerging Issues/New Business (46:12)

- A. Bylaws. Denise presented a document outlining suggested changes for the CCB's current set of bylaws, based upon the City's draft bylaws that are in development for all advisory boards. Most of the changes were housekeeping and for clarity and consistency. The most significant discussion was regarding the topic of Committees, and the need to change that verbiage to be consistent with recent board training. Mark suggested that the Committee section be removed for simplicity. He moved to accept the amendments proposed for the CCB bylaws, with the exception of removing the section regarding Committees. Lori seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
- B. City Advisory Boards. Denise then reviewed a response prepared to address concerns the CCB has regarding the City's draft bylaws and resolution for the creation of all city advisory boards. Issues identified in the bylaws were the definition of a quorum, the need to be visibly present to participate on a board, the definition of advocacy, board actions on social media and the need for prior review, and the tracking of required education. Two issues regarding the draft resolution were a limitation to the number of members (9) and the terms of service. It was noted that board appointments are in essence self limiting, as the City decides who will continue to serve. It was also noted that the CCB currently has some one year terms in place, which is inconsistent with this resolution. There was significant discussion about youth members, lack of participation, and the 2 year commitment required. Mark moved that Denise draft a letter to the City Commission outlining the Board's comments. This draft will be shared with

all members for input using Google doc. Lori seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

- C. CCB Webpage. Denise suggested that the CCB should have a more robust page on the City website, and model it after the Non-motorized Board page. Desired items were the resolution creating the board, the Climate Action Plan, a link to resources, and a listing of members, with elected positions. Leea assured the group that the site is being worked on and these items will be added.

8. Announcements (1:33.10)

None

9. Public Testimony (1:33.26)

None noted. Mark suggested that the CCB consider asking for public comment at the beginning of the meeting and perhaps after each agenda item, so that interested parties don't have to wait until the end to comment. This topic will be added to the August agenda.

10. Action items from this meeting

- Denise will circulate the draft solid waste management options to all members for review
- Mark will send out the August meeting invite for the Energy and Transportation group to all members
- Denise will draft a letter to the City Commission outlining the board's suggestions and comments for the draft bylaws and resolution
- Miranda and Leea will update the CCB page on the website
- Public testimony will be moved to the beginning of the next and future meetings

11. Next Meeting: Thursday, August 10, 4:30 pm

12. Adjourn (1:34)