

Helena Citizen Conservation Board

June 8, 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/play/07nAKqb-mhnb4VCWQQaFCSTvEiFvuko2FEs6m7KW9SGo_rkWhEyhRm79KgMvw3IBDDTvfQZhc-BfyhWQ._HYJJzb5VMGGYutj?canPlayFromShare=true&from=share_recording_detail&continueMode=true&componentName=rec-play&originRequestUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fus06web.zoom.us%2Frec%2Fshare%2FDbnEuuczmoO27S6hv9mU2vgaROyQd5PZkJ5yDehBnw3cgqm55p32JBECt-96UHL9_.5vaY8NNT-qqOJwU9

1. Roll Call and Welcome (0:30)

- Members present: Diana Hammer, Mark Juedeman, Lori FitzGerald, Devon Malizia, Jason Selong, Denise Roth Barber, Dick Sloan
- Members excused: none
- Public present: Caroline Bean, guest speaker; Dr. G; Makenna Sellers MT Renewable Energy Association (MREA), and Bunny Rutledge, Prickly Pear Land Trust (PPLT)
- City staff present: Leea Anderson, Miranda Griffis, Jackie Pierson

2. Review and Approval of May 18, 2023 minutes (1:50)

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

3. Guest Speaker: Caroline Bean, Climate Action Program Manager, Missoula County (4:12)

- Caroline was asked by Diana to present on how Missoula came up with their Resiliency plan as Helena's is in need of an update (created in 2009)
- Caroline presented her "Missoula County Climate Action" powerpoint via Zoom
- She described how Missoula County, in collaboration with the City of Missoula, developed their "Climate Ready Missoula" plan, and reviewed examples of its implementation, specifically the Electrify Missoula and Wildfire smoke and Heat Preparedness projects.
- The 2016 Missoula Growth Policy specified that Missoula reduce its contribution to climate change, which spurred this process

- She discussed how they used the “Climate Ready Communities” framework, which is available across the country. Over the course of two years the Climate Ready Missoula collaboration (with the help of social scientists at UM and concerned citizen), created a steering committee and ultimately adopted a final plan with 29 major goals and 77 strategies on a number of climate topics
- The process has involved significant collaboration with outside groups (with Public Health Dept, Extension offices, Parks and Rec, and NW Energy), non profit groups, and much active communication with the public
- Her office is willing to share its processes and framework to help Helena get started. She fielded multiple questions from the Board regarding budget/funding, time invested and collaboration. Links were provided and multiple spreadsheets are available for Helena to access

Further discussion

- Diana asked Leea how the upcoming sustainability audit (SPA) review will help Helena get to a similar place in planning. Leea described that the SPA will result in a 10-year plan that can be budgeted for. It will provide a map for an initial framework that is needed before an action plan can be implemented. It will also consider costs. The audit RFP now has a due date of June 28 for submissions. It will be a Level 3 audit (the group will complete the review in person) of only the city. Leea discussed how Lewis and Clark County has not been very collaborative with the city, and does not have a sustainability coordinator or other staff to support this effort.

4. Officers Report (54:00)

Diana stated there was no Officers Report for this meeting, but new officers need to be identified

5. Report from the Public Works Department–Miranda Griffis and Leea Anderson (55:14)

- Leea reported that some of the planned electric chargers have been installed in the Jackson Street parking garage. A NW energy meter is being placed at the golf course and will be completed in 2 weeks. The electric street sweeper now has a meter so that data on its use can start to be collected and reported to the public.
- In regards to reports from the Commissioner’s FY24 budget meetings, it was noted that Commissioner Logan had requested \$300,000 for additional solar installations from the remaining ARPA funds, and Commissioner Dean had

requested \$60,000 for renewable energy rebates, whose fund has been depleted and has a waiting list. It was confirmed that this fund can be used for rooftop solar, but also new appliances, geothermal heat pumps and any other renewable energy items.

- The city budget must be approved by June 30
- Mark asked about the potential EMF emissions from the water meter replacement project (if they are greater than the old meters), as per Dr. G.'s previous inquiry. Leea reported that the new meters for the mass replacement project have not yet been chosen so that is unknown. The new meters will be mass replaced over the next 1-½ years, and have been budgeted for (some this year and the remainder next year).
- It was reported that the Parks Board found a way to save Board Zoom meetings to the cloud so that the public can view them from the city page. A link to each meeting will be provided so that the board can include in their minutes.
- Diana inquired about the Waterwise Garden Tour and the JS training needed to complete the story map. Leea will be doing the training later in June and may be able to get that going after that. She did state that an external organization could probably complete it in a more timely fashion and might be a better route.
- Diana complimented Public Works on the water quality report and the water tips flyers that were sent out with water bills last month.

6. Unfinished business—election of officers (1:06)

- Diana stated that her term on the CCB will be ending in February 2024, so a new Chair should be identified at this time, for better continuity. There is also a vice chair position, and a secretary position to fill.
- Mark stated he was willing to continue as vice chair. Lori offered to fill a position, but did not feel experienced enough to take on the chair. Denise offered to become chair, but is not sure of her status on the CCB currently, as she is not being recognized by the city staff as an official member. There was discussion that legal is saying no HCC members are to be on boards, however only the Public Arts board no longer has a HCC member (all other boards still do). The group agreed that for now, until there is official communication from the City Commission on the subject, that Denise will remain the HCC representative on the CCB, and will be chair for an unknown term.
- New officers put forth to the board were Denise as chair, Mark as vice chair, and Lori as secretary. Dick made a motion to approve all of these officers, and Mark seconded. The new officers were approved unanimously

7. Emerging Issues/New Business (1:18)

No new business or issues were noted

8. Issue Reports (1:19)

- Water conservation–Diana reported the group was still working on the Waterwise garden tour. The Justice Building continues on the Xeriscaping project, which has been budgeted for into 2024. Leea inquired about the signage for that project, and will bring that back up with Bridget Johnson.
- Energy and Transportation–Mark reported that this group has not met recently, but requests that anyone with an interest in this area to let him know. That includes members of the public
- Waste Reduction–Denise reviewed the recent survey results, which were also circulated to the board via email, with her recommendations to the Integrated Solid Waste Master Plan Committee. Of the 70,000 greater Helena area residents, there were 1359 county responses and 407 city responses. She reported there was one correction in the percentage of city residents willing to pay more for recycling. There was also a strong response from the county that they do NOT want curbside recycling. She encouraged all board members to share the results of the survey. It was clear from the survey that not enough people recycle, and there needs to be consideration of curbside pick up for food waste. Diana recommended this topic be added to the next agenda for further discussion.
- Denise inquired Leea about any other applications for board positions. Leea reported that there was a new applicant mentioned at the recent City Commission admin meeting that will likely be on the next Commission meeting agenda.

9. Announcements (1:32)

- Diana announced that the Youth Climate Trial documentary will be playing at the Holter Museum tonight at 6PM. It is to raise awareness of the Held Trial that will begin in Montana on Monday.

10. Public Testimony (1:33)

- Bunny Rutlege of PPLT was thanked for attending (Makenna had already left). She states she will try to come again to the next meeting. Denise reminded everyone that the Board encourages and would like more public comment and participation.

11. Action items from this meeting (1:34)

Further discussion regarding recommendations from CCB to the Integrated SW Master Plan Committee, specifically universal composting

12. Next Meeting: Thursday, July 13, 4:30 pm

13. Adjourn (1:34:29)

