

District 1 and 2 Neighborhood Meeting 5/15/08

Rocky Mountain Development Center Dinner Club

Districts 1 and 2 had 8 guests, including the rep from Friends of Pets Program.

1. Recycling Program - Kent Schlosser gave an overview of recycling programs in Helena and other communities. Comments/questions included:
 - Why don't more residents don't use the Blue Bag system. It is convenient.
 - Broadway St. and Sixth Ave. neighbors are looking at options for a neighborhood recycling program.
 - More drop off locations (IE. Lundy Center and Rodney St).
 - Some say these locations get messy.
 - Some willing to pay for service (IE. \$10/mo) but others not.
 - How much would it cost for service? Some cannot afford to even pay a small amount.
 - Storage of recyclable items an issue.
 - Some want to hear more from communities with successful programs.
 - Are we going about things backwards? What about deposits on bottles? Many other states (and countries) do this successfully. The deposits could help pay for the recycling programs.
 - City can make the programs mandatory by assessing a small fee for service (part of the solid waste fee we already pay). Again, this might be too much for some folks.
 - Helena is "in the dark ages" with regards to recycling. California, for instance, has been doing recycling for a long time.
 - Does the city use recycled paper? This could help increase the demand for the product?

This discussion lead trash problems downtown, especially on Jackson and Fuller Streets. Some folks have worked with the Solid Waste Dept. to get more containers in these locations, such as the Jackson Street Garage. (Information obtained from the Solid Waste and Parks Depts concerning trash in these areas was later sent to the resident who brought this up and Dist reps).

2. Parks Development - Larry Mitchell gave an overview of the undeveloped parks in the city. Ideas given for Meatloaf Park were:
 - spray the knapweed
 - leave undeveloped
 - dog refuse stations/ dog mitt posts
 - pick up the "really ancient garbage"
 - plant native grasses,
 - maintain trails for safety
 - plant more trees around the water tank

Other comments included:

- take some of the \$350K and use it to clean up the downtown area (treat it like a park)
- make the walking mall and Constitution Park priorities to fix up
- establish accessible trail systems in all parks for use by all (wheelchair bound etc.)
- if another district needs more \$ to develop their park, go ahead and use the money

Information was given on a weed spraying plan and that an "adopt a trail program" is in the works. It was explained that Meat loaf is a combination of open space, city land, and water district owned property so there might be some restrictions regarding development.

Decision was made to cancel a meeting tentatively scheduled in two weeks to further discuss Meatloaf Hill. The feedback some have been receiving seems to focus on the same recommendations mentioned above.

3. Historic Preservation Commission - Rebecca Ridenour gave information on what this program is and notified folks of an upcoming meeting on the topic. Mention was made of an apparently successful program in Bozeman.

4. Neighborhood Conservation Clubs - Kent Schlosser gave a brief update on this organization.

5. Helena Spay/Neuter Task Force - Jane Benson gave an informative presentation on this program. Next clinic is set for 6/29. A brief discussion followed.

6. Unmarked Intersections/Site Obstruction Issues - Lynne Boone gave a brief overview of the city ordinance regarding site obstruction on corners and some options/ issues regarding unmarked intersections and site obstruction, especially in the south central area of town.

7. Non-Motorized Transportation Committee - Matt Cohn gave a overview of the recently formed committee, which has met twice thus far. The group currently is working on a traffic calming plan for the city.

8. FY 2009 Budget Work Sessions - Larry Mitchell gave folks information on dates for the upcoming city work sessions. He indicated that the city commission would like input from citizens regarding the 2009 budget for the City of Helena and asked for input from attendees at the neighborhood meeting. No comments received.

9. Paint Color for the South Montana Reservoir - Larry Mitchell informed folks of the plan to paint the exterior of this water tank located west of the Touchstone area and east of Beattie St. and asked folks to cast their vote for color choice. Volunteers will be going door to door to neighbors in the vicinity of the water tank to give them the option of voting. Comments made at the meeting included:

- use public art money to paint it
- have graffiti artists paint it for free
- paint it invisible.

Effort will be made to put the color choices on the HCC website so folks can see the color options available.

10. Open Discussion - Additional comments included:

- a developer from the a proposed condo complex to be locate on the corner of Front St and 13th St.came to answer any questions/concerns regarding this building. Attendees asked questions concerning the project. One comment received is that the project does not seem like affordable housing.

- Comment was made about a growing problem with skateboarding on the walking mall. Skateboarders have caused problems with pedestrians. Additional comments included:

- Eliminate skateboarding all the way down to at least the 500 block of Last Chance Gulch
- There is fear of retribution if one says anything to the offenders
- Kids are causing problems in the downtown area
- Not enough for kids to do
- Not a good location for the new game business located in the old Base Camp business

End of meeting notes.

Follow-up comments:

-A citizen reported that the door was locked at the Neighborhood Center when he attempted to come to the neighborhood meeting later in the evening. Apologies are extended to anyone who found the doors locked. Not sure what happened but HCC will make sure this does not happen at future meetings.