

## Helena Citizen's Council

### Regular Meeting

April 27, 2005

Members Present: George Hoff, Thom Warsinski, Joe Ruby, Jerry McGee, Wayne Lewis, Bob Habeck, Jim Christnacht, Bill Roberts, Teresa Klotz, Delma Sommers and Jerry Hutch.

Members Absent: Laura Erickson, Robert Clarkson, Keith Jones, Jan Lombardi, Allen Tompkins and Justin Trafton.

Visitors Present: None

Approval of March 30 Minutes: The minutes were approved with the following correction, the Walking Mall update was made by the Friends of Downtown Helena.

Treasurer's Report: At April 14, 2005, the HCC has \$1,325.03 available in its treasury.

#### Helena Area Development Activities:

Tim Burton (Helena City Manager) and Tim McGee (Admin Services Director for the City of Helena) gave an excellent presentation on development areas around Helena.

The City's belief is that if they do a good job providing basic services, the private sector will create jobs. It's not the City's job to create jobs. They define "basic services" as sewer, water, police, fire and open space management.

They've also been working to build strategic relationships with the County, School District, Helena College of Technology, Gateway, private developers, as examples. These relationships are vital, and they don't happen by accident.

They foresee Helena's boundaries eventually going from Fort Harrison to East Helena.

Current Development Projects: Right now, there are 7,200 residential and 600 commercial lots in some stage of the development process – a total of apx. 2,000 acres.

Nob Hill/Colonial Drive/S. Interchange: Connects to Saddle Drive

Padbury Ranch: SE of Hwy 12/I15, connects to the S. interchange.

Aspen Park/Mountain View Meadows: East of Padbury, connects to S. interchange.

Schatz Ranch: Between Fort Harrison and Country Club; Head Lane is the boundary. The City provides water/sewer to the Fort. Tim Burton's meeting with the General soon regarding annexation. The Veteran's Administration Hospital is a separate entity.

Overlook Estates: Immediately west of Kessler School; high-density condo/townhouse development starting in the spring/summer of 2005.

Northgate Meadows: North of Custer, between Green Meadow and Benton.

Skelton: On McHugh and Road Runner Lane.

Golden Estates: North of Skelton.

Skyview: South of Home Depot; all commercial. The City is currently in negotiations with 2 national retail outlets for the land across the Frontage Road from Home Depot, where the tennis courts are currently located.

Plans are available in the City's Engineering Dept, and HCC members are welcome to view them if they're interested.

Other Areas of Interest:

The South Interchange: Based on MDT's study, they don't expect the traffic impact on Broadway, Winne and Colonial Drive to be horrible.

The Custer Interchange: Will take 2-3 years to design, 4-5 years to completion. Custer Ave. from the Canyon Ferry/York Road junction to Joslyn also needs to be reconstructed. It's at max usage and is deteriorating. Without federal funding, it won't be completed.

The South Interchange, Capital Interchange, Custer Interchange and Lincoln Road Interchange are all part of a \$120 million Federal Transportation project.

Centennial Park (the old landfill): Is in the master planning stages, as well as the land between Carroll College and the YMCA fields.

Memorial Pool: Needs big help.

Kindrick Legion Field: Is in good shape.

The Old Armory: Land was given to the State when the Nat'l Guard was located there. In the process of reacquiring that building/land.

St.Peter's Hospital: Is in the process of a \$40 million expansion.

Helena Regional Airport: Airplane traffic in and out of Helena is doubling monthly.

Loews: Has purchased the land across Custer from Power Townsend.

Fairgrounds: Are coming in to the City.

Henderson and Custer: The City is trying to acquire the State of Montana property at this intersection.

Capital Hill Mall: Comes off the tax roll if the Historical Society buys it. The new Mall will bring in more, and building a new mall will be part a stipulation of selling the mall.

Areas subdivided 30 years ago: Many of these neighborhoods need help as septic systems fail, and the regulations of 30 years ago don't meet today's standards. As a good neighbor, the City will need to help the County retrofit these communities which is often more costly than building new subdivisions to today's standards. However this doesn't mean current City residents are responsible to foot the bill.

The Sewer Plant: Is well placed to grow smart, currently operating at 55% of capacity.

Downtown: Facing growth and retrofit issues, which is better than stagnation.

Non-City Residents: Can't pick and choose City services. If you want City services, you'll be in the City. Existing City residents shouldn't have to foot the bill to extend services to areas in need.

Burlington Northern rail yards: Has higher quantities of lead than the EPA allows due to loading/unloading of rail cars. The railroad will need to do remediation at some point.

There's lots of venture capital coming in to Helena. We need to find a way to provide the services they need. If we tell them we can't provide basic services right now, they'll go elsewhere to invest their money. And they won't be back to Helena.

Largest growth industries in the Helena region are professional services and construction.

All Montana towns are feeling the same pressure; how to grow and provide services?

They're also looking at maintenance needed for Last Chance Gulch/the Walking Mall.

The existing Downtown TIF District sunsets June 30, 2005. It has helped fund (or will help fund) Lewis & Clark Library, Jackson Street Parking facility, Women's Mural, Grandstreet Theater, Fuller/Neill intersection, Discovery Works, renaming Cedar and N. Main to Last Chance Gulch. If a new TIF District were formed, it would start with a new base, and wouldn't have funds available for some time.

There was discussion of the City providing a ½ time support staff for the HCC, to handle our administrative functions (take minutes and plan meetings).

Helena Area Transit Site (HATS) Update:

Debra Lafontaine, Project Manager for Community Development, is part of the site selection study for the new transit facility.

HATS ridership has increased; it's more than Dial-a-Ride and has regular routes. They want to find out what would interest people because there will be noise and pollution issues with the new facility.

Federal monies are being used so they must meet NEPA requirements for environmental issues. They will need 40k square feet, and the existing facility on Last Chance Gulch has only 10k square feet, with no room to grow.

She brought a map with 10 possible locations, and they'd like to narrow it to 3 or 4.

They have determined neighborhood meetings will be the most effective way to get community input, and would like HCC's help to get the word out.

Community discussion of the following 3 options:

#2 on the map; the 6 th Ward park on Gallatin.

#5 on the map; at Poplar and Dodge.

#9 on the map; on Prospect, just north of Capital Hill Mall.

Since the above 3 sites are near Bryant School, they're advertising a meeting at Bryant on Wednesday May 4 at 7pm.

The Independent Record will run ads, notices will be posted around the neighborhood, Bryant's Principal has agreed to send flyers home with the students. Wayne Lewis will contact HCTV about advertising the meeting as well as televising it for broader exposure.

District Reports:

District 1: No report.

District 2: Joe Ruby will email all of us about an economist at Research & Analysis, to see whether we'd like a presentation regarding the Helena labor market.

District 3: George went to the last Kenwood meeting; they know eventually they'll be surrounded by

City property. The City Planning Dept called George about a group of people on the upper-west side (west of the City limits, from University to Stuart) who want to come into the City.

District 4: George said the owner of the old Cooney Home Cemetery property is being donated to the County. The other land will be sold to the highest bidder.

District 5: Nothing to report.

District 6: Justin Trafton is starring in “The Full Monty” at the Myrna Loy Center. Jim went to the meeting about revitalizing downtown, at the Chamber of Commerce. There was a good turnout. A gentleman from Billings talked about the process Billings has gone through. Are Plan Helena and Friends of Downtown Helena affiliated? No – they are both grass roots organizations that are independent of each other.

District 7: The sub-divison at Raven Rock Minor is zoned as general commercial/light industrial.

Old Business:

HCC Charter: George, Bill, Tim and Laura are working on this.

Meeting Schedule:

City Commission Meetings:

May 9: George Hoff

May 23: Wayne Lewis

City Admin Meetings:

May 4: George Hoff

May 18: George Hoff

Tim Burton’s Staff Meeting:

Date TBA: George Hoff

Next HCC Meeting: May 25

General Announcements:

On Friday May 13 th, the Montana Association for the Blind (MAB) is sponsoring a Low Vision Symposium at the Red Lion Colonial, from 9am to 4:30pm, and it's free.

The Library Board wants to attend an HCC meeting to present/discuss their ideas about a policy for the public using their PC's to access the internet. We'll invite them in May.

Georgina Daly, a student at the Univ. of Idaho, made a very interesting presentation about the South Hills Open Space Study at the last HOLMAC meeting. She's already returned to Idaho, but we could ask Bill Roberts or Randy Lilje to talk to us about her presentation at our June meeting.

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa Klotz

HCC District 3