

Helena Citizen's Council

Regular Meeting

May 25, 2005

Members Present: George Hoff, Thom Warsinski, Wayne Lewis, Bob Habeck, Jim Christnacht, Bill Roberts, Jan Lombardi, Allen Tompkins, Justin Trafton and Teresa Klotz.

Members Absent: Laura Erickson, Robert Clarkson, Keith Jones, Joe Ruby, Jerry McGee, Delma Sommers and Jerry Hutch.

Approval of April 27 Minutes: The minutes were approved as submitted.

OLD BUSINESS:

Last Chance Gulch road naming: George Hoff

Due to confusing information on the petition, the City Commission asked City Attorney Dave Nielson to go back to the property owners with better information. The City hopes to resolve this at the next Commission meeting on June 13, but no later than June 27.

One property owner (who is not necessarily the business owner) gets one vote. If someone owns more than one property, they still get just one vote. If a husband/wife own a property, they get one vote between them.

Two property owners are adamantly opposed to the name change. Their dispute is not in renumbering, but in changing the name of Cedar Street from I-15 to Montana Ave.

One property owner who is supporting the change is soliciting others to remove their names from the petition.

Business people from Montana Ave. to the Library are ready to have this resolved.

There really should be no additional costs to business owners. When renewing business licenses, the City doesn't charge for address changes. Business cards and letterhead can be updated whenever it's time to reorder. And advertising should use current addresses.

No signs have been changed yet, and there's no date established to have this completed.

HATS Meeting Report: Justin Trafton

A draft of the Greater Helena Area Transportation Plan has been issued.

The Transportation Coordination Committee (TCC) will be meeting bi-weekly between now and August to work through the plan. Their intent is to approve the plan, with possible revisions, in August 2005.

It's extremely comprehensive, discussing (among other things) apx. 53 Transportation System Management (TSM) project plans with all aspects broken out. It identifies what it considers to be Helena's boundaries, and addresses small to large-scale projects, major and minor improvements scaled by dollar amount, public transit, non-motorized traffic, trails, shared-use, etc. Traffic and population changes are projected to 2025.

The plan is available electronically via a link on the City and County websites. You can also get a copy of it on CD from the City Engineering office.

Billings, Bozeman and Missoula have received federal transportation grants for improvement, but they meet some criteria that Helena doesn't meet yet. Andy Skinner is planning to meet with Max Baucus about funding the grade separation (an underpass or overpass) at the Montana Ave. railroad crossing (a \$13 million project).

NEW BUSINESS:

Televising HCC Meetings on HCTV, Channel 11: Kirsten Fabien

HCTV's focus is public, education and government broadcasting. At a minimum, you need basic cable service to receive Channel 11.

They have negotiated some individual contracts for which they're paid; with the City and County Commissions as well as the Montana Legislature. These meetings are televised "gavel to gavel" without station commentary.

They have 24x7 airtime to fill with no commercial time so they rely on their members to produce a significant portion of their programming.

HCTV is very interested in televising our monthly meetings, but their total staff is 5 people so commit someone to film the meetings. They offer the use of their equipment after we've been trained to use it. Air time is free. We just drop off the raw footage at the station, and they'll take it from there. Editing is optional.

If the HCC joins the station, the entire committee is considered a member. As long as an individual has taken the camera class, we can check out the equipment to shoot other public meetings or anything, really.

HCTV is invited lots of places, and they make an effort to cover various public meetings. When there's

a public meeting we think may be of interest, we'd be wise to see whether the station already has it covered.

There is a live feed from the City Commission chambers, but the Wednesday night time slot is already committed so our meeting couldn't air live anyway.

Tim Burton and Dave Nielson (City Attorney) don't see a problem with televising HCC meetings. We have money in our budget right now, and they will increase our budget for next year to include the cost of HCTV membership.

Kirsten suggested doing a "dry run" of the meeting can be helpful. If we're not happy with how it comes out, we don't have to air it.

HCC needs to pay a \$60 annual fee to become a member of the station.

HCTV can't commit their staff to filming our meetings, so some of us would need to learn to operate the camera/mike equipment.

The camera class costs \$10 per person. Wayne Lewis and Teresa Klotz are already HCTV members and have taken the camera and editing classes.

An HCC member needs to check the equipment in and out, deliver the videotapes to the station for airing.

HCC is also responsible for providing its own videotapes for filming. Each meeting will take 2 tapes. Tapes can be reused.

If you bring in a VHS tape, the station will dub copies for a \$5 fee.

HCC will need to manage titles/credits ourselves, otherwise we're at the mercy of HCTV staff and their time to do some editing.

HCTV will commit to a regularly scheduled time to air HCC meetings and is will air the meetings more than once.

Motion: That HCC become members of HCTV at a cost of \$60 per year. PASSED

Motion: To send Bill Roberts and Justin Trafton to the camera class at a cost of \$10 each. If others are interested, we'll send them too. PASSED

Motion: To form an ad-hoc committee to figure out how to do it (introduction, titles, meeting format,

protocol, etc.). PASSED

Action Items:

George will deliver the completed the membership application and Bill and Justin's registration for the camera class to Debbie who will pay our expenses.

Bill and Justin will take the camera class.

Bill Roberts agreed to set up a meeting of the ad-hoc committee.

Teresa Klotz will check out a camera and shoot the June meeting.

Lewis and Clark Library: Joan Bishop

The Library has had an open policy regarding their computers, but a teenage girl recently witnessed nudity on a website that an adult on the adjacent pc was looking at.

The Library can't easily keep dirty pictures off pc screens without muzzling personal freedom, but they are also concerned about how easy it is to get to these sites.

They are considering the route Billings is taking, which is providing a separate area for kids ages 12 and under. Isolation booths are another option. Lewis and Clark Library has a separate computer area for smaller kids where there is no internet access available.

The American Library Association opposes any filtering, but several states are mandating that all libraries must filter adult sites.

No one thinks filters are truly effective - technology changes too rapidly and people, especially kids, figure out how to get around them.

There are 5 members of the Library Board and have a new director coming in. While they're in the process of reviewing their current policy, they're not making any changes until the new director is hired and they've had some community input.

Joan would like us to take this issue back to our neighbors to generate some discussion within our community. At this time, no public meetings are scheduled.

Joan brought copies of the Library's current Electronic Access Policy as well as Jason Mohr's article in the IR on April 18, 2005.

Friends of Downtown Helena (FDH): Bill Schneider

FDH think the visioning process to develop a plan for all of downtown Helena may be an up and coming contentious issue. They want to be way ahead of it, to talk to people and see what Helena citizens think, to avoid what happened with the Walking Mall. The City sometimes gets ahead of itself with making decisions pre-public input.

There is widespread agreement for a plan vs. a piece-meal approach, and existing plans are out of date.

FDH considers "downtown" to be from the Great Northern area to the Old Federal Building. Essentially the Business Improvement District with some possible changes.

FDH thinks an independent, truly broad-based, non-bias, bipartisan entity with no pre-conceived goal should be in charge of the process. Helena residents aren't the only ones who enjoy downtown; including County residents should be considered.

FDH sees a couple of options:

Form a brand new entity, to include HCC member(s) and any other stakeholders.

Choose one of the existing entities to manage it (HCC, Plan Helena, FDH, BID, City of Helena, etc.). FDH thinks HCC is the prime candidate, given our official connection between City government and the people. We're not controversial.

In either case, FDH sees this as a stand-alone committee that represents the community – not the City, etc. FDH is admittedly biased, and not the right group to manage it. While the City and the BID should be major players, they're also not the right ones to manage it. Stakeholders vs. drivers.

Work and money will be needed, may be a good idea to consider an outside facilitator. FDH doesn't

expect either option to shoulder the expense.

FDH would like to see it work like the transportation plan discussed earlier, where the draft plan hits it really close in the beginning, with some tweaking before it's finalized.

FDH hopes to get something going before the City spearheads an effort. They're aware of some discussion by City staff, but don't know the status.

HCC recommended that FDH talk to Justin Trafton about the group that's meeting about the Mid-Town area. ("Mid-Town" is from the train depot across malfunction junction, down Helena Avenue and attaching to downtown at the downtown malfunction junction.) Developers started the effort, but they have a very inclusive approach.

Questions:

Who are the stakeholders?

Preliminary discussions should take place to identify them.

We should also get the historical preservation folks involved early on.

Get the interested parties together and have a planning meeting?

What about HCC becoming involved in this?

HCC members are elected officials - we can't solicit, promote or campaign for anything. We are willing to participate within our charter.

We can assist with scheduling meetings and in making recommendations to the City Commission to help get it going. But it sounds like a recommendation to the City Commission is premature at this point.

Facilitating/planning would exceed our charter, but we can encourage the effort.

What can our role be, given our structure?

HCC job is to make the neighborhoods connect. We're accountable to all of Helena; need to find a way

to support the mid-town effort as well as downtown effort, as well as other activities around town.

We'll put this back on the June agenda under Old Business. Bill Schneider won't be available but they will send another representative from the FDH.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

HOMAC: Bill Roberts

The Weed Committee is going through the South Hills with GPS equipment marking the area for spraying.

There's a logging project at Nob Hill for fire mitigation.

The Trails Committee decided on sign types for the South Hills area so all the trail junctions will be signed.

2005 is the 100th Anniversary of Mount Helena being declared a city park. It's also the 50th Anniversary of the Helena Symphony. HOMAC's talking about some type of joint celebration.

DISTRICT REPORTS: We were running late, so District reports were abbreviated.

District 2: Wayne Lewis will talk to Joe Ruby about putting signs up on Rodney street regarding a zoning change.

District 5:

Lead cleanup in the railroad yard is an issue.

George sent around some maps of the area North of the water treatment plant where the Aspen Trails sub-division is going in. They're requesting annexation. The City is excited because there are other residents in that area who are interested in coming in to the City. They're working with the developers to include water/sewer hookups for the adjacent property. There will be a presentation and public meeting at Warren School on June 6th at 7pm.

Costco is negotiating for the land across Custer from Home Depot.

District 6: The HATS site selection committee is leaning toward the 6th Ward park, but no decision has been made. Justin will email all of us with the next meeting date.

Meeting Schedule:

City Commission Meetings:

June 13: Wayne Lewis

June 27: Teresa Klotz

City Admin Meetings:

June 8: Bill Roberts

June 22: George Hoff

Tim Burton's Staff Meeting:

Date TBA: George Hoff

Next HCC Meeting: June 22

If you're attending one of these meetings, you'll need to pick up the HCC packet from Debbie and Robyn. Their offices are right across from the Commission chambers. The packets contain agendas and copies of presentations and they should be ready a day or two before each meeting.

General Announcements:

The City is supposed to send pertinent information to the appropriate District representatives for comment and input. If you get email from the City Planning Dept, please be sure you respond in a timely manner.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Teresa Klotz
HCC District 3