

Helena Citizen's Council

Regular Meeting – August 23, 2006

Members Present: Matthew Cohn, Jim Christnacht, Laura Erickson, Marshall Gingery, Teresa Klotz, Rebecca Ridenour, Bill Roberts, Ken Saunders, Allen Tompkins, Jim Tucker Jr, Justin Trafton and Thom Warsinski.

Members Absent: Lynne Boone, Mary Ann Dunwell, Amy Glasscock, Bob Habeck, George Hoff, Mark McDonnell, Jerry McGee, Larry Mitchell, and Loyd Tracy.

Visitors Present: Officer Brian Dellwo, George McCauley, Melanie Reynolds, Kate Wilson and Commission Peura.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The July 26, 2006 minutes were approved as submitted.

HELENA POLICE DEPT REPORT: Officer Brian Dellwo

Officer Dellwo was directly involved with the incident at B&B Market this week. The suspect was apprehended within 1 hour of the incident.

The driver of the vehicle that crashed into Jorgenson's was released from the hospital.

He has received several complaints about traffic incidents; cars speeding, not stopping at stop signs, etc. If you witness this behavior, you can report it to HPD and they'll send officers for increased presence in that area.

There are also many, many abandoned vehicles around town. 6 officers (2 per shift) are assigned to work these, as time allows between other calls for service. It's an 11 day process, unless the vehicle is considered "junk", then it's shorter. Continue to report them to HPD, and they'll get to them as soon as they can.

There are no leads in the Benton Avenue Cemetery vandalism. Due to the dollar amount of the damage, this is a high priority case.

George McCauley reported a chronic speeder in his neighborhood to the HPD. Based on the vehicle description, Officer Zander located the driver and warned him that the neighborhood was watching. The last time the vehicle was seen in the neighborhood, it was driving within the speed limit.

Citizens can also get license numbers and report them to HPD. If HPD catches them, they'll ask you for a statement, and the City Prosecutor will determine whether to pursue. If they do, you may be called to testify in court.

We don't know whether there are speed limits in alleys.

Formal requests for placement of the digital speed sign/trailer should go to Sergeant Hagen. With school starting, it would be useful to place near schools – however HPD only has 1 trailer.

HCC TREASURER'S REPORT: Our budget of \$3818 for FY07 has been approved. We have \$298 in pending expenses from the Quality of Life committee, leaving a balance of \$3520.

DISTRICT DISCUSSIONS: HCC members are encouraged to request items for this part of the agenda in advance of our monthly meeting.

Trolley #3 Committee Report: George Hoff isn't here tonight, so we'll postpone this to the September agenda.

Airport Authority Update: Marshall Gingery

Very busy place! There's a lot of development in that area; Costco and the relocation of the tennis facility are examples. They will also be actively involved in the new Custer Ave. interchange. The airport has sites for 18 different businesses. The Airport Authority Board has 2 new members.

They have signed a 5 year contract with Morrison Maierle for improvement projects to include reconstruction of taxiways A, B and C, Expansion and updating the Rocky Mountain Emergency Services facility, additional terminal security equipment, remodel and expand the airport fire and maintenance building, replace the old jetway, expand the air carrier ramp and update airfield lighting and gate. There is no immediate guarantee the improvements will lead to additional air service in/out of Helena, but it will definitely make Helena more attractive to air service providers.

The Airport did not sell land to Costco; they have a 40 years lease agreement.

Ron Mercer is willing to attend a future HCC meeting. He has an excellent 20 minute Power Point presentation. He's also open to visits from HCC members.

Midtown Planning Group: Justin Trafton and Allen Tompkins

This group has held 2 meetings so far. The 1st addressed the schedule and process the neighborhood will need to go through.

The 2nd successfully established the planning boundary. The Eastern boundary is I-90, from Cedar Ave to Last Chance, East on Lyndale, South on Rodney, East on Billings (South side of HMS), South on Montana, East on Eight Ave, North on Roberts, East on Eleventh Ave back to I-90. It's a large area that encompasses residential and commercial properties.

The next meeting will be Thursday 9/7 from 5:30-7pm at the UM Helena on Roberts Street. The focus will be developing a visioning statement for the area.

Delinquent Property Taxes: Justin Trafton

After receiving a "Notice of Pending Assignment" regarding delinquent property taxes, a resident of

District 6 contacted Justin – as an FYI. Under Montana State Law, private companies (from anywhere) can pay your delinquent property taxes, placing a lien on your property and giving you 18 months to repay (including interest and fees). The lien holder must notify you 3 times during those 18 months, but if you fail to respond, they receive the deed to your property. It's a nation-wide process that is completely legal.

Someone mentioned that the City has a property tax assistance program.

Urban Wildlife Task Force: Matthew Cohn

Is currently reviewing 10 different management options and the scoring criteria.

They'll also be doing a survey to get public opinion.

After New Year's they'll hold some public meetings, probably combining districts because different parts of town see the issue differently.

After last week's presentation to the City Commission, Matthew's phone is busy!

There is no projecting the number of deer currently in our area, or their growth. Biologists say there's no limit to their capacity, given access to food and water so Helena's carrying capacity is more of a social issue than a biological one. Cars are currently the only predator, and disease. Deer in town get different diseases than deer in the wild. In other communities, town deer have attracted natural predators to town which is obviously a concern and a serious matter.

Their next meeting is 8/24, noon in Room 326. They meet every other Thursday.

District 2: Rebecca Ridenour

A Neighborhood Watch group near the new Golden Triangle facility on Jackson Street may be morphing into a neighborhood group to address several issues in that area (absentee property owners, abandoned buildings, squatters, arson, general community decay and blight). The meeting was well attended by citizens as well as 2 HPD members. They've learned there is an ordinance addressing community decay and will be working on a laundry list of issues.

Belinda Waters in the City Planning Dept is a great resource for information about urban blight.

2 neighborhoods in Missoula, in a similar position, decided to band together to address the problem. This group might want to talk to the MidTown group.

Tammy Gibson oversees the Neighborhood Watch program and is willing to come to an HCC meeting and talk about setting up neighborhood watch groups.

HOLMAC: Bill Roberts

Trail signs are in on Mount Helena; some need to be moved and 1 has been vandalized. Work is starting on Mount Ascension.

Prickly Pear Land Trust has purchased 40 acres on Mount Ascension to allow legal, non-trespassing access to the top.

Transportation Coordinating Committee 2 (TCC2): Laura Erikson

The Bike/Pedestrian Coordinating Committee has met twice. Their focus isn't necessarily about "trails", as much as alternate transportation routes for people. May be able to use a combination of City and County funding.

They're talking about hosting a bike awareness day to get people talking/thinking about how they can get around town without using a vehicle; a partnership with HCC, Great Divide Cycling team, Safe Routes to Schools and TCC2?

Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds: Jim Tucker Jr.

District 4 borders the Fairgrounds, and there is some idea that eventually it will be annexed into the City. Jim met with the County Commissioners who assured him it will never happen. The property was deeded from the State directly to Lewis and Clark County 100 years ago. Jim thinks the argument the preservation folks make about the fairgrounds is well thought out, and he believes the County's plan for the property accommodates their concerns.

Golf Advisory Board: Larry Mitchell

Bill Roberts Golf Course is managed by the City Parks Dept, and is totally funded by user fees. It doesn't receive anything from the City's general fund, but it contributes to the City's coffers through money they pay for access to the City's IT infrastructure. User fees will increase by 3-5% this year to keep up with basic costs, including spending \$50-\$80k for improvements to the driving range.

Quality of Life Committee: Teresa Klotz

We've distributed apx. 2500 copies of the survey and will be at Alive@5 and the Farmer's Market through Labor Day weekend. We'll start compiling results in September and hope to have feedback to report later in September.

We've spent \$298 so far on copies and advertising. KMTX radio has been extremely helpful to us with recording/distributing a PSA to local radio stations.

OLD BUSINESS:

How to Approve HCC Expenditures: We talked about this a little last month, and the HCC Board thought it might be smart to ask our Committee on Budget (COB) to come up with a plan, recommend what the process should be. Some suggestions are:

Committees should contact the COB to see if funds are available before proceeding.

Committees should submit a written, itemized spending plan to the COB.

Requests over \$50 should be approved by the HCC Board.

Requests over \$500 should be approved by the full HCC.

We must have documentation of all money spent.

Who approves projects – the COB, HCC Board, full HCC?

All projects should be presented to the full HCC in writing, including a budget request which will allow

the membership to decide whether the HCC wants to pursue the matter.

It will be helpful to provide a worksheet that committees/groups can use to provide the information the HCC needs to make informed decisions about projects.

Bringing project ideas to the full HCC may also garner assistance, resources the committee was unaware of.

We are a public entity. To act officially, we must have a public meeting – which means we can't take votes, action based on emails.

We need to balance expediency with fiscal responsibility.

The ultimate goal of this discussion/process is to amend our bylaws to include a process for utilizing HCC funds and accounting for those expenditures.

A portion of our FY2007 budget is support from Robyn Brown. Who decides who gets to use Robyn's time, and how do we account for it? Requests for Robyn's time and assistance must go through the HCC Board to Debbie Havens. Debbie and Robyn are also in the process of reviewing a draft position description of support we would like to receive. We should have their response sometime in September – that list/agreement will determine the support we can request.

HCC members should email any suggestions to Jim Christnacht by 9/15/06. Jim and the COB will make a recommendation at the September HCC meeting.

HCC Community Service Project:

District 1: Will do Pioneer Park/Anchor Park. The Navy League has funds to paint the anchor. The Naval Reserve is interested in helping. The Library will open their lobby. The City has agreed to supply resources for weeding.

District 2: Will do one of the City Parks projects, but they haven't decided which one. They also want to do one of the neighbor/citizen projects they've learned about.

District 3: Will do Cunningham Park.

District 4: Jim was looking at Barney Park. The shelter is in good condition, but several other areas need attention (water on the baseball field settles at home plate, the water fountain and wading pool don't work, the tennis court's a little rough and the basketball court could use some work). But then Benton Ave. Cemetery was hit last weekend, and it seems like a fund raiser might be more useful to the neighborhood right now.

District 5: Both of their active reps will be out of town that day. They haven't chosen a project at this time, and may not be able to take one on.

District 6: Is considering Lockey or Beattie Parks, but hasn't decided yet.

District 7: No one is in attendance from District 7.

Undecided Districts must settle on their project and let Teresa know by next Monday August 28th, so the sub-committee can move forward with advertising the event.

NEW BUSINESS: County Health Department: Melanie Reynolds and Kate Wilson

Melanie Reynolds has been the County Health Officer for the past 6 months. She is interested in the outcome of the Quality of Life survey we're doing – how they might look at their part in a healthier community.

A common perception is that only people in a position of financial hardship/need use the County Health Dept's services. "I don't use your services, but I'm glad you're there for the people who need you." But we all benefit from their services – monitor air and water quality, monitor outbreaks, issue certifications, regularly contact local health care providers to find out what they're seeing in their practices, as a resource for new restaurants and inspection/enforcement of existing restaurants, educational articles in our local papers, work with Paul Spengler on disaster preparedness, lead concerns at Spring Meadow Lake, tobacco educators with teens, flu shots, weigh in on the impact zoning issues have on public health. They also manage the County's animal control.

They got started via memorandum of agreement between the City and County and are run by the 9 member Board of Health, consisting of 1 City and 1 County Commissioner, an East Helena City Council member, the Superintendent of Public Schools, a physician, an environmental sciences expert, 1 City and 1 County resident and a consumer of health services. The Board meets the 4th Thursday of each month in Room 309.

They are a full service organization, employing 81 people, full-time and part-time.

They have 4 sites; a part-time nurse in Augusta, a Main Street office in East Helena that handles lead abatement, an office at the City/County Bldg and the Cooperative Health Center on 9th Ave.

Since 1900, we've added 30 years to our life expectancy primarily through sanitation improvement and management of communicable diseases/immunizations. Drugs and medical care represent apx. 5 years of the 30 year increase.

They are working with a recycler to sponsor an electronics recycling event at Staples on 9/15-9/16. For a small donation, you'll be able to get rid of unusable electronics.

Kate Wilson is the Executive Director of the Cooperative Health Center. They receive most of their funding from the federal government with some from patient revenues. Due to their federal funding, they are required to demonstrate their services are improving.

They have 2 doctors, 2 nurse practitioners, a dentist, a counselor/case manager and a diabetes educator on staff.

They have partnerships with Snyder's for prescriptions. St. Peter's Hospital as well as several local specialists honor their sliding fee scale. They also work with Boyd Andrew, the Lewis and Clark County Detention Center, Golden Triangle. For example, they provide all of the dental services at the jail.

They are there to serve those most in need, and it is truly impressive what their clients live with/through on a daily basis. They work hard with their clients to help them achieve independence.

Kate sees their big challenge is educating people physicians and citizens that they're a provider of high quality health care services and more. They don't just treat uninsured, homeless people – everyone is welcome to use their services.

Discussion with Melanie and Kate:

They don't currently have a formal relationship with the Indian Alliance.

How do you plan for a pandemic? We don't have an imminent threat, Avian Flu is difficult to pass to humans. It's seen mostly in countries where there is a significant amount of human/hands on contact with birds. With respect to planning, the nature of a public health emergency is that it overwhelms staff and resources. The Health Dept is actively training staff in incident command, learning how to implement quarantines and emergencies, talking to the hospital about preparedness – how they can work together. It's also critical to be planning how to help people who can't leave their homes? They're talking to businesses and groups, trying to educate the public about what flu is and what it isn't. All of this activity also helps them prepare for other kinds of outbreaks.

How does the heavy use of antibiotics in our culture impact our future? Studies about the overuse of antibiotics are being done, but Melanie and Kate haven't seen any results. In most flu planning, no vaccine or antibiotics will help.

Missoula had a recent outbreak of cryptosporidium (sp?). Has Helena had an outbreak? This is a reportable disease and we see apx. 1 case per week. It is typically contracted from water at public parks. The Health Dept follows up after treatment to look for commonalities, trying to locate a potential source.

The most effective prevention is washing your hands after you've been in a public pool, spray park, etc.

It's also wise to stay away from people (work, school, etc.) when you're sick. It's tough because many people don't have a lot of sick leave, so they go to work sick and spread it. In the case of neural viruses, you can be feeling better but still shedding the virus for an additional 2 days.

HCC Vacancies: Justin will ask Debbie Havens to include the following vacancies to the City's list of Public Service Announcements.

District 2: 1 position, Patty Rambo is moving to Libby for a teaching position.

District 3: 1 position, Jan Lombardi resigned.

District 4: 2 positions.

District 6: 1 position.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

George McCauley handed out copies of the booklet, "Best Little Art Town".

Justin Trafton passed around copies of the "Fiscal Year 2007 City/County Directory".

CITY MEETING ASSIGNMENTS:

City Admin Meetings: 4-6pm

September 6; Marshall Gingery

September 20; Marshall Gingery

City Commission Meetings: 6pm –

August 28; Teresa Klotz

September 11; Allen Tompkins

September 25; Thom Warsinski

City Manager's Meeting: 10am -

September 19; Justin Trafton

Next HCC Meeting: 7 -9pm

September 27 – Fire Service Review Report

Respectfully Submitted by Teresa Klotz, HCC Secretary, District 3