

Helena Citizen's Council  
Regular Meeting – December 20, 2006

Members Present: Lynne Boone, Jim Christnacht, Matthew Cohn, Marshall Gingery, Amy Glasscock, Bob Habeck, Teresa Klotz, George McCauley, Larry Mitchell, Rebecca Ridenour, Ken Saunders, Allen Tompkins, Justin Trafton, Jim Tucker Jr. and Thom Warsinski.

Members Absent: Mary Ann Dunwell, Laura Erikson, George Hoff, Mark McDonnell, Jerry McGee and Bill Roberts.

Visitors Present: Commissioner Robert Throssell, Lt David Jeseritz and Lt Roger Johnson (HPD), Lt Kelly Tuck (HFD) and Gene Hickman from FWP.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes from November 15, 2006 were approved as submitted.

HELENA POLICE DEPT REPORT: Lt Jeseritz talked about recent cases:

HPD has 2 people in custody for the homicide on the west side. Tips from citizens made those arrests possible.

They also have 2 people in custody for the aggravated burglary (with a stungun) on Wilder.

There have been many residential burglaries recently. They have closed 4 of those cases and are working on more. Lt Jeseritz is rotating out of patrol to the records division for the next 2 years.

Lt Roger Johnson will be moving into the Patrol supervision rotation for the next 2 years, with Lt Livesay. Lt Johnson will have 19 years with HPD in April 2007 and has worked in most divisions during that time. He's spent the last 2+ years on the Missouri River Drug Task Force serving as commander for several months.

Right now the patrol division has 6 new officers; 4 recent graduates of the law enforcement academy and 2 from law enforcement in other towns. All of them have ties to the Helena community, which is a bonus for Helena. 1 more officer is starting the academy in Jan. 2007. All of this puts us 2 over staff, but that will even out over time.

Our canine unit officer, Shane Moes, is retiring, which creates an opening to take over working with his explosives ordinance dog. Shane will help with the transition.

Last October, HPD started a physical fitness incentive program. Twice each year officers can volunteer to take a physical fitness test. If they pass the test 4 consecutive times, they receive a \$100 gift certificate to use at a local store for fitness equipment. 24 of our 50 officers currently participate in the program.

#### HELENA FIRE POLICE DEPT REPORT: Lt Kelly Tuck

Outside of providing emergency response services, HFD is feeling a bit disconnected from the community. Their union wants to remedy that and will start sending a representative to the monthly HCC meetings to help keep us informed and answer any questions we may have. They also attend the bi-weekly City Admin meetings.

The Mayor has issued (or will soon issue?) a proclamation to reestablish the Fire Service Review Committee. The committee will include firefighters and HCC members, and it will be charged with reviewing the recent Fire Service Review Report. Any changes to our current fire service will be costly – cost is really the only prohibitor. Determining sustainable funding will be a crucial part of the process.

HFD is a City entity, but it's important to note that many people outside the City utilize their services. Fort Harrison is a great example. It's outside City limits, but there's live ammunition out there. If there is an incident, the Fort contacts Lewis and Clark County who immediately calls for a mutual response.

There are currently no firm plans for another station. Based on Helena's growth and geography, 4 to 5 stations is more realistic. And a 3rd station probably won't be pursued until Station 2 is revamped. These will be matters for the Fire Service Review Committee.

TREASURER REPORT: At 12/18/06, we still have \$3246 remaining available of our \$3818 budget.

#### DISTRICT DISCUSSIONS:

Urban Wildlife Task Force, Deer Census: Gene Hickman with FWP is conducting a deer census around Helena (City-wide and generally by HCC District), including head count, sex and age ratios.

Gene needs help counting and can have up to 3 people with him when he goes out. He is going street by street; every street and alley will be surveyed at least twice, some 3 times. Gene alerts HPD dispatch when he's out and about, in case they get calls about suspicious characters.

He's trying to come up with a consistent process they can duplicate next year. The real value of the census will be down the road, in measuring the success of the solution(s) the Urban Wildlife Task Force decides to pursue. There won't be a silver bullet to solve this problem.

Gene sent around a sign-up sheet for people who are able to help. His phone # is 458-3884. His goal is to complete the surveys by the 3rd week of January, issuing a report by the end of January.

#### Questions for Gene:

What about seasonal changes? It's true deer hang out in different places in spring (tulips) vs. fall (apples). But if they're not in 1 yard, they're in another. The ideal time to conduct a census is August/September because it is the peak. It's also when fawns start moving around and bucks are easily identifiable. He doesn't think there's a lot of infiltration from outside of town – the town deer are just reproducing.

If we do nothing, how quickly will the deer population grow? A doe can birth 1 to 2 fawns each year. If you start with 1 pair of deer, in 10 years you'll have apx. 1000 deer.

Do you see predators moving into town? Not yet. Cars are the biggest predators right now and fawns have the highest mortality rate in town because they're not as attentive as adults.

Are there other nuisance animals? Squirrels and skunks are always a problem. There are a lot of aggressive does protecting fawns. And bucks in rut, or not, getting into it can be dangerous.

Is it true that we can't eat tranquilized deer? The most common/cheapest tranquilizer takes 30 days to metabolize in LIVING animals. FWP tags the animals they tranquilize so they're identifiable to hunters. If they kill a tagged animal, they can call FWP for details.

#### Recommendation regarding consistent speed limits in school zones:

After last month's meeting, Justin decided to withhold the recommendation, thinking we should reconsider the wording and review our intention.

Several suggestions were made; look at the existing speed limits, talk to Kathy Harris (a local engineer) who's done a lot of work with schools.

However we have a recommendation that was passed via Robert's Rules. The recommendation acknowledges the inconsistencies and asks the City Commission to make them consistent.

After more discussion, it was decided to put the recommendation forward as stated last month and wait for the City Commission's response.

Computer training for HCC members who would like some help:

Some HCC members are having difficulty sending/receiving email attachments, building email distribution lists, etc. Larry Mitchell's been working with the County IT department to try to set up some computer training, but there are questions about whether we're City employees or general public. There's also the issue that we're all using our own individual pc's with varying operating systems, email programs, ISP's etc. It might be easier to train ourselves.

Lynne Boone, George McCauley, Rebecca Ridenour, Ken Saunders and Thom Warsinski could all use some help. Teresa Klotz, Larry Mitchell, Rebecca Ridenour, Justin Trafton and Jim Tucker Jr. are willing to help. They'll work it out individually.

District 1:

The Downtown Visioning group has invited Robert Brooks to do a 2 day seminar on 1/17-1/18 to talk about revitalizing places. The seminar is open to the public and will be covered by HCTV. Registration will be \$20.

District 2:

Rebecca's been attending the Rodney Street neighborhood meetings. They're having an ice sculpting contest on 1/13. The entry fee is \$10 and it will start at 8am with judging at 5pm. On 1/6, there will be a talk (?) about how to make a block of ice from snow.

Lynne attended a Logan/Jackson Street neighborhood meeting with Dave Nielson and Sharon Haugan, regarding neighbor and zoning issues. They have problems with Federal Building and Great Northern Employees parking on their streets. There are lots of concerned people banding together around neighborhood issues. Many of these issues are complaint driven and can be an extremely lengthy process to get to legal action if people won't respond to complaints.

Larry Mitchell has agreed to serve on a site committee for Golden Triangle in the Logan Ave area. They want to expand their services or move to there they can expand. They're being more proactive this time. They're thinking about a "confined bed" facility to help people through mental health crises. Helena hasn't had this service available since St. Peter's Hospital closed the support center.

George McCauley worked on a petition for a traffic study in his neighborhood and wants to send a status letter to the 77 people who signed the petition. HCC will cover the expenses as long as they are within the new expenditures policy that we approved in November 2006.

George is talking to the parking commission about Starbucks patrons parking on the sidewalks at the downtown store. He's also talked to another company whose sandwich board was blocking the ramped portion of a sidewalk corner – hindering wheelchair access.

An affordable housing comment was made at the City Commission meeting. Michael O'Neil wants to come to an HCC meeting to talk about AWARE (advocacy group for disabled people) and the Montana Home Choice Coalition. George will give the contact info to Justin.

District 4:

The Veteran's halfway house on Leslie has been approved.

District 6:

The MidTown group continues to meet. They're planning a business engagement luncheon for the January/February timeframe. They're also having a potluck on 12/21 at HCT.

District 7:

Loyd Tracy has resigned his HCC position. Ellen Bell has been selected to fill that vacancy.

OLD BUSINESS:

HCC 2007 Officers Nominating Committee: has come up with the following slate of nominees:

Chair - Justin Trafton

Vice-Chair – Lynne Boone

Secretary – Rebecca Ridenour

Treasurer – Bill Roberts

The slate of candidates must be issued to the full HCC by January 9, 2007. We'll do that via email this year. We'll hold elections at our Jan. 24th meeting, where nominations can also be taken from the floor.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

##### Water Bill Stuffer:

The format of water bill stuffers is 1/3 of an 8 ½ x 11 page, both sides; with no flexibility in the size of the document. The cost is \$500. The audience is apx. 10k people who receive water bills. The City Commission's approval process for water bill stuffers takes apx. 6 weeks.

The intent of the stuffer for the HCC is to get some visibility for the HCC, to publish the dates and locations of the quarterly district/neighborhood meetings.

We want to see a "final" draft at the January meeting, so we can just plug in the dates/locations of the quarterly meetings, the 2007 officer's names and some info about the HCC in general.

If the committee thinks other advertising would be more effective than the water bill stuffer, they will need to present their plan to some portion of the HCC, based on our new expenditure policy.

Motion: To appropriate \$500 to pay for a water bill stuffer. Motion carries.

##### Quarterly Neighborhood Meetings:

We are all in agreement that quarterly neighborhood meetings are a good idea. It may be wise to group some Districts together in the beginning. And there has been some discussion of making funds available for refreshments during the meetings.

Motion: To hold neighborhood meetings in April, July and October 2007. (January 2007 is too soon and January 2008 is outside the scope of this body.) Motion Carries.

By the first week of January, let Justin know whether you plan to pair up with another District for meetings – knowing those commitments will be for 2007.

Justin also needs to know if you have any site recommendations for your District's meetings.

Robyn Brown will take care of reserving the space/dates for all of the Districts.

Lynne's List for 2007:

Robyn will begin attending the monthly HCC meeting in January 2007.

“Lynne’s List” for City meeting attendance will be administered by Robyn, with members volunteering at our monthly meetings.

Going forward, when you attend one of the City meetings, it will be your responsibility to put together the report you’re going to give. Prior to the meeting, we encourage you to email the HCC soliciting info to be included in your report.

Monthly Meeting with City Manager Burton and HCC District Chairs:

Tim Burton has agreed to participate in a monthly meeting with 8 HCC members (a member of our board and the 7 HCC District Chairs). The format will be an open discussion to ask questions of the City Manager, get the status on various projects, etc.

Justin will let us know more as this plan comes together, dates, times.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Thanks to Ken Saunders and Matthew Cohn for the coffee and cookies!

Lt Tuck suggested advertising the HCC on the side of the City’s fire trucks. They have a lot of “unused” space, attract attention wherever they go and have a captive audience at response sites.

CITY MEETING ASSIGNMENTS:

City Admin Meetings: 4 to 6pm

Lynne Boone will cover the Admin meetings from January through March.

Those dates are: 1/3, 1/24, 2/7, 2/21, 3/7 and 3/21

City Commission Meetings: 6pm –

January 8; Bill Roberts

January 29; Ken Saunders

February 12; George McCauley

February 26; Amy Glasscock

March 12; Matthew Cohn

March 26; Jim Tucker Jr.

City Manager's Meeting: 10am –

January \_\_\_\_; Justin Trafton

Next HCC Meeting: 7 to 9pm

January 24; HCC Officer Elections

Respectfully submitted by Teresa Klotz, HCC Secretary, District 3