

Helena Citizen's Council

Regular Meeting

January 25, 2006

Members Present: Ellen Bell, Becky Bird, Lynne Boone, Jim Christnacht, Matthew Cohn, Marshall Gingery, Amy Glasscock, Bob Habeck, Tripp Hammer, George Hoff, Teresa Klotz, Jan Lombardi, Jerry McGee, Larry Mitchell, Patty Rambo, Rebecca Ridenour, Bill Roberts, Ken Saunders, Jay Synness, Allen Tompkins, Loyd Tracy, Justin Trafton, Jim Tucker Jr. and Thom Warsinski.

Members Absent: Mary Ann Dunwell and Laura Erickson. Berdene Steen (District 7) has had to resign her position due to health reasons.

Visitors Present: Brian Coplin, George McCauley, and Commissioner Peura.

Approval of December 14, 2005 Minutes: The minutes were approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report: Our total annual budget is \$1565. As of 1/11/06, we still have \$1045 in our account. It appears that the advertising expenses for the Meth Awareness town hall meeting still haven't been applied to our balance.

Police Dept Report: No on-duty officer attended, so Jerry McGee answered questions for us.

The City Commission approved the Nob Hill radio tower. Law enforcement hopes to have it operational within the next 4 to 6 months, if not sooner.

The recent prisoner escape cost Lewis and Clark County/Helena law enforcement apx. \$18k, and has billed Cascade County for those expenses. Sheriff Liedle has asked to be notified of all future prisoner transports traveling through Lewis and Clark County. Other agencies are not statutorily mandated to do so – compliance is a cooperative effort.

OLD BUSINESS:

No word on the status of the “Thank You” letter to HCC members who didn’t run for reelection.

NEW BUSINESS:

Follow-up Meth Awareness and Disaster Preparedness seminars:

Sheriff Liedle has approached George about the HCC sponsoring another town hall meeting before the end of the school year. After some discussion, Bill Roberts, Jan Lombardi, Marshall Gingery, Ellen Bell and Jim Tucker Jr. volunteered to work on a committee to coordinate this event.

At a previous HCC meeting, we agreed October (Disaster Preparedness Month) would be the appropriate time to sponsor another town hall meeting on this topic.

Allen Tompkins reminded us that the Helena Fire Dept suggested a video be developed of both these town hall meetings, for HCTV and distribution to interested residents.

HCC Officer Elections: The following people were elected to serve as HCC officers for 2006:

Chair: Justin Trafton (District 6)

Vice Chair: Bob Habeck (District 7)

Treasurer: Jim Christnacht (District 6)

Secretary: Teresa Klotz (District 3)

Many thanks (and a standing ovation) to George Hoff, our outgoing Chair, for his work as Chair during the past year. George is an amazing wealth of information and a valuable resource for the HCC. If you have questions about the HCC, George is the guy to talk to!

Orientation for New HCC Members: HCC members received a binder of HCC information.

Map of HCC Districts

City Calendar for February and March

List of City Admin and City Commission meeting dates for 2006

List of HCC members

Copy of the HCC Bylaws; please familiarize yourself with how HCC relates to the City.

Copy of Ordinance #2990 that lists the HCC District/Voting Precinct correlation and a map of the voting precincts.

City of Helena Directory of Elected and Appointed Officials. In February, we'll receive the revised and updated version for 2006.

List of City Boards and Committees

The table of contents from Helena's City Codes book, the list of City ordinances.

Robert's Rules of Order

Descriptions of HCC specific committees. Please let our new Chair, Justin, know if you're interested in participating on any of these.

Table of HCC publicity opportunities

List of issues that came up during 2005 HCC meetings; though no action has been taken.

Copies of the minutes from all the 2005 HCC meetings.

"Business" cards. If you need more, let Justin know and he'll coordinate future printings with Debbie Havens and Robin Brown.

HCC District Chairs: Each District named a Chair to serve as the primary point of contact for District information from City staff, citizens, etc. District Chairs are responsible for keeping the other members of their District informed.

District 1: Amy Glasscock

Districts 2: Larry Mitchell

District 3: George Hoff

District 4: Jim Tucker, Jr.

District 5: Thom Warsinski

District 6: Becky Bird

District 7: Bob Habeck

City Boards/Committees: The Mayor and the Commissioners will name appointments to the Helena's various boards and committees, several of which encourage HCC participation.

If you would like to serve on a particular board or committee, let Bob Habeck know by Tuesday January 31st. If you're interested in more than one, please prioritize your list in order of preference.

If you have questions about meeting times, time commitments and expectations, contact someone who is part of that group. Names and contact information are in the directory that was included in your orientation binder.

If you're curious about a board or committee, it's perfectly acceptable to attend some of their meetings to help you determine whether it's a good fit for you.

Committee/District Reports:

There were no reports from Districts 1, 2, 3, 4 or 7.

District 5:

Jim Tucker Jr. asked whether anyone's expressed concerns about the open flame of the water treatment plant being next door to the new Town Pump on Custer? Thom said he'd look into it.

Is putting together a committee to address Midtown area improvement, from the Hustad Center past the train depot. Tell Justin if you're interested, and he'll email the details to you. Their next meeting will be Thursday February 16th.

District 6:

There's a group of commercial property owners and residents getting together regarding 6th Ward revitalization. Tell Justin if you're interested in this group.

The City has signed a buy/sell agreement for the Mergenthaler property at the corner of N. Montana and Hwy 12/Lyndale for the new HATS site.

Walgreens is going forward at the corner of 11th and Montana. They have more work to do before final plat approval.

The Historical Society's purchase of the Capital Hill Mall is still pending.

There will a public meeting at Bryant School on Tuesday January 31st at 7pm to talk about the proposed office building behind St. Mary's Church. The site will serve as the Administrative Office for the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Ed (OCHE) and parking for the Helena College of Technology.

Other Comments:

George distributed copies of the 2005 City/Country directory. The 2006 edition will be available sometime in February.

George will talk to Paul Putz about the status of the restoration of the trolley up at Big Sandy. Bob Habeck thinks we're just waiting for a volunteered rig to go pick it up. Space is reserved at the rehab shop by the Fairgrounds, we just need to get it here.

Deer were heavily discussed at today's City Admin meeting. The City Commission will meet with the Helena Open Land Management Advisory Committee (HOLMAC) next week to see if they're willing

to take on the task of forming a group to address this issue. There is currently no timetable, but the City Commission is open to HCC participation and wants maximum citizen participation as well.

We'd like to have some kind of "HCC Social", to allow HCC members to get together and visit outside our normal monthly meeting setting. Details are still to be determined.

Jim Christnacht suggested that someone should approve HCC expenditures before they happen. City employees write and sign the checks to pay our bills, but they require our approval before they'll do so. We need to do a better job of documenting our expenses, especially if we're thinking about asking for a larger budget.

Legislation is being proposed that any entity that receives funding from tax dollars must account for those funds via a budget process that must be filed annually. If we have a budget, that approves expenditures via a formal process.

If we're going to pursue a ½ time City staffer, we must be very clear about how their time (and money) will be spent.

A group has formed to discuss a downtown visioning process. Bill Roberts and George Hoff attended their first meeting. Bill will email all HCC members a copy of the notes he got from that meeting. They'll meet again on Tuesday February 21st, from 6:30-8:30pm at the Chamber of Commerce. They are reserving two seats for HCC members, so let Bill Roberts know if you're interested in working on this group.

We film all HCC meetings for broadcast on HCTV Channel 11. Bill Roberts will let us know when this month's meeting will be aired.

Debbie Havens and Robin Brown are currently the City staff assigned to help the HCC, in addition to managing the rest of their workloads. They're very busy, so if we need their help, we need to give them as much advance notice as possible. They've also asked for one point of contact with the HCC so we're not pulling them in several directions.

Tim Burton wants City staff to meet with the HCC; just FYI for a future HCC meeting.

We'll put George McCauley on the March agenda to discuss the list of "Quality of Life" issues he brought to us several months ago. George will update the list and get it to Teresa in an electronic format for forwarding to HCC members.

Meeting Assignments:

The City Commission has asked that we sit on the front bench on the right-hand side, near the aisle, when we represent the HCC at the City Commission meetings. They also want us to introduce the new members who are attending their first Commission meeting.

If you are covering the City Admin meeting, be sure to pick up the purple binder from Debbie Havens and Robin Browns's office. It is the HCC's reference tool for issues being discussed at Admin meetings, including budgetary information. We only have one copy, so be sure to return it to Debbie and Robin when the meeting's over.

HCC's Executive Committee will work on providing some type of standard report we can make at these meetings. It's okay to express a personal opinion, but when representing the HCC, we need to make it clear when we're speaking for the HCC, and when we're expressing our own opinions.

Lynne Boone will draft a proposal for a way to assign meeting coverage well in advance so we don't have to handle it on a month-to-month basis.

City Admin Meetings:

February 8; Marshall Gingery

February 22; Larry Mitchell

City Commission Meetings:

January 30; Teresa Klotz and Matthew Cohn

February 13; Rebecca Ridenour

February 27; Thom Warsinski

City Manager's Meeting:

Date TBA; George Hoff

George will get us a calendar of the 2006 dates so we can schedule coverage.

Next HCC Meeting:

February 22nd – the Mayor and City Commissioners will be joining us. To make the best use of our time during that meeting, we will do some advance preparation:

By Wednesday February 1st, send Teresa Klotz a list of questions or issues you would like to discuss with the Commissioners at our February meeting.

Teresa will compile a common list and send it back out to HCC members for comment.

On February 15th, Teresa will forward our finalized list to the Mayor and the City Commissioners to give them advance notice of the areas we're concerned about.

We should also ask the Mayor and the Commissioners what they're looking for from us during the coming year.

Respectfully Submitted by Teresa Klotz, HCC Secretary, District 3