

Helena Citizens Council Regular Meeting August 22, 2007 - 6:00 p.m.

Members present: Ellen Bell, Jim Christnacht, Justin Trafton, Ken Saunders, Larry Mitchell, Marshall Gingery, Matt Cohn, Rebecca Ridenour, Teresa Klotz and Thom Warsinski. Also present: HCC VISTA Martha Eberle and Deputy City Clerk Robyn Brown.

Members absent: Allen Tompkins, Bill Roberts, Bob Habeck, George Hoff, George McCauley, Jim Tucker, Jr. and Lynne Boone.

Visitors: HPD Lieutenant Roger Johnson and Jack Stults.

June 27, 2007 HCC Meeting minutes

The June 27, 2007 minutes were approved as submitted.

Helena Police Department Report

Lt. Roger Johnson reported the following items:

- The HPD is hiring four new officers and two new officers were confirmed on August 20, 2007. Also, Officer Pete Callahan was promoted to Sergeant.
- School starts in August, he asked HCC members to remind their district residents of school zone speed limits.
- Construction continues on Henderson Street; as a result Custer, Benton and Montana Avenues have seen a large increase in traffic.
- Two HPD Officers attended basic Spanish language training.
- The HPD is still investigating the home invasion that took place in August on the 1300 Block of Stuart Street.
- From January to August 2007 there were 368 reports of abandoned vehicles with 60 actually towed; \$4500 has been paid to the tower. Discussion was held on the process for towing junk and abandoned vehicles.

Thom Warsinski noted the K-9 Unit recently performed a training exercise in the basement of the Cogswell Building; it was very interesting to watch.

Helena Firefighters Union Report

No report given.

Treasurer's Report

Chair Trafton reported there is \$4,593.19 remaining in the HCC Budget; funding has been spent on the VISTA program, City/County Information & Technology Services and advertising for the District Meetings.

Meeting Assignments

- Administrative Meetings:
September 5 - Matt Cohn
September 19 - Lynne Boone
- City Commission Meeting:
September 10 - Marshall Gingery
September 24 - Marshall Gingery

District Meeting Review

District 5 - Three people attended the meeting. Concerns related to traffic on Custer and Montana Avenues and there was interest in a neighborhood garden.

Districts 6 & 7 - Seven to nine people attended the meeting. Weeds and the condition of trees (in District 7) were of concern to attendees.

Districts 1 & 2 - Thirteen citizens (including five HCC members) attended the meeting. The Parks General Obligation Bond, Zoning Ordinance changes, abandoned/junk vehicles and community gardens were of interest to attendees.

Matt Cohn commented he and the other District 1 representatives prefer combining their neighborhood meetings with other districts.

Jack Stults, 714 Red Letter; stated Janet and Beltview Parks were of interest at the meeting he attended. The discussion of these parks turned into a conversation about a lack of customer service from the Parks Department on the issues. This has been discussed with City Manager Tim Burton.

Districts 3 & 4 - Discussion related to parking problems with Blue Cross/Blue Shield employees.

Community Development Director Sharon Haugen has indicated she would like to have Community Development representatives at the October 18, 2007 neighborhood meetings to discuss changes to the Zoning Ordinance.

District/Committee Reports

District 2 -

Lynne Boone indicated, via email, she would like to set up a neighborhood meeting regarding the Neighborhood Watch Program and asked any interested districts to contact her.

Lynne also indicated she would contact the Parks Department to request the installation of a bulletin board at Clinton Park that her district could use to post announcements for upcoming activities. Discussion was held regarding who would manage the boards for expiration dates and content.

Chair Trafton announced the filing deadline for a seat on the HCC is October 9, 2007. The council needs to set up recruiting and advertising for the election, in addition to a task force to write job descriptions, estimate time commitments and study how to retain council members. It was decided the task force would consist of Justin, Matt Cohn and Martha Eberle. Discussion was held on the HCC's purpose and why members have joined and resigned from the council in the past. Members need to figure out how to function as a large council and still make new members feel comfortable and not overwhelmed.

Help Helena Shine - Martha passed out a list of identified projects and asked that members contact her with any ideas. She noted she would like to begin advertising soon.

Quality of Life Committee - no update given.

VISTA Update

Martha commented she is glad to be here and working for the HCC. She gave an overview of what she has been working on since she started with the city and stated she would like to set up a regular HCC show on HCTV, a column in the Independent Record and will look into the HCC having a regular interview on the local radio stations.

Marshall suggested Martha attend the September Airport Authority meeting and an upcoming Hometown Helena meeting to get to know some of the community's leaders.

Open Discussion

Matt gave the history and mission of Advantage Helena and encouraged council members to get involved with their campaign to pick a new brand for Helena to help promote business and tourism.

Matt and Ken Saunders will attend the City Commission's annual tour of Helena on September 7, 2007.

Public Comments

Jack Stults passed out information regarding his campaign platform.

Adjournment - There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm. The next HCC meeting is September 26, 2007 at 7:00pm in Room 326 of the City/County Building.