

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING: 6:30 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2022
INTERNET ZOOM MEETING: <https://zoom.us/j/8976327748>
CONFERENCE CALL-IN: 1-301-715-8592 MEETING ID: 897 632 7748

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Mayor Harris called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Councilmember Leland led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITY OFFICIALS & STAFF PRESENT: Mayor Kelly Harris, Council President Don Dahl, Councilmember Judy Leland, Councilmember Wesley Feist, Councilmember Suzanne Ferguson, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, Police Chief Mike Sanders, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, City Attorney Pete Elverum, and Zoning Officer Jeremy Fadness

PUBLIC PRESENT: Dave Jensen, Sally Nyland, Rick Pyfer, Lyle Cusson, Earl Charles, Frank Belgarde, and Jeff Schepp

ABSENT/EXCUSED: City Judge Dennis Loveless and Fire Chief Troy Maness

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. **Zoning Variance Request for Signs Adjacent to Highway 12 and Wiley Drive, East Helena** – The public notice and staff report were included in the council packet. Zoning Officer Fadness explained East Helena RE, LLC’s request for variance from city code to allow an increased total square footage of signage per lot, an increased area of freestanding signs per lot, and increased area of wall signs, and an increased height for freestanding signs. He recommended approval of the increased area and height of all signs except the freestanding sign adjacent to Wylie Drive. This was an information-only item.
2. **Zoning Variance Request for Signs Adjacent to Highway 12 and Wiley Drive, East Helena** – No written public comment had been received. Mayor Harris called for public comment on the proposed variance. No written public comment had been received. Town Pump Display Marketing Manager Lyle Cusson commented in favor granting the variance. Dave Jensen commented that Council should not approve the 40’ and 60’ signs until MDT made final decisions on the speed limit and traffic configuration at the intersection of HWY 12 and Wylie Drive.
3. **Zoning Variance Request for Signs Adjacent to Highway 12 and Wiley Drive, East Helena** – Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the variances per staff recommendations. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Sally Nyland commented, “Now that we have a fully staffed police department, I would like the city to move forward with enforcing current ordinances pertaining to the abuse of East Helena city rights-of-way. These ordinances were updated by the ROW Committee and

passed by the East Helena City Council. Main issues are homeowners using the public rights-of-way as their extended property. Examples: Rubbish, abandoned or disabled vehicles, parking violations (angle, double parking, wrong direction, etc.).”

Rick Pyfer expressed his concerns about the safety of spectators during the annual fireworks display.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the June 7, 2022 meeting were included in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CITY COURT REPORT: A written report from City Judge Dennis Loveless for the month of May 2022 was included in the council packet.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Administration – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported the following:

- The remainder of the SRF wastewater loans had been paid off.
- Swimming lesson registration had been turned over to pool staff on opening day.
- She was working on fiscal year-end closing.

Police Department – Police Chief Mike Sanders reported the following:

- Officer DeBoo will be attending Field Officer Training.
- The department had received 155 calls-for-service and had seen an increase in animal-related calls including 3 dog bites.
- With the warmer weather, there had been extra patrols around Kennedy Park.

Public Works - Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported the following:

- There was a potential buyer for the METG property.
- American Chemet’s sewer service line under the highway collapsed.
- One hundred four of the new water meters that had been ordered almost a year ago were received.
- Pavement repair projects were being completed.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Troy Maness was excused.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Lewis & Clark County Sheriff's Office Reserve Agreement** – The draft agreement was included in the council packet. Police Chief Sanders explained that sheriff’s reserve would be assisting with rodeo weekend. Dave Jensen asked who was paying for the additional law enforcement coverage and suggested that the rodeo association and downtown merchants should pay the expense next year. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the agreement. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Request to Install a Granite Podium at Main Street Park** – Drawings of the proposed podium were included in the council packet. Frank Belgarde and Jeff Schepp were present to request Council’s permission to install the podium supplied by the VFW. They discussed the placement of the podium with Council. There was

- no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the podium. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Flags Placed by Kiwanis Club along Main Street Park** – The contract was included in the council packet. Rick Pyfer was present to request the placement of 6 flags on 5 holidays per year for \$50 annually per flag (prorated for holidays that had already passed in the current year). He answered questions from Council and Sally Nyland. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. Councilmembers Feist and Leland voted aye. Councilmembers Dahl and Ferguson voted no. Mayor Harris voted aye. The motion passed.
 4. **City of East Helena Development Fee Creation Scope of Work** – Cost estimates from Brad Koenig Robert Peccia & Associates were included in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore explained that one estimate included southside sewer projects and the other did not. Dave Jensen commented that he was in favor of development fees, but that the estimates were high. Council discussed grant funding for water and wastewater master plans and requesting METG’s assistance with paying for them. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the development fee creation estimate that did not include southside sewer projects to be clarified later. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. Councilmembers Dahl, Leland, and Ferguson voted aye. Councilmember Feist voted no. The motion passed.
 5. **Solid Waste Special Pickup Fees** – The current garbage ordinance disposal fees were included in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore explained that recommended a \$20 charge per special pickup of a limit of 10 items a maximum of 6 times per year per residence. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
 6. **Resolution 569 Relating to financing of Certain Proposed Projects; Establishing Compliance with Reimbursement Bond Regulations under the Internal Revenue Code** – The draft resolution was included in the council packet. Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren explained that the resolution would allow the city to reimburse itself for expenditures from bond proceeds. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve Resolution 569. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MAYOR’S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported the following:

- He had attended the Board of Health meeting.
- He had attended meetings about the development of the METG property
- He had been working with the state fire marshall regarding Montana Propane.

COUNCILMEMBERS’ REPORTS:

Don Dahl had nothing to report.

Judy Leland reported that she had received calls for the City of Helena due to an error in the phone directory.

Wesley Feist reported that there would be a Helena WINS Construction Exploration Event on June 25th and that East Helena was on the Hometown Helena agenda August 11th.

Suzanne Ferguson had nothing to report.

LEGAL REPORTS: City Attorney Elverum reported that court had been busy and that it had been nice to have the officers out and about.

PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 295173 through 295216 were presented for Council's review. Councilmember Leland made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

1. East Helena Planning Board Meeting, Thursday, June 23, 2022, 6:00 PM, City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, July 5, 2022, 6:30 PM, City Hall Room 110
3. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, July 19, 2022, 6:30 PM, City Hall Room 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 8:07 PM.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor