

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING: 6:30 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2024
JOIN ZOOM MEETING: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3787705872>
CONFERENCE CALL-IN: 1-253-205-0468 MEETING ID: 378 770 5872

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

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

PUBLIC PRESENT: Ken Murphy, Laura Mozer, Donna Clark, Cheryl Verbanac, Blair Verbanac, Kelly Posewitz, Heather Basset, Bill Covey, Unidentified Man, Unidentified Woman, and Dave Jensen

ABSENT/EXCUSED: City Judge Dennis Loveless, Fire Chief Roger Campbell, and Councilmember Judy Leland

(0:00:35) PUBLIC HEARING:

1. **Conditional Use Permit Application for a Multi-Family Development of Twelve Four-Plex Buildings Adjacent to Plant Road** – A copy of the public notice was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris reported that the applicant had withdrawn the application and may reapply later. This was an information-only item.
2. **Conditional Use Permit Application for a Multi-Family Development of Twelve Four-Plex Buildings Adjacent to Plant Road** – Mayor Harris called for public comment on the application. (0:01:50) Bill Covey commented in opposition to the proposed conditional use permit.
3. **Conditional Use Permit Application for a Multi-Family Development of Twelve Four-Plex Buildings Adjacent to Plant Road** – Councilmember Feist made a motion to deny the conditional use permit application. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There was no public comment on non-agenda items.

(0:06:45) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the May 21, 2024 meeting were included in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl

made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CITY COURT REPORT: City Judge Dennis Loveless was excused.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

(0:08:40) Administration – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that the county election officials had seen a steady stream of voters for the primary election all day and that the FitLot classes had begun on the AARP fitness equipment located in Kennedy Park

(0:9:15) Police Department – Police Chief Mike Sanders reported that there had been 378 calls-for-service in May; he met with the Lewis and Clark County Emergency Management Team; Patrol Officer Butler will finish his field training this month; the department had purchased a new patrol vehicle; and that he had been working with City Attorney Elverum to dispose of surplus property.

(0:12:00) Public Works – A written report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported there had been excess wipes congesting sewer lines in the Highland Meadows Subdivision; he responded to the March nitrogen level violation; Tri County Disposal will need to start charging a fee when they lend the city a garbage truck; a resident’s window was inadvertently broken while the right-of-way was being mowed; and the department purchased a new curb painter/street striper.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Roger Campbell was excused.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **(0:20:30) Confirmation of Appointment of Patrol Officer Chris Kirkegaard** – Police Chief Sanders discussed Officer Kirkegaard’s successful completion of his one-year probationary period. There was no public comment. Councilmember Ferguson made a motion to confirm the appointment of Patrol Officer Kirkegaard. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **(0:23:10) Request to Use Main Street Park for a Wheelchair Fundraiser July 20, 2024** – Donna Clark requested Council’s approval to use Main Street Park at no charge for a fundraiser to provide a track wheelchair for a child who could benefit from it. She answered questions from those present. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the request. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **(0:26:25) Lewis & Clark Library Request for Fee Waiver to Use Main Street Park Pavilion for a Musical Performance Wednesday, July 17, 2024 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.** – Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren presented East Helena Branch Manager Andrea Eckerson’s request to use the Main Street Park Pavilion at no charge for a free, family friendly performance by Cowboy Andy and The Salamanders.

There was no public comment. Councilmember Ferguson made a motion to approve the request. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **(0:27:30) Proposed ARC Sporting & Events Complex** – Kelly Posewitz described the events that could be held at the proposed complex. She handed out written information to Council, discussed how it would be financed, and invited everyone to attend a public meeting on June 12th. She answered questions from Council. This was an information-only item.
5. **(0:35:30) Montana Convoy Foundation Request to Hold a Christmas Convoy in East Helena** – A map of the proposed convoy route was on the council room table. Laura Mozer and Ken Murphy requested Council's approval to hold the convoy of large vehicles decorated with lights in East Helena tentatively on December 14th. A video of a convoy in Belgrade was shown onscreen. A portion of the proceeds from the event would be donated to the new rodeo grounds. (0:42:45) Heather Basset commented in favor of the convoy. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the convoy. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
6. **(0:45:50) Part-Time Building Code Inspector Job Description** – The draft position announcement and job description were included in the council packet. Mayor Harris discussed the need for an in-house building inspector rather than contracting it. He answered questions from Council. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the Building Code Inspector job description. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
7. **(0:54:10) Strom & Associates Contract for Audit Services for FY24, FY25, & FY26** – The draft contract was included in the council packet. Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren noted that the fees per audit had increased by \$2,000.00. Council discussed conducting the audit exit interview as a public meeting. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the contract. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:57:50) MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported that he had met with representatives from the ARC Sporting & Events Complex; worked on a CDBG planning grant; met with Senator Tester's representative regarding the RAISE grant; and that he attended the Memorial Day ceremonies.

COUNCILMEMBERS' REPORTS:

(1:01:40) Don Dahl reported that he had attended the Zoning Commission meeting.

Judy Leland was excused.

(1:02:20) Wesley Feist reported that he attended Coffee with the Chamber; attended the first Lewis and Clark County Metro-Region Opioid Governance meeting; attended the East Helena High School principal hiring event; attended the Memorial Day parade; met with Helena Area Ambassadors; and that he attended the Vision Helena meeting.

(1:05:35) Suzanne Ferguson reported that she had attended the Zoning Commission meeting.

(1:05:45) LEGAL REPORT: City Attorney Elverum reported that he had attended the meeting with Senator Tester’s representative regarding the RAISE grant; that city court was going well; and that he will be bringing a draft open container ordinance update to Council soon. He commended the police department on their work.

(1:06:35) PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 297594 through 297649 were presented for Council’s review. Councilmember Feist made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

1. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, June 18, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, July 2, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor