

# ***Helena Vigilante Runners***

## ***Board Meeting #9***

### ***Meeting Minutes***

***February 8, 2010***

#### **I. Call to order**

Steve Engebrecht called to order the ninth meeting of the Helena Vigilante Runners at 7:05 pm on February 8th, 2010 at 107 W. Lawrence.

#### **II. Roll call**

The following persons were present:

Steve Engebrecht, President

Patrick Judge, Vice President

Michele Bazzanella, Treasurer

Mike Fanning, Board Member

Marta Fisher, Board Member – with amazing cookies for the group

Mike Jacobson, Board Member

Thomas Jodoin, Board Member

Scott Story, Board Member

Jeff Thomas, Board Member

Alan Wintersteen, Board Member

Chris Beskid, Board Candidate

Todd Younkin, Board Candidate

Don Clark, City of Helena Water Treatment Supervisor

#### **III. Approval of minutes from last meeting**

Pat moved that the minutes of the December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009 meeting be approved. Mike Jacobson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

#### **IV. Financial Report**

Treasurer Bazzanella reported that a couple of remaining payments had been paid at the end of last year (including a contribution to the Lewis & Clark Search & Rescue and a remaining Porta John bill), but otherwise there was nothing new to report.

#### **V. Elections**

a) Board: Thomas Jodoin moved that the following slate of candidates be appointed (or re-appointed) for a full three year term: Chris Beskid, Todd Younkin, Mike Fanning, Marta Fisher, and Scott Story Alan Wintersteen seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. The group thanked Thomas Jodoin for his service on the board. And while he was unable to attend this meeting, Sean Slinger's MANY contributions to the Helena Vigilante Runners are also very much appreciated. The group is excited about the Slangers' latest venture with the Tread Lightly running store, and wishes Sean and Sarah the best of luck.

b) Officers: Mike Fanning moved that the organization retain its existing officers for another year. Scott Story seconded the motion. The group discussed the advantages of keeping some stability while the organization is still trying to get on its feet (having moved from "gestation phase" to "infancy"). But the group also discussed the advantages of having some turn-over sometime in the future. The motion

passed unanimously. [It goes without saying that Marta was reappointed as “Vice President for Treats” for the full duration of her service on the board.]

## **VI. Visit with Don Clark**

Don Clark introduced himself and his long-time interest in:

- 1) running, having himself competed in many races over the years (such as the Colter run), and also having a sister (Val Smith) who coaches cross-country at Capital High School, and
- 2) the Ten-Mile watershed, as Helena’s primary source of water in addition to offering excellent wildlife habitat and many recreational opportunities.

Don would like to host a “Ten Mile Day” on a Saturday sometime this summer. It would be aimed at promoting awareness of the importance of the drainage. There are a lot of ongoing issues associated with the area, including: Superfund Site, beetle killed trees, and fire danger. They had quite the scare from last year’s fire on MacDonald Pass. If a fire were to hit the drainage, it could wipe out the treatment facility for years (with the debris and sediment coming down in the water).

Don spoke of the recent Collaborative Group that studied the drainage (the science, the aesthetics, the politics, etc.) and came up with recommendations. He’s trying to keep the ball rolling with this idea, and thinks a run/race might be a great component of a “Ten Mile Day.” He said he’s not looking to generate money so much as awareness, and he was very interested in hearing whatever feedback the HVR could give him. He’s hoping to keep the runners in the area after the race so they can visit booths, take tours of the treatment plant, and generally have a pleasant and educational experience. The group responded positively to the idea, and offered the following suggestions:

- make sure to look at the schedule of events of interest to the HVR and pick a date that doesn’t conflict with other local races – the group suggested July 24<sup>th</sup> or July 31<sup>st</sup>
- offering a picnic (and beer!) is a great way to encourage people to stick around
- make sure to include a 10 Mile race – not only is the name perfect (The Ten Mile Ten Miler), but it’s a great distance that isn’t seen very often anymore
- include a shorter race as well, to appeal to kids / families / less-serious runners – but keep it relatively simple the first year (two races is plenty)
- the treatment plant would make a good staging area (the idea of running up to Chessman was applauded, but probably logistically infeasible) – the race probably needs to be just an out-and-back course – Don said that dust abatement is already occurring as part of the Superfund activities – while not ideal, people didn’t think an out-and-back course is a show-stopper, and it does have some advantages (you get to see the other runners, you can use waterstations twice, etc.)
- Pat and Steve promised to send Don step-by-step information about how to organize a race
- Marta suggested that the Prickly Pear Don’t Fence Me In race would be a good model
- Todd recommended having some tours of remediated areas (to show the contrast of “before and after”)
- Scott suggested including Audubon, to make sure there’s a full discussion of the issues of – beetle infestations are (to some degree) a naturally occurring cycle, with benefits to woodpeckers, etc.
- The group thought that Don DID have enough time to organize the event, but that he it was good he was starting now. The city could use a water bill stuffer to help promote the event.
- Thomas suggested that Don get in touch with Great Falls Park and Rec., which organizes the Icebreaker race every year.
- Jeff emphasized the importance of notifying the residents in the drainage.
- Pat said he would be happy to post a call for volunteers on the club listserves.
- Alan said something like the “Migrating Bird Day” that his family attends would go over well – making use of the existing Forest Service interpretive trails, for example

## **VII. HVR Education Series**

Mike Fanning introduced his idea for a lecture series sponsored by HVR. He envisions 45 minute talks by local nutritionists, physical therapists, biomechanists, chiropractors, acupuncturists, or others who would volunteer to come and address the group (specific people could be brainstormed with help of the listserv). The participants could then adjourn to a local establishment to reflect on the talk over beers. The board thought it was a good idea, and urged Mike to set-up a trial presentation. They suggested holding the events on weeknights, primarily in the off-season. Potential locations include the library, Staggering Ox, and the Bagel Company.

#### **VIII. Other Administrative Issues**

- a) Pat circulated the 2010 Conflict of Interest Statement of Directors for board member signatures
- b) Pat said that he would send out the list of policies the board had implicitly agreed to as part of its 501c3 application.
- c) Steve said that he had not yet heard from the Secretary of State's office about renewing the corporate filing for 2010. Michele thought that would occur sometime in the first quarter.
- d) Steve said that RRCA has gone to an online process for the first time this year, and that he's had some difficulty getting a username and password so we can submit our membership data and dues.
- e) Steve read the letter he received from the IRS confirming that the club's 501c3 application was received and being processed. The club should hear something further by the end of March.

#### **IX. Announcements**

- a) Steve said the North side of Mt. Helena will need some trail work this year, and suggested that the club help out with that. Michele offered to help coordinate trail work days as she did last year.
- b) Alan Wintersteen discussed the progress he's made with the website transition. The group reaffirmed its agreement that the club should have ONE website. Alan said we should start promoting the new location now. He has a lot of ideas for improvements, like creating a "board" section that posts our official documents, minutes, etc.
- c) Pat reported the progress he's made toward organizing a Vigilante Mile as part of the Vigilante Day Parade. He said it sounded like the schools were interested in a donation, and the group suggested splitting the proceeds. Jeff Thomas continued to emphasize the importance of crowd control. Pat responded that he hoped we could get a police motorcycle escort for the lead runner. Pat also emphasized his commitment to including high school runners – that Vigilante Day is primarily about the youth. He also mentioned that Chris Colberg is very interested in helping out, and also getting involved in other activities that would support competitive running for Helena's youth. Both Pat and Chris would very much like to see an indoor track facility in Helena some day, especially now that Carroll College is starting a track program. Pat reported that MSU may be looking to purchase a new track, which might mean that their existing track would come available for purchase (according to Jeff, it breaks down into 56 pieces for transport and storage).
- d) Marta said that she intends to host a "Phase 0 Party" again this year, but it will be sometime in early March (to go along with her 35<sup>th</sup> birthday).
- e) Jeff Thomas gave the official Vig Gesture in a hearty show of support for the Helena runners competing in the upcoming Montana Mens Masters Mile. Pat forgot to return the gesture to Jeff, who will be competing in a USATF cross-country race in Spokane the next day, but would like to hereby correct that omission.

#### **X. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

#### **XI. Adjournment**

At 8:31, Michele moved to adjourn, Scott seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **XII. Addendum**

On April 2, 2010, the Tread Lightly running store hosted an advance opening party for Helena Vigilante Runners. Much fun was had by all!

On April 23, Marta Fisher moved that the board endorse the proposal to add the Wakina Sky, Show Me the Horse, Mini Ridge, McKelvey, South Dump Gulch, Stairway to Heaven, Pinchot, Roger Fuchs, Entertainment, Archery Range, TR, Emmett's Ridge and Black Forest Trails to the National Forest System. Michele Bazzanella seconded the motion, and it passed with "Aye" votes submitted by Steve Engebrecht, Mike Jacobson, Mike Fanning, Scott Story, Sarah, Slanger, Brian Wieck, and Pat Judge (in addition to Marta and Michele). No "Nay" votes were submitted. Marta drafted a letter expressing HVR's position, and received feedback and approval from the board. The text of that letter is as follows:

April 28, 2010

Helena Ranger District  
Attn: Roy Barkley  
2001 Poplar St.  
Helena, MT 59602

Dear Mr. Barkley,

Helena Vigilante Runners supports the proposal to add the Wakina Sky, Show Me the Horse, Mini Ridge, McKelvey, South Dump Gulch, Stairway to Heaven, Pinchot, Roger Fuchs, Entertainment, Archery Range, TR, Emmett's Ridge and Black Forest Trails to the National Forest System. Helena Vigilante Runners (HVR) is a recently incorporated group which promotes health, fitness, and community through group training runs, races, and social events in the greater Helena area. HVR's ultramarathoners, track athletes, triathletes, and recreational runners appreciate the accessibility and quality of the trails in the South Hills.

The trails which are proposed for addition to the National Forest System are well established user trails. Many of us run on these trails daily, where we frequently encounter other runners, bikers, and hikers. For the last several years, the courses for the Don't Fence Me In 12k and 30k trail races have followed some of these trails. Such well loved, and therefore heavily used, trails need maintenance. Adding these trails to the National Forest System will allow that maintenance.

These trails are all located close to town, in the wildland-urban interface. In particular, only portions of the Archery Range and Entertainment Trails are on Helena National Forest land; other stretches are on land owned by private individuals and the City of Helena. Additionally, the TR, Roger Fuchs, and Pinchot Trails are in an area of Forest Service land less than a mile wide and bordered on all sides by public roads. We believe that part of the value of these trails lies in their proximity to town.

These trails are all proposed as nonmotorized trails, so their addition to the National Forest System seems entirely consistent with the Clancy-Unionville Travel Decision.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Marta Fisher, board member

Vigilante Mile -- On March 29, Steve Engebrecht suggested that the Vigilante Mile be held at the Capitol Complex and that the funds be donated to the Historical Society to help build a new facility. On April 14, Chris Colberg attended a Montana Heritage Museum Task Force meeting to coordinate HVR's participation in the museum's fundraising campaign. The 1st Annual Vigilante Mile took place on May 1. 27 runners participated, and \$290 was raised. The event also received some excellent press coverage.

On May 3, Patrick Judge and Chris Colberg testified to the City Commission about HVR's continuing desire for soft trail surfaces for low-impact running. Specifically, they asked the commission to approve the option of having parallel decomposed granite paths as part of the proposed Centennial Park project (Judge's testimony appears below). Unfortunately, their efforts did not meet with immediate success.

Mr. Mayor and Members of the Commission,

My name is Patrick Judge, and my address is 409 Dearborn. I'm the Vice President of the Helena Vigilante Runners, which is the umbrella organization for Helena's running community. We currently have 217 participants on our listserv, and an average of about 80 people who show up to our Tuesday-at-Noon weekly workouts.

I testified last year on the organization's desire to preserve soft, natural surfaces for low-impact running, and for competitive events. We regularly train on the existing dirt path at Centennial Park, and are concerned about the amount of pavement being contemplated.

- We certainly appreciate all of the work that went into this proposal, and support the goals of creating additional non-motorized commuter options. But we do question whether all of that asphalt is really necessary in order to meet commuter needs.

- I've made a map of the proposed trails that I would like to hand out:

- the asphalt trails are shaded in yellow, while the decomposed granite is in blue

- as you can see, there's significantly more yellow than blue

- you essentially have four blue strands, one of which is the ballpark road

- and note also that these strands have very little connectivity, for "loop" running

- We realize it's late in the process. But I would note that our organization is a young one that just formed in January last year, and that we did in fact appear before the commission on this topic just one month after our formation. We appreciate that the request for proposals did include a bid element alternate for a parallel granite path.

- We would love the opportunity to get more involved in these issues. Chris Colberg, who is here with me, has actually applied for a position on the non-motorized advisory committee.

- Our request to you this evening would be to take one of the following actions, listed in order of preference:

- 1) postpone final action on the trails until the stakeholders have had a chance to look for a workable compromise, or

- 2) approve the alternate providing for a parallel trail system, but look for ways to reduce the cost. Much less appealing to us is the option of having special grading that would allow for running on the adjacent grass surface. While this might work for solitary runners, it raises issues of water saturation, footing, and crowding for the size groups we have. If it comes down to it, I suppose that would be better than nothing. But we hope we can do better.

Helena Vigilante Runners stands ready to work constructively and collaboratively as a partner in this project, and expresses thanks for this opportunity to testify.

**These minutes were prepared by Patrick Judge, due to Lori Heit's absence and with her permission.**