

LOWELL AREA RECREATION AUTHORITY

January 13, 2021

6pm Zoom

Board Members present: Perry Beachum, Janine Mork, Betsy Davidson, Amanda Rogers, Cliff Yankovich, Mark Anderson

Also present: Laura Garrison, At Large rep., Dave Austin, Williams & Works, Tom Gossiaux, Janalee Grischke, Bob Rogers, Community Center

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm.

A motion to approve the Agenda as presented was made by Beachum, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried.

A motion to approve the minutes from the November meeting was made by Beachum, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – One check to issue – Chamber of Commerce Membership. A motion to pay the Chamber bill was made by Beachum, seconded by Yankovich. Motion carried.

\$5000 from each municipality was received and will be deposited. Also have \$500 from Fry Foundation. The audit is complete. Betsy will send reports.

Betsy still wants to have checking and savings accounts combined. She will talk to Mork about getting that done.

Remaining left to pay Harding – Some of the payment was held back. There are some repairs that need to be finished. We paid \$2750 of original \$3250 bill. Hold on to it for now. We will talk to them in Spring to see if we can get it fixed.

Public Comment – Janalee Grischke – her group is looking into grant workshops, etc.. to see what they can get started on for the equestrian trail project. She is learning a lot by sitting in on our meetings.

The Lowell Cable Fund grant requests have a deadline of February 5, 2021. Have we asked them for any funds toward trail? This grant is for smaller local projects. Our project is too big. If we have something smaller in scope in future, we can apply for it.

New Business

Bob Rogers, Lowell Community Center

Bob is leading the community center group. They are gaining momentum. This is the sixth or seventh attempt to get a community center built. He believes LARA started out as a community center initiative. Williams and Works did a feasibility and needs study. A pool had an 85%-90% need. The study was complete mid December, 2020. He outlined their progress so far.

It was determined they will need about 25 acres of land with accessible utilities. It will potentially cost \$17 - \$20 million for the facility. The YMCA is interested in partnering with them. In Caledonia, the Y leases the building and runs the programs. Other thoughts were to have it owned by the school and have the Y run it. Funding could be obtained through bond extensions if the school were part of it. To start the funding process, they plan to ask 15 foundations for money. Amway, VanAndel, DeVos, Lowell Community Fund, Wege Foundation, etc.

Another option is to have an Urban Cooperative between the Townships and the City. They will form a board and be a separate legal entity, similar to LARA.

The property they are looking for should have close proximity to schools, trails and neighborhoods. They have three parcels as possibilities. The best location is property located on Foreman, just north and east of the new retirement home there. They are also looking at teaming with the fairgrounds.

Bob will come to the February meeting with more information from feasibility study.

Anderson to Yankovich – possibility of Community Center at Fairgrounds. Cliff will bring up at next City Council meeting.

Austin – flooding is a concern at the current fairground area.

Beachum – the pool was filled in after closure in 1992.

Old Business

Bench and platform on Alden Nash – revisit in Spring.

Rail Trail Connection Progress and Updates

Grant applications are due April 1, 2021 for DNR. We can assume we are getting the grants – 99% true. We are \$550,000 short.

We need Meijer to come up with more funding. Draft a letter to Meijer Foundation. Other foundations have increased their donation amounts. Ask Meijer to do the same. Bert Bleke will follow up with them 4-5 days after letter is sent. Try the Kellogg Foundation also.

The DNR requires a commitment for the matching funds by October 1. Applications due April 1. Ideally we should get it wrapped up by April 1 deadline. Work needs to start this year in order to have building start in 2022.

Dave Austin needs authorization to proceed with grant application process. It should be easier than before since the routes are set. We are 9% short of our funding goal. (\$522,000).

Kent County Road Commission said they would partner with us to expand the Hudson Street Bridge. They are not planning any work there until 2023. They will contribute to trail walkway on bridge if it can sit on the same piers as current bridge.

Anderson – ROW process Need legal descriptions and proper format to submit to DNR. Reagan and Grand Rapids Gravel right of ways are drafted already. The Seely ROW on Grand River is very important. It needs to be secured as soon as possible.

Davidson – What about going on WOOD-TV and talking up the project. Austin thought it would be great for small projects, trailheads, etc. Once grant is in place then tell the world about it.

Anderson – LARA should send a letter of support for Grand River Storage. The trail runs along the north side of the property along the fence.

Anderson made a motion to send an email expressing our support, Yankovich seconded it. Motion carried.

Discussion about plowing trail. Protocol is 3" or more.

Anderson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:32pm. Yankovich seconds. Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting – February 10, 2021, 6pm. Location TBD