

LARA Meeting Minutes

OCTOBER 8, 2025

Board Members Present (P=Present, EA=Excused Absence, A=Absent)

P-Perry Beachum (Chair) City of Lowell Resident
EA-Mark Anderson (Vice Chair), Lowell Twp. Board Representative
P-Amanda Rogers (Treasurer) Lowell Twp. Resident
P-Mark Weaver, (Secretary)Vergennes Twp Resident
P-Sherry Richmond, Vergennes Township Board Representative
P-Eric Bartkus, Lowell City Council Representative
P-Tom Gossaiux, At Large Member
P-Jennette Stevenson, Alternate, Lowell Township
--Unassigned, Alternate, City of Lowell

Guests

Dave Austin, Williams & Works

Motions

- Motion to excuse tonight's absence. Tom moves to excuse Mark A. Eric supports. Motion carried.
- Approval of October 2025 Agenda Eric moves. Tom supports. Motion carried.
- Approval of August 2025 Minutes. Tom moves. Eric supports. Motion carried.

Treasurer Report

- Bill payments
 - Mowing, Pat's Premier Lawn Care LLC: Two invoices at \$125 and \$125
- Other:
 - Review of expenses so far this year
 - Tom moves to pay bills. Eric supports. Motion carried.

Public Comment

- None

Old Business

- Status: Vergennes Twp Rec Plan. Sherry. Plan is approved for preparation by Williams & Works. Anticipate January 2026 completion.
- Status: Board Alternate, City of Lowell. Eric. No update.
- Status: Updated Inspection and Maintenance Plan. Tom. Tom will send out an email with an electronic copy for the Board to review and respond to Tom.
- Status: LARA by-laws -Edit to Term Limits. Draft Amendment and Process. Mark W. Perry suggests Eric present for a Resolution to the City first, followed by Sherry for Vergennes Township, and Mark A Lowell Township. Mark W to check with Sue for process....ASAP
- Status: Maintenance and Repair committee. Recent work, etc. Perry. Segments of the trail were recently repaired and recoated. Perry will see if there are enough funds available in the "not to exceed" contract to perform work needed near Alden Nash and Gee.
- Status: New Construction committee updates. Mark A. Absent

New Business

- Grand River Trail

Dave A

Grand River Trail recently had an article in Lowell's First Look. Downtown Grand Rapids and Kent County have significant funds to complete the trail from Grand Haven to Lowell. The Ottawa segment has been done for years. Next year the goal is to get to Ada, extending to Lowell the following year where LARA's Phase 2 to Montcalm will be the last segment of the Grand River Trail. It is a little early to strategize the planning and funding for the Ada/Lowell segment.

The Grand River Trail will use the LARA Phase 1 trail segment as part of the Grand River Trail connection as well. Regarding operations and management, once the LARA trail is connected to the Meijer Trail, we will ask to include the LARA Trail in the management of the Meijer Trail by the Meijer Trail Friends Group.

Kent County Roads and Kent County Parks are doing a bridge expansion near Knapp Road with a pedestrian crossing. Dave hopes we can replicate this work at the Hudson St bridge.

Once Lowell is connected, we hope to take advantage of capital funds of the greater trail system. But there is the possibility that Phase 2 will be funded elsewhere.

Williams and Works Trail Update.

Phase 1 was placed on hold in April due to new people at MDOT wanting more environmental work to be done. MSU was contracted to perform the work. It is complete and will be available sometime in October. With satisfactory results we will get clearance for the EGLE permit. Then MDOT who holds the grant will distribute the funding and set a bid date for the project. Opening bids are anticipated for January 2026. Construction will begin in 2026, extending a bit into 2027.

Adjourn

Tom moves to close the meeting. Eric Supports. Motion carried.
Adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Next Meeting

Next scheduled meeting is November 12, 2025 at Vergennes Township Hall.