

LARA MINUTES

June 11, 2025

6:30 PM

Lowell Charter Township Hall

Board Members Present (P=Present; A=Absent; E=Excused Absence)

E-Perry Beachum (Chair) City of Lowell Resident
E-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
E-Eric Bartkus, Lowell City Council Representative
P-Tom Gossaiux, At Large Member

P-Jennette Stevenson, Alternate, Lowell Township
P-Janalee Grischke, Proposed Alternate, Vergennes Township
Unassigned, Alternate, City of Lowell

Guests

Mark Fritzma

Motions

- Motion to excuse tonight's absences. Tom moves to approve. Amanda supports. Motion carried.
- Approval of May 2025 Minutes. Tom moves to approve. Amanda supports. Motion carried.
- Approval of June 2025 Agenda. Tom moves to approve. Amanda supports. Motion carried.

Treasurer Report

- Bill payments
 - \$150 Lowell C of C Duck Race sponsorship (July 11' and 12)
 - Insurances- General liability \$2224
 - Property Insurance for pavilion \$1022
 - Lawn Mowing \$125. Pats Premier Lawn Care.
 - Tom moves to approve payments. Jenette supports. Motion carried.
- Other:
 - o 2025/26 Budget. Discussed as printed with adjustment to Liability Insurance (\$3,246)
 - o Tom moves to approve budget with adjustment. Jenette approves. Motion carried.

Public Comment

- None

Old Business

- Status: Vergennes Twp Rec Plan. Mark/Sherry. Approved, but no timeline established. No updates.
- Tabled until at least August: Standing Committee leads; Spreadsheets and Inspection and Maintenance Planning;

- Board Alternates (Vergennes Twp has declined to support a Vergennes Two Alternate Board Member. Awaiting City consideration) of perhaps Grant Hengesbach

New Business

- Next meeting: Discuss ebikes amendments to by laws, etc. DNR webpage. Consider insurance issues with ebikes on trails.
- Next meeting: Walk thru LARA by laws.
- Discuss partnering with other trails for maintenance and repair for better bid prices.
- Mowing. Scott Litchfield . Lowell to Ionia and Lowell to Greenville. Amanda will email Ron.
- Janalee will contact Rep. Albert re state laws re ebikes and liability and if similar to the equine liability act which limits liability.
- Maintenance and Repair committees with a recommendations list (cleaning and crack seal less than \$3K) needs to be prepared. Need an updated quote and other miscellaneous and signage issues.
- New Construction committee to include new signage.
- Consistency and signage. Contact John Morrison West Mi Trails for guidance.
- Maintenance committee: Tom , Dave, Jenette

Williams and Works Trail Update.

Permits – As a condition of the MDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant, all necessary permits must be in hand before the project can be bid. The department that reviews and administers technical projects using this grant is MDOT's Local Agency Projects (LAP) conducted by a staff of engineers and biologists. They review and make sure that all of the permits required are in hand and meet criteria to satisfy federal standards.

- **EGLE/USACE Joint Permit** – Upon receipt of the funds submitted by the City for the Wetlands bank, the EGLE/US Army Corps of Engineer Joint permit was finalized and is in hand!
- **SHPO Permit** – The SHPO (State Historical Preservation Office) permit was approved earlier in the process, but after review by the current LAP staff, they asked for additional information to comply with the current version of the permit forms which have changed since the original SHPO application was made. This requires that new Tribal Consultation be made to verify that the project would not impact any known historical native American sites. This consultation was made and a new SHPO approval was received on March 20, 2025.
- **NEPA Clearance**– The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is the law that oversees all the environmental, cultural and social concerns with federally funded projects. NEPA Clearance is required before a project can be bid and includes permits mentioned above as well and any other concerns that may arise from the MDOT LAP staff. While the project did have preliminary clearance earlier, new items were identified by the current LAP Environmental staff that require additional field work and reports before a final NEPA clearance can be issued. Specially, they have requested that a complete flora and fauna survey be made to determine if any rare or treated/endangered species are present within the scope of the project. If so, the project will have to include measures to protect and/or avoid those issues. The survey must be done by qualified professionals, in this case the work is to be done by the MICHIGAN NATURAL FEATURES INVENTORY AT MICHIGAN

STATE UNIVERSITY. The field work will be done over the summer and early fall with a final report expected in October.

Schedule – The need for the additional NEPA Clearance work means that the project cannot be bid until late this year or early in 2026. Construction will take place in 2026.

Once we have more specifics, we will prepare a formal update to the City, Townships and all funding partners.

Adjourn

- Adjourned at appx 7:30 pm via motion by Tom. Amanda supports. Motion carried.
- Next scheduled meeting is July 9, 2025, 6:30 pm, Vergennes Township Hall. July meeting may be cancelled. Following meeting August 13.