

LARA MINUTES

May 14, 2025

6:30 PM

Lowell Charter Township Hall

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

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

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

Guests

Dave Austin W&W

Motions

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

Treasurer Report

- Bill payments
 - Two invoices from City of Lowell:
 - \$3321.79 permitting fees (not itemized).
 - \$2708.40 (Environmental MDOT, etc)
 - Women's Club. \$30.00
 - Mark A moves to approve payments. Mark W supports. Motion carried.
- Other:
 - o Amanda proposed including an annual \$1,000.00 Quickbooks subscription beginning in next year's budget. Approved by President.
 - o June 11 the Board will establish the budget for 2025/26. All members are asked to attend to reach quorum (Perry will be out of town).

Public Comment

- None

Old Business

- Status: Standing Committee Leads/POC's for such things as Events, IT/Web, Planning, etc. Mark W. Tabled.

- Status: Report out. April 26 Clean Up Day. Janalee. Clean up results were impressive. Public participation was minimal.
- Status: Long-term Maintenance Strategy: Spreadsheets and Insp & Maint Plan. / Tom. Amanda proposed a subcommittee of her, Dave and others to work out maintenance and repair needs.
- Status: Vergennes Twp Rec Plan. Mark/Sherry. Approved, but no timeline established.

New Business

- Board Alternates: Vergennes Twp needs to appoint an Alternate to the LARa Board. Mark W will prepare a letter for Perry's signature, identifying the Township's responsibility to select an Alternate. The Board will recommend consideration of Janalee Grischke as the Alternate. Additionally, Perry will check with City of Lowell regarding selection of an Alternate.

Williams and Works Trail Update.

Dave provided a detailed report after the meeting, copied here:

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.

Adjorn

- Adjourned at 7:14 pm via motion by Mark A. Amanda supports. Motion carried.
- Next scheduled meeting is June 11, 2025, 6:30 pm, Vergennes Township Hall.