

LARA MINUTES

April 9, 2025

6:30 PM

Lowell Charter Township Hall (alternate venue)

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
P-Eric Bartkus, Lowell City Council Representative
A-Tom Gossaiux, At Large Member

A-Jennette Stevenson, Alternate, Lowell Township
P-Janalee Grischke, 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. Janalee supports. Motion carried.
- Approval of March 2025 Minutes. Mark A moves to approve. Eric supports. Motion carried.
- Approval of April 2025 Agenda. Mark A moves to approve. Janalee supports. Motion carried.

Treasurer Report

- Bill payments
 - Williams and Works via city of Lowell \$11,297.53 (\$10K was additional hydraulic analysis and verification that the City owned the land)
 - Hooper printing \$275.60
 - Zachs Clean Cut Lawn care \$4,510 (12 months of mowing and snowplowing)
 - Mark A moves to pay the bills. Eric supports. Motion carried.
- Other:
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Public Comment

- None

New business

- Strategic Fundraising. Mark A notes the success of Bridge Fest.

- Mark A proposed for the May meeting to discuss routine trail maintenance seal coating, edging, clearing joints to filling, etc. (one step above trail clean up)

Old Business

- Status: Standing Committee Leads/POC's for such things as Events, IT/Web, Planning, etc. Mark W. No email response yet. Does this action have Board support? Tabled.
- Status: Updates. April 26 Clean Up Day. Janalee. Clean up signs? Lowell First Look article? Details of the event? Girl Scouts will participate. Garden Club will be reminded.
 - Prepare a map/list of tasks to accomplish for Clean Up Day. Boar will meet April 16 Wednesday night 6 pm at Cherry Creek to identify the Clean-Up tasks and strategy for April 26
 - Trash bags. Not for vegetation. Perry will get Light and Power to donate the bags.
 - Mark A will have three trucks/pick up refuse
 - Perry will handle food. Hot dogs on a grill. Basic condiments. Ready at 11 am
 - Three zones: Meijer to Foreman. HS to Foreman. Cherry Creek to Foreman at Alden Nash.
 - Sign up form by Amanda.
 - We need to identify trail repair/maintenance etc during the Clean Up Day. Photo document issues to aid in maintenance strategizing. Amanda will check with Tom to see the status of his spreadsheet.
- Status: Long-term Maintenance Strategy: Spreadsheets and Insp & Maint Plan. / Tom. Tabled.
- Status: Vergennes Twp Rec Plan. Mark/Sherry. Approved, but no timeline established.

Williams and Works Trail Update.

Mark A recommended we prepare a short narrative to explain the reasons for the delays to the three municipalities.

Dave's notes:

Phase II Update

Dave met on-site at the Hudson Street bridge with representatives from the Kent County Road Commission and the Kent County Parks Department to discuss the Road Commission's feasibility of connecting the planned pedestrian bridge over the Grand River to connect to the existing vehicular bridge. Dennis Kent from MDOT (and Lowell resident) also attended. Doing so would minimize redundant costs and would be more palatable to EGLE for permitting. These two county agencies are currently working on a similar effort over the Grand River on Knapp Street in Grand Rapids and the Road Commission representatives thought this approach would be feasible for the Phase II project, however, this would require formal approval from the Road Commission prior to beginning design. The Parks Department has funds available to assist towards the completion of Phase II. Dave and Ben Swayze from the Parks Department had a follow up meeting with the MDOT TAP Grant staff to ask them if they would allow the bridge to proceed as a separate project in advance of the trail extension to Montcalm Ave., which continues to be delayed in negotiations with the railroad for access. The MDOT Grant staff will review this option and report back. Dave made it clear to MDOT that the City of Lowell does not have the resources for additional matching funds for Phase II and would rely on the County for those funds. The County Parks Department is taking the lead on further investigation and will report back with what they come up with.

Phase I Update

- MDNR issued their formal approval of the plans and specifications, authorizing use of the \$300,000 Trust Fund grant.
- The EGLE permit will be issued once the City makes payment for the Wetlands Bank Credit. That amount was originally budgeted at \$214,000. The final amount is much less at \$188,800. Dave will work with Amanda and the City to facilitate this payment.
- On 4/9/25, notice was received from the endangered species biologist / NEPA coordinator for the local agency program at MDOT. They have some additional environmental items they require be addressed. The two major items were:
 - They have concerns over two threatened species within the area of the project, the Blanchard's Cricket Frog & Cut-leaved water parsnip, that were not highlighted as a concern in the initial environmental reviews by MDNR. The project will have to consult with MDNR threatened and endangered species for further guidance. The process may require additional field surveys before a permit can be issued.
 - The area of the Grand River near the trail has a documented Eagle nest. Additional documentation is required to show the proximity of the trail to the nest. If it is within 500 ft., additional precautions will be required as a part of the project.
 - Williams & Works is providing additional information regarding other concerns.
- The additional environmental items mentioned above will cause a delay in bidding the project and prevent the project from removing the trees prior to the start of the MDOT contract. As such, tree removal will now be added into the overall MDOT contract. We are now being told that the projected bid date will be in late summer/early fall, with completion in the fall of 2026. Dave will provide the City and the Townships with a written update once all the steps are known.

Adjourn

- Adjourned at 7:20 pm via motion by Mark A. Janalee supports. Motion carried.
- Next scheduled meeting is May 14, 2025.