

Lowell Area Recreation Authority (LARA)

Meeting Minutes

Date: October 9, 2019

Location: City Hall

Perry Beachum (Chair) City of Lowell resident
Heather Hoffman (Secretary) Vergennes Twp Clerk
Betsy Davidson (Treasurer) Vergennes Twp Resident
Mark Anderson (Vice Chair) Lowell Township Trustee
Vacant- Lowell Township resident
Greg Canfield- City of Lowell Council Member
Rich Conrad, at large rep

Board Members present: Hoffman, Davidson, Beachum, Canfield, Conrad Anderson Absent: NONE
Vacant seat- Lowell Township resident
Others present: Dave Austin- Williams and Works-

AGENDA- Approval of Agenda: CANFIELD 1ST, CONRAD, 2ND- ALL YES Motion Carried

MINUTES: September Minutes will be provided at the November meeting for approval.

TREASURER'S REPORT- The Authority has one savings account at Mercantile Bank with inactivity. Looking to transfer the savings account balance into the checking account to avoid any fees. Anderson will meet with Davidson to get the monies transferred.

Public Comment: Friends of the Trail Group update- A week ago- Button Rd and Smyrna grading was started. Finished trail scheduled to start within days. Will be 3.5" crushed asphalt with a compacted base and run from Vergennes North to Belding. The plan is to get as much done as possible this year. Weather permitting. The plan is to be completed by August of 2020. Asphalt from Vergennes to Foreman will be completed.

Trail Maintenance will be completed by Mike Harding – Austin will meet with Mike Harding regarding what needs to be done. The quote was under \$3,000 for maintenance of the trail. This will be completed this year.

Zack's lawn service took care of the weeds near Metric Manufacturing. There will be discussion about weed control as part of the maintenance plan.

Rich Conrad had received a message about a tree across the trail. It seems this has already been resolved.

PHASE 2- Connection to Flat River Valley Trail (FRVT) and Grand River Valley Trail (GRVT) LARA is withdrawing the MDNR grant for this year. Austin gave information regarding firm schedule from MDOT for the conditional commitment dates for the funds we need to match their grant. LARA is still 1.5 Million short of the 6.5 Million dollar project. A decision will need to be made by the Board whether to proceed with preliminary permits that are needed before all the commitment funding has been met. Austin expressed concerns there could be possible delays for some of the necessary permitting that has to take place before the project could be started. It is important that this permitting is in place so when the Grant funding becomes available, we can immediately start the project. If permitting is not completed, there could be any possible delays in receiving the necessary grant money. The Board will need to make a decision to either wait to have all monies in hand (all the matching funds) or start with preliminary permitting since it takes so long. The project can be completed and designed, but until everything is completely done, the grant monies will not be given. It is first come-first-serve when monies are needed.

We will have to think about finding our gap in funding without needing to go to MDOT and ask to push the funding back a year. We are currently 1.5 M short with a 6.5 M project.

DNR is the minority funder, but our grant will not be accepted, if we cannot receive commitments from a matching source by October of 2020. On this date, the Board will have to have a letter in hand showing where all of the funding for the project will come from.

Currently applying for the IRON BELL grant to co-exist on that part of the trail. Anderson has been in talks with Burt Blakey to be on board with this project.

Costs for permit applications, survey, hydraulic model survey, boardwalk section permit/ soil boring permits will cost tens of thousands, and we would need to commit to this to get the ball rolling

Grand Rapids Gravel and Reagan easement language has been drafted. The Board will bring these documents to the owners to have formal signing within the month. Waiting on the railroad easement approval process – they have cashed our application check.

Dave Vaught had requested that he would like more money for more bushes. He received \$1,600 for bushes. The Arbor Board may help him and Beachum suggested this may be an option.

In September, a concerned resident, who parks at the trailhead at the Cooper Woodland Trail shared that someone, claiming to be part of the Lowell Little League, told him he could not park there. Beachum will talk to the Little League Board regarding the incident.

Davidson asked that each municipality advertise the vacancy on the LARA Board. This is a Lowell Township Resident vacancy. We need a new Lowell Township Resident who may be interested in serving on this Board.

Canfield motioned to adjourn-Anderson 2nd. All members voted yes.

Meeting Adjourned 6:55 pm.

Next Meeting November 13, 2019