

Lowell Area Trails Meeting
September 17, 2003
4:00 - 5:30pm
Athletic Office Conference Room
Lowell High School

Present: Perry Beachum, Mari Stone, Dan Edwards, Will Welsh, Al Halbeisen, Betsy Davidson, Dick Cooper, Tamara Karczewski, Barry Hobrla, Mark Lessens, Paula Blumn, and Mark VanAllsburg, (Mika Meyer Beckett & Jones)

The following are notes from our meeting to the best of my recollection. Please review and share your additions or corrections at our next group meeting on Wednesday October 15, 2003 at 4:00pm.

Perry Beachum opened the meeting with a summary of the project to date. The next application for Lowell Foundation grants is in December. If funding is needed to start a building authority before then, then other sources of funds may be needed.

Mark VanAllsburg gave a summary of his recommendation to establish a joint building authority (JBA) under Act 31. Representatives of each municipality would have a representative on the JBA. The JBA would be flexible to grow as an organization. It would have the power of condemnation (if needed). The JBA could set up millages to maintain a trail, subject to an election.

Mark was asked about other municipalities that have JBA's. He indicated Grand Haven has used it for their trail system and it is often used for libraries. Other examples can be provided. Questions were also asked the cost of maintaining trails. Mark will check with some of his clients to see if they have estimated maintenance costs.

From January meeting notes, when asked about annual maintenance costs the following information was provided by LAP.

- *Portland has a similar trail system in length and allocates \$5,000 per year for sweeping, garbage collection, edging and mowing once a year. Nothing done in the winter. Cost breaks down to \$1,390 per mile.*
- *The Department of Natural Resources recommends \$5,000 per mile per year.*
- *Cascade has 15 miles of trails and allocates \$25,000 toward repairs only.*

Friends groups, adopt-a-trail programs and volunteers can all have an impact on the day-to-day maintenance cost.

Mari Stone suggested that we start soliciting contributions to get started. Perry can contact Dr. Reagan about the Lowell Area Fund. Will Welsh will attend the Rotary meeting on October 8th. It was then asked if we should get the municipalities approval for this concept before obtaining funds. Presentations of the trail study have been made to the City and Lowell Township. Each agency will have concerns about the cost of maintenance, liability and the distribution of funds for constructing trails that are not within their boundaries.

The benefits of having a community trail system to connect areas within each municipality will need to be stressed. Areas such as Eastgate in Lowell Township cannot easily connect to the Lowell Township Park without crossing through the City and over the Grand River.

Al Halbeisen was asked by Paula to attend the Lowell Township Recreation Committee meeting on September 29th to give them an update on the trail.

Mark suggested that trail easements be requested in all PUD developments to make future connections easier. Vergennes is considering that for future developments.

Dan Edwards proposes that three committees be set up;

1. Government Liaison (work with boards to get approvals)
2. Fund Raising (contributions and grant applications)
3. Public Information (website)

A formal presentation has not been made to the Lowell School Board, which would fall under the duties of group 1. Perry will start working on group 2 with assistance on grant applications by Al and Dan. Betsy will start a website for group 3.

NEXT STEPS: Further discuss the formation of an authority and committees and consider visiting other communities to look at their trail developments.

Respectfully submitted,
Al Halbeisen, P.E.

Next Trails Meeting: Wednesday October 15, 2003 at 4 pm, Lowell High School