



**Board Meeting, December 13, 2006 @ 6:00 pm
Lowell High School**

Present: Board Members, Mari Stone, Perry Beachum, Dan Edwards, Al Halbeisen, Betsy Davidson, Jim Pfaller, and Paula Blumn (for Leslie Stougaard).

Guests; Stacy Messrsmith, YMCA, Greg Pratt, LAS, Jackie Dimminck, Cindy Kehoe, Steve Mueller, WWC, Jody Seese, Tim Richards, LLP and Dave Pasquale

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of November meeting approved.

LARA Treasurers Report

Balance as of 12-13-06 is \$ 16,532.57.

Old Business

Terms of Office. Amendment to LARA agreement eliminating the term limit has been approved by Vergennes Township and will go to City of Lowell and Lowell Township Boards for approval.

New Business

Development committee researched obtaining 501(c)3 status for LARA and recommends applying for status for better opportunities in funding and receipt of donations. Application cost is \$750. Motion made and passed to apply for 501(c)3 status.

Steve Mueller discussed plans for speakers and tours at Wege/Wittenbach Center. Walks will be held on first Sunday of each month. WWC will be needing volunteers to help with tours and sponsors for speakers.

Mari presented schedule of LARA meeting dates for 2007. Dates are 2nd Wednesday of each month, with locations rotating between the 3 municipal governments. Locations may vary for special events. Motion passed to approved schedule.

Development Committee (Dan, Mari, Leslie and Jennifer)

See new business (510(c)3 application.

Development committee suggests formation of an Advisory Committee consisting of local resource people who could help with special issues, such as security, school involvement, medical, and coordination with other trails. Advisory Committee would not be members of LARA and would not need to attend monthly meetings.

Marketing Committee (Betsy, Tamara, Jennifer and Eric)

No report.

Easements

Lowell School Easements

Members of School Board and Administration have walked the route options around the High School. They are waiting for information from attorney for Consumers easement. Still need to development plan for connection at Cherry Creek Elementary School.

Alden Nash West

Mari has had more discussions with Steve Hanson about trail in sanitary sewer easement.

Wege property easement

Mari had meeting with Wege and company to review trail options. They prefer we stay to west side of property with access from Foreman Road. Crossing location of stream to be reviewed for MDEQ reaction.

Foreman Road easements

Al to review cross section options to discuss with Kent County Road Commission.

Fairground Connection to Stony Lakeside Park

No action.

Other

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. Public meeting held at 7 pm in High School cafeteria. See summary of meeting attached.

The foregoing constitutes my understanding of matters discussed and conclusions reached. Please review and share your additions or corrections at our next board meeting on **Wednesday January 10, 2007 at 6 pm, Lowell Township.**

Respectfully submitted,
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For more information refer to the website

www.lowellareatrailway.org

Commonly used acronyms;

Landscape Architects & Planners (LAP)
Lowell Area Recreation Authority (LARA)
Lowell Area Schools (LAS)
Lowell Light & Power (LLP)
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)
North Country Trail Association (NCTA)
West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition (WMTGC)
Wittenbach – Wege Center (WWC)

Presentations by Mari Stone, Al Halbeisen and Dan Edwards;

Case Statement available at meeting (green sheet).

Introduction of LARA board members

Master Plan is available at government offices. For more information refer to the website www.lowellareatrailway.org

Potential routes for first segment;
Wege/Wittenbach Center to Cherry Creek Elementary School

Funding;

Major fund raising campaigns to be started after route is confirmed. Some donations have been made, including Lowell Snowmobile Club when they disbanded and a recent donation by the Lowell Rotary Club. A grant by the Lowell Community Fund was used for the master plan work.

All meetings open to the public. Second Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. Location rotates between Lowell City Hall, Vergennes Township Hall and Lowell Township Hall.

Carolyn Kane of West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition (WMTGC) provided update on efforts to buy and convert abandoned railroad line south of Lowell and fund raising campaign for WMTGC

Meeting open to questions and comments;

Citizen requested answers to question on flyer distributed to elementary school children;

No tax increases for construction of trail.

Property rights – LARA does not have power to condemn property for trail. All easements to be voluntary.

Maintenance costs to be covered by each municipal government. Volunteer groups will be used as much as possible.

Trail will be built approximately 2 years after easements are obtained.

The Trail may be plowed in the winter, depending on available funding.

LARA has insurance policy to cover liability.

Trail system will take many years to build all the potential routes identified in Master Plan. Other cities have experienced increased interest in their trails, as segments get built demand increases for more connections.