

Lowell Area Trails Meeting
November 19, 2003
4:00 - 5:15 pm
Athletic Office Conference Room
Lowell High School

Present: Dave Pasquale, Mari Stone, Dan Edwards, Al Halbeisen, Barry Hobrila, Perry Beachum, Andy Linebaugh, Betsy Davidson and Paula Blumn

Status of **Cooper Woodland Preserve** - Tamara had contacted many of the group members to inform them of the logging work being done at the preserve. There was also a story in the Lowell Ledger about the work. Prior to the meeting Al, Mari and Paula had visited the woodland. Paula reported that the Lowell Education Foundation decision to harvest some of the trees was made with Dick Coopers knowledge. Although he was not enthusiastic about the idea, he would understand if the Foundation chose to exercise it's right to log the property. An independent forester was used to assess the woodland when the Coopers first gifted the property to the Foundation and he recommended that it be managed using modern forestry techniques. It was decided to do the work at this time since it would not be possible after the planned adjacent developments are built. After the tree harvest is completed trails within the preserve will be restored by the logger and can be used as part of the community trail system.

Betsy gave a report on the **Public information** website (www.lowellareatrailway.org) that has been started. Dan has added the list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and a sign-up and comment list will be added. Links to other sites, such as the West Michigan Trails/Greenways Coalition will be included.

Funding sources Discussion on how to use donations that could be received before the formal creation of an authority. Dave Pasquale will check with the City to see if they can set up a temporary account that would hold money for the trails. Some of the funds might be used for the legal fees necessary to set up an authority.

Mari Stone reported that a meeting was held with representatives of the Greenville, Rockford, Ada and Belding trail groups to discuss regional connections. Roger Sabine of Kent County Parks Department was at the meeting and indicated that there are some federal funds available which stress regional linkages.

Alternatives to Joint Building Authority (JBA) Mark VanAllsburg sent a letter to some of the group members with his opinions of the pros and cons of the various types of authorities that could be available to use. Act 156 which Paula suggested at the last meeting is a simpler authority, with less power, but needs specific rules to run properly. Andy said he would check with other LAP project managers to see what types of authorities their clients have used. After discussion by the group it was felt that since the groups goals do not include asking for millages or using the power of condemnation to get easements that the Recreation Authority of Act 156 of 1917 makes the most sense. It was decided that the Recreation Authority would be the most likely type to be approved by the participating municipalities and will be presented to them for approval.

Mark has told Mari that the cost to establish the Recreation Authority would be similar to the cost to set up a JBA. The authority itself is simpler, but requires more specific rules to be written to run properly.

NEXT STEPS: Prepare proposal for forming recreation authority to present to municipal boards.

The foregoing constitutes my understanding of matters discussed and conclusions reached. Please review and share your additions or corrections at our next group meeting on Wednesday December 17, 2003 at 4 pm, Lowell High School.

Respectfully submitted,
Al Halbeisen, P.E.
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