



GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

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Sustainability Committee
Monday, August 7, 2017
1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Rachell Nagorsen, Chair of the Committee, welcomed everyone and had all attendees introduce themselves.

Rachell Nagorsen - City of Walker

Carrie Rivette, P.E. – City of Grand Rapids

Elaine Isely – WMEAC

Jamie Vaughan – Trout Unlimited

Dennis Cole – Ottawa County WRC

John Koches – GVSU-AWRI

Rev. Nurya Love Parish – Plainsong Farm

Robert Pettit – ECT

Greg Madura – Alpine Township

Wendy Ogilvie - GVMC

2. Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Update

- a. Wendy provided an update on the status of the contract for the RCPP grant. GVMC is still waiting for the final signatures on the grant, but expects the grant to be all signed by early September.
- b. The portion of the RCPP for Habitat Restoration in the Grand River will be administered in conjunction with Grand Rapids Whitewater. Once the contract is signed, GVMC will prepare a Request for Proposals for developing a Watershed Project Plan, which is required before any work is completed. The practices will be implemented under the PL-566 program.
- c. The portion of the RCPP for agricultural conservation practices in the Indian Mill Creek & Rogue River Watersheds will be conducted with input from this Committee. Future Community/Farmer Outreach Meetings will be scheduled and members of this Committee will be called upon to help

engage the community. The practices will be implemented under EQIP, focusing on sediment reduction and habitat restoration BMPs. This Committee will help determine the criteria for ranking practices and in identifying eligible properties for practices to be implemented. Elaine mentioned that this project might be able to complement WMEAC's project funded through Wege for implementing green infrastructure in rural areas. Other practices that will be encouraged are forest management and pollinator habitats. Nurya suggested contacting West Michigan Growers Group for potential farmers that might be interested in signing up. Wendy will follow up.

3. Water Trail

- a. Wendy gave a summary of the Grand River Partnership Meeting that was held on June 26 to discuss the next steps in designating the grand River as a State Water Trail. The Partnership (LGROW, MGROW, and UGRWA) believes that the effort needs to move forward and not wait for the State to come up with their application. We could just self-designate as the Grand River water Trail. Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission has agreed to let us use the logo, which we will revise to not include the word "Heritage" and change color depending on the section of the river. That way the trail will seem to be a continuous and coordinated system, but still maintain some uniqueness of the areas.
- b. Elaine shared that WMEAC has received funding from Meijer for WMEAC staff to engage the communities along the river and gain support for the river trail. WMEAC will also be submitting an application to the Frey Foundation for this project.
- c. Wendy discussed the vision for the Grand River Water Trail and how it might be revised from the DNR Vision. Below is the suggested vision supported by the GR Partnership and the DNR vision. Wendy asked for feedback from the members on suggested changes.



Grand River Partnership's Vision: The Grand River Water Trail (GRWT) offers accessible, safe, and enjoyable recreational opportunities and paddling adventures for all, joining communities along Michigan's longest river from the headwaters to Lake Michigan. The GRWT is sustainably maintained by watershed partnerships to honor its ecological worth and connect individuals and families to the river's scenic, historic,

cultural, and economic resources. The GRWT promotes environmental stewardship, healthy lifestyles, water resource protection, and economic prosperity.

DNR's Vision: The goal of the water trail designation is to develop and maintain a locally supported, sustainable trail for the entire length of the river that offers a diversity of experiences, including lengths, scenery, heritage exploration, paddler challenges and amenities. The trail will be a catalyst for improved recreational opportunity, healthy lifestyles and local prosperity.

- d. The Committee members discussed the needs of Community Outreach and what the primary message needs to be to get to the public. Some of the comments were to include that access sites are usable for all levels of ability, the current water quality, and the safety rating of the river stretch. How this information would be communicated was also discussed, using websites, apps, google maps, and other social media.
4. Natural Connection GI Map Updates
 - a. Wendy indicated that no updates have been made to the maps, but funding through several recent grants might be able to be used to update certain watersheds with new green infrastructure features. This will be added to future agendas of this committee.
 5. Adjourn – Rachell adjourned the meeting and announced the next meeting:
October 2, 2017 @ GVMC 1:30-2:30