



**Sustainability Committee**  
**Monday, December 12, 2022**  
**1:30 PM – 2:30 PM**

## **Minutes**

1. Introductions
  - a. Attendees: Dan Taber, Rachell Nagorsen, Josh Arnold, Wendy Ogilvie, Senci Pace, Jared Harmon, Joel Betts, Carlos Calderon, Robert Cloy, Gerry Miller, Carrie Rivette
2. Sustainable Agriculture
  - a. Urban Farming
    - i. The City of Grand Rapids Urban Ag Committee meets quarterly. At the November meeting they discussed updating the zoning codes, enforcement codes, and permitting to promote urban agriculture. Some of the current regulations are too stringent, they are looking to soften them to encourage more urban agriculture practices. A memo was generated and sent to the cities executive staff. City Manager Mark Washington reviews the recommendations, and it is then sent to the City Commission after the new year. There are three new City Commissioners taking office this week.
    - ii. City of Muskegon reached out to learn more about the urban agriculture programs ‘nuts and bolts’, and how GR helps facilitate it. If there are any interested parties or government officials, reach out to this group. The goal is to have urban agriculture be permissible, legal, and functional for all.
    - iii. The USDA FSA’s new Urban Agriculture office will be in Grand Rapids. An Executive Director has not been hired yet. An Urban County Committee will be elected. Members must be registered with the FSA and located within the city of GR. There has been contact with local producers and partners to establish a large pool of community-based funding. Applications will be live in 2023. WMEAC and other partners are working on outreach and coordination to make more programs available for urban ag. producers. Urban Ag. was previously not eligible for most FSA programs due to size and scale of practices. The recently updated Farm Bill includes urban ag. language and support. Out of the 17 counties selected for this Urban Ag program, Grand Rapids is the least urbanized. Due to this, there will be a lot of coordination and adjustments to the program to be specific to GR. Hoping for a lot of local meetings and public input during the first year.
  - b. RCPP Projects
    - i. Final plan for the EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) was submitted. December 9<sup>th</sup> was the last day to apply. Have until June 2023 to obligate the rest of the money – mostly cover crops, brush mgmt., forest mgmt., etc. Getting the locations of the selected practices can help us determine if we need more water quality monitoring stations. Unfortunately, the RCPP renewal proposal was not awarded to GVMC. Ottawa Counties RCPP project is ongoing.

### 3. Sustainable Watershed Funding Initiative

#### a. [Final Report](#)

i. Final Report was published beginning of December 2022. Proposes a voluntary contribution on property taxes to go to local watershed work. Since taxes are county by county and watershed organizations cover more area than that, it needs framework on how to distribute the collected funds. Wendy will send out the final version.

#### b. Communications Team

i. Communication Team is needed to educate the public and promote the Sustainable Watershed Funding Initiative. Will be looking for consultants to find the right groups to lobby this proposal. If you want to join this communications team, inquire with Wendy.

### 4. Watershed Resilience Plan

a. EPA Equitable Resilience Building Tool workshops: LGROW hosted workshops in the Buck Creek, Indian Mill / Mill Creek, and Plaster Creek subwatersheds. These workshops were to collect diverse and valuable information on the issues present in each watershed. Highlights social justice and equity along with climate change. Based off the EPA and consultants workshop methods. End goal is to give action items for local governments, businesses, and individuals to do about emerging issues.

#### b. Additional subwatershed workshops

i. Rush Creek workshop is scheduled for 12/15/22

### 5. Lower Grand River Water Trail

#### a. [Final draft](#)

i. Access site information and locations are in detail and extremely useful. More details are needed for the next steps – how to make the official water trail.

#### b. State or national designation

i. National Designation- LGROW needs letters of support from all access sites to be included in the plan to be considered for designation.

### 6. 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Grand River Spring Forum: Mark Your Calendars!

a. Thursday 6/8– Kick-off event

b. Friday 6/9 – MS4 meeting, Grand Lady Cruise

c. Saturday 6/9 – Float trip

### 7. 2023 Meeting Schedule

a. March 20, 2023 @ 1:30 pm

b. June 19, 2023 @ 1:30 pm

c. September 16, 2023 @ 1:30 pm

d. December 11, 2023 @ 1:30 pm

### 8. Adjourn