

AGENDA & MINUTES

GRAND RIVER GREENWAY Advisory Committee

October 26, 2022
3:00 PM
29 Pearl Street NW (Downtown Grand Rapids Inc Offices)

1. Call to Order & Welcome (3:00)

Present: Kate Berens, Matt Chapman (virtual), Rob Hunter, Tim Kelly, Ryan Kilpatrick, Jim Meeks, Sam Moore, Wendy Ogilvie, Stephanie Ogren, Mark Rambo, Julius Suchy, Kara Wood

Absent: Salvador Lopez

Others Present: Andy Guy, Josh Spencer, Natalie Youakim (virtual)

2. Agenda Review (3:01)

3. Introductions (3:03)

4. Ground Rules (3:15)

Members accepted the proposed ground rules as presented.

5. Committee Governance & Administration (3:20)

Chairperson. Members agreed to preserve the option for revisiting the idea of a Chair and other Committee governance matters as needed.

Scheduling. Mr. Guy introduced the idea of establishing a regular meeting schedule and overviewed a proposed list of 6 meetings to initiate the committee's work. He also stated the river organizing work can be a fluid process as conversations, understanding and partnerships evolve. So the presented list of 6 meetings is not meant to be a rigid prescription for how the Committee does it work but rather an initial outline.

Members agreed calendaring meeting dates in advance – versus “Doodling” on a month-to-month basis – is preferred.

Guy outlined several potential meeting day/time windows that seemingly work/don't work for the group.

Members agreed a single Doodle that aims to identify numerous meeting dates in advance is preferred. Staff will execute.

Mr. Moore inquired if, given the urgency associated with certain funding sources (ARPA), and the readiness/importance of certain prospective projects, might the group be open to an accelerated meeting cadence ... ie perhaps weekly/biweekly vs. monthly.

Members expressed openness to the idea. Staff will prioritize scheduling as a next step.

6. Discussion Topic #1: Greenway Vision & History of Planning/Engagement (3:30)

Guy overviewed a brief history of the Grand River Greenway vision, related planning/engagement activities, as well as common themes that cut across the various efforts. See presentation slides.

7. Discussion Topic #2: Greenway Project Overview (4:00)

Josh briefly overviewed numerous greenway-related projects currently in some stage of development in communities across Kent County. See presentation slides and “Grand River Greenway” project catalogue attached.

8. Committee Member Discussion (4:30)

Item #7 concluded with two questions:

- What additional information do members need to further inform this Greenway Committee conversation?
- What do you feel are some basic criteria to help guide categorization/prioritization of Greenway projects?

What follows are general responses that flowed from dialogue among the members responding to the questions:

More Information

- What’s the timeline for implementation of each project. What’s within/beyond the scope of ARPA?
- What’s eligible for funding under the Greenway ARPA allocation?
- Who controls the property for individual projects? ie some on public land? Other potentially on private land?
- On multifaceted sites, can we isolate individual “project” elements and costs ie trail segment, park space, etc.
- What’s the ability of individual projects to access additional capital? ie some project sponsors could have more ready access to capital than others.
- What are the priority “Transformative” initiatives? How do we define/determine “Transformative”?
- Which projects truly meaningfully connect important places/asset together?
- Which projects present joint development potential, particularly the potential to catalyze private sector investment?

- What's the critical path to permitting for individual projects if necessary? ie close to river edge, running thru a wetland, relevant to flood protection, etc.
- What's the cost of the proposed over-river connections?
- Can ARPA funds support project planning, design, engineering, etc?

Potential Criteria Considerations (presented in no particular order)

- Funds raised to date (ie public, private, etc)
- Sustainability/O&M plan
- Potential to improve public safety
- Potential to fill critical/difficult trail gaps or help establish "backbone" trail that other communities/projects can tap in to
- Potential to drive tourism
- Potential to improve community health outcomes
- Positive impact on underserved communities (urban, suburban and rural)
- Potential to attract other funds / tap diverse funding sources
- Potential to catalyze other important projects
- Timeline for completion

9. Adjournment (5:00)

Guy adjourned the meeting at 5:00 PM