

Root River Trail Extension - Citizens Exploratory Committee

Meeting minutes.

Date: April 5, 2023

Location: La Crescent City Hall

1. Call To Order, Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Larry Kirch, City of La Crescent, Community Development Director.

Members Present: Joe Thesing – Houston, Hein Bloem - Houston, Jake Olson - Hokah, Larry Stryker – La Crescent, Dick Wieser – La Crescent County,

Members Absent: Jay Wheaton - Houston, Ben Horn – Houston County, Kevin Walther - Hokah

Others Present: Allison Wagner, Houston County EDA, Christina Peterson, La Crescent Resident,

2. March 8, 2023 Minutes - Acceptance

Larry Kirch asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes. There were no changes or corrections and the minutes were accepted by consensus.

3. Discussion Items -

a. Review Updated Task List/Milestones/Deliverables (aka Work Breakdown Structure)

Larry Kirch presented an updated draft (dated 3/28/2023) of a Work Breakdown Structure for this project that included a list of tasks, schedule, duration of task, level of effort in hours, resources to assist with the task, cost, a description of the deliverable, and the status of the progress on the task. As noted, many tasks have been completed including getting a webpage up and going on the La Crescent website, finalizing the fact sheet and updating the Work Breakdown Structure spreadsheet.

b. Review Revised RRT Extension Fact Sheet (DRAFT)

Larry K handed out and reviewed the updated fact sheet with the two additional items:

What is the Minnesota DOT funded Active Transportation planning project for Minnesota State Highway 16 between the Wagon Wheel Bridge and Miller's Corner?

Did Houston County receive funding for wider shoulders along Houston County Road 21 from State Highway 16 to Houston County Road 9?

c. Review Aerial Photos/Ownership – La Crescent to Houston

The committee reviewed the large-scale map of the Root River Valley that the county surveyor had provided. The aerial photos were based on the Schnieder Beacon maps with aerial photos and parcels outlined. The aerial did not show individual ownership. The county surveyor had also provided a set of “tiles” that broke up the corridor into smaller color ownership sheets. The committee spent about 45 minutes going over the ownership tiles along with having the Beacon website up on the city’s monitor. Also displayed was a page from the Minnesota DNR’s website that illustrates a map of the land that is under public ownership by the DNR or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The committee asked that a more detailed analysis be completed of ownership and Christina Peterson and Hein Bloom volunteered to work with Larry Kirch to create a list of parcels and ownership and an owner’s interest or dis-interest based on past discussions. Also discussed was the need to meet with the DNR and so that the committee could understand how land designations affect use. This also included land with easements such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) which is an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

4. Discuss Future Guest Speakers

It was suggested that Larry K reach out to the Minnesota DNR so as to learn about the various land designations and the allowed uses on those lands. It was hoped that this could be in July. Another speaker could be Tim Miller from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as well as the executive director of the Parks and Trails Council. Also, it was suggested that the committee contact Gary Larson so as to better understand the NRCS Easements that are on a few parcels.

5. Next Meeting – May 10 – Location TBD

The committee decided to cancel the May 10th meeting and instead have the next meeting on June 7th. The location is still TBD. The committee wanted to hear about the results of the MnDOT Hwy 16 Corridor Planning Study from the Wagon Wheel Bridge to Miller’s Corner (intersection of 16/26) as well as a more detailed breakdown of property ownership in the corridor.

6. Public Comment - none

7. Adjourn – the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Meeting minutes drafted by Larry Kirch, City of La Crescent, Community Development Director