

## Root River Trail Extension - Citizens Exploratory Committee

Meeting minutes.

Date: June 7, 2023

Location: Hokah Fire Department

### 1. Call To Order, Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. by Larry Kirch, City of La Crescent, Community Development Director.

Members Present: Jay Wheaton - Houston, Ben Horn – Houston County, Jake Olson - Hokah, Larry Stryker – La Crescent, Dick Wieser – La Crescent

Members Absent: Joe Thesing – Houston County, Kevin Walther – Hokah

Others Present: Allison Wagner, Houston County EDA

### 2. April 5, 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. Implications/Ramifications of recent contact with landowners in the corridor and next steps

The committee discussed recent contact with some property owners over the Memorial Day weekend. Some of the contact was not favorable. The committee's work was not to the point of meeting with individual private landowners. The committee felt that the group should continue its work to understand the land ownership in the corridor including state and federal ownership and allowable uses on state and federal land. This is a long-term project and the committee should work slowly to come up with a Trail Plan per the Memorandum of Agreement to Jointly Cooperate. Related to the corridor and land ownership, Larry K gave an update of the Mn Highway 16 Corridor Planning for bicycle/pedestrian users (Active Transportation) from the Wagon Wheel Bike-Ped Bridge to Miller's Corner. The MnDOT consultant has finished their work and the City of La Crescent will have another meeting of the project steering committee, meet with MnDOT engineering staff from MnDOT District 6 and conduct an additional public informational meeting. The study recommends that the city and MnDOT work with the railroad to place a facility between the highway and the RR tracks. Some of the highway exists within an easement from the RR. Larry K will set up a meeting with Jay Wheaton and Christina Peterson to work on the ownership listing for the aerial photos.

b. Committee membership

There will be two openings on the committee. Joe Thesing, appointed by Houston County has taken a new employment position out of the immediate area and let Larry K and Allison Wagner know that will be unable to continue on the committee after the July meeting. Hein Bloem, appointed by the City of Houston, has resigned from the committee and is notifying the City of Houston. The committee expressed appreciation for the work that Hein has done over the years in promoting the benefits of trails to local communities.

**4. Discuss Future Guest Speakers**

Larry K mentioned again that he would like to reach out to the Minnesota DNR in the near future to get a better understanding about the various land designations and the allowed uses on those lands owned by the DNR. 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.

**5. Next Meeting – July 19 – Location TBD**

Larry K let the committee know that he was volunteering for the Bike.Build.Home500 bicycle ride, benefiting affordable housing, which is going to travel from Onalaska through Wisconsin and Minnesota the week of July 12-16 and asked if the meeting could be moved to July 19<sup>th</sup>.

**6. Public Comment - none**

**7. Adjourn – the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.**

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