

Root River Trail Extension - Citizens Exploratory Committee

Meeting minutes.

Date: March 8, 2023

Location: La Crescent City Hall

1. Call To Order, Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m. by Larry Kirch, City of La Crescent, Community Development Director.

Members Present: Ben Horn – Houston County, Joe Thesing – Houston, Hein Bloem - Houston, Jay Wheaton - Houston, Jake Olson - Hokah, Larry Stryker – La Crescent, County,

Members Absent: Dick Wieser – La Crescent (excused), Kevin Walther - Hokah

Others Present:

2. January 11, 2023 Minutes - Acceptance

Larry Kirch asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes. Larry K noted that on page 2, “the work ceased” should be deleted as it was repeated in the 5th line of Item #4. There were no other changes or corrections and the minutes were accepted by consensus.

3. Planning Projects – Near the Trail

a. Update on MnDOT Active Transportation Program Corridor Plan – Wagon Wheel Bridge to Miller’s Corner (STH 16)

Larry Kirch updated the committee on the MnDOT Active Transportation Planning (STH 16 corridor from the new Wagon Wheel bridge landing to Miller’s Corner) corridor study. The corridor planning study continues with a planning committee and their most recent meeting was March 2nd. A third planning committee meeting as well as a public meeting and city council meetings are also to be scheduled in April and May. The project was to finish in March but is more likely to be May/June. The consultant was seeing input from the planning committee on the various alternatives and the pros/cons and issues/opportunities of each alternative. The final “plan” is actually a Powerpoint slide show that will be presented by the city staff to the public and council as the consultants work essentially ends after the next and final “planning committee” meeting on April 26th.

b. La Crescent Walnut Street Planning Study

The city approved a Professional Services Agreement with MSA Professional Services as they were the sole respondent to a Request for Proposals (RFP) that the city posted on the city website and a public procurement website. The planning study extends from South 3rd

Street north to the new hotel as includes South 1st Street where the Wagon Wheel Bridge Landing transitions to Walnut Street. The city is also working to create an area known as Overlook Plaza at the new bridge landing. The city's EDC will serve as the project committee for the project. The city/committee is beginning the project on April 5th with a kick-off and walk of the corridor from South 3rd Street to the new hotel site. The project should wrap up by November of this year and was funded through the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC). The Local Studies Program funds 80% of the \$27,000 study and the city will pay the local share.

4. La Crescent Organizational Memberships

- a. SMART, League of American Bicyclists, Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota – the City of La Crescent recently joined the Southeastern Minnesota Association of Regional Trails and the membership was \$25.00. Larry Kirch suggested that a membership may be something for each community to think about. The city also joined the League of American Bicyclists (LABA) (the oldest bicycle advocacy group in the U.S.) which cost \$50,00. The city has made an application to the LABA for a Bike Friendly Community designation and recently three local businesses became Bike Friendly Businesses. The city also joined the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota (\$150.00) and the city is now proximately listed on their website along with the Bike Shoppe. The Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota has numerous chapters throughout the state. The Executive Director has been an active participant in the MnDOT Hwy 16 Corridor Planning effort.
- b. City of La Crescent is currently member of the Parks and Trails Council of Mn – Larry Kirch verified that the city is a member of this group. The Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota did list the Wagon Wheel Trail on their website and actively assisted in securing funding for the WWT. This group is a 501 c3 and does work with local trail groups to see trail projects through to fruition.

5. Discuss Future Guest Speakers

Several speakers were suggested for future meetings including Tim Miller from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the executive director of the Parks and Trails Council. No timeline for requesting they speak to the committee was established.

6. Discussion Items –

- a. Review Draft RRT Extension Fact Sheet – Larry Kirch presented a draft of a Fact Sheet or Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Some minor corrections were suggested as well as the suggestion to add something about the MnDOT Hwy 16 Corridor Study to Miller's Corner as well as the state funded project to include bike lanes along Houston County Highway 21 from MnHWY 16 to the county line (intersects with Filmore County 9).
- b. Review Draft Task List/Milestones/Deliverables (aka Work Breakdown Structure) - Larry Kirch presented a draft 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. The group noted that people are asking them about this effort and therefore concurred that it was important to get the committee agendas, minutes, fact sheet, the MOA to Jointly Cooperate, current DNR trail plans on the City of La Crescent's website with links on each communities' website. Larry Kirch noted that the next most important task was to get the property owner information mapped out at a scale that the committee can use to look at corridor options.

7. Next Meeting – April 5 – The committee suggested to hold the meeting at the La Crescent City Hall Council Chambers in order to accommodate the La Crescent staff who were going to be involved in the Walnut Street kickoff and corridor walk most of the day on April 5th.
8. Public Comment – none
9. Adjourn – the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

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