



GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

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Sustainability Committee
Monday, April 3, 2017
1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions
 - i. Wendy Ogilvie, GVMC
 - ii. Carrie Rivette, Grand Rapids
 - iii. Elaine Sterrett Isely, WMEAC
 - iv. Jamie Vaughan, Trout Unlimited Rogue River
 - v. Rachell Nagorsen, Walker
 - vi. Russ Slater, County Ag Board, Citizen
 - vii. Dan Schoonmaker, WMSBF (on phone)
 - viii. Jerry Miller, Kent Conservation District
 - ix. Robert Pettit, ECT
 - x. Rachel Foerch, GVMC

2. Sustainable Agriculture
 - a. Wendy explained the USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program award to GVMC and how this committee would be involved with the process. The agricultural portion of the project covers Indian Mill Creek and the Rogue River Watersheds. For these watersheds, about \$2.8 million is available for landowners to install practices through EQIP, with a priority given to practices that help reduce erosion and sedimentation. The contract is still be negotiated with NRCS headquarters, but a July signing date is expected. The project would start August 2017 and end July 2022. Partners with a financial commitment to the agricultural portion of the RCPP include Alpine Township, City of Walker, ECT, Friends of Indian Mill Creek, Kent Conservation District, Kent County Drain Commissioner, Rogue River Watershed Partners, and Trout Unlimited. The remaining \$5.1 million is allocated through PL-566 for habitat restoration in the Grand River downtown Grand Rapids, as part of the Grand River Restoration project.
 - i. Rachell will send Wendy the map of the agricultural areas available for conservation practices within the City of Walker. Carrie indicated that only a small amount of land would be available within the City of Grand Rapids.
 - ii. Alpine Township is arranging a meeting with farmers for either April 17 or 24 to raise awareness of program and get farmers signed up for site visits.
 - iii. Current farmland preservation efforts will be connected to the RCPP.
 - iv. Jerry and other NRCS/KCD staff will attend the meeting to give specifics on EQIP program.
 - v. Wendy will schedule a meeting with Ben Greene, Plainfield Township Trustee, since he expressed interest in the program.
 - vi. TU will help with organizing wetland workshops once the RCPP is underway.

3. Natural Connections

- a. The Natural Connections Map shows the hubs and corridors of the watershed, but needs to be updated.
 - b. The MDNR is assisting the Grand River Partnership, comprised of LGROW, MGROW and the UGRWA, in securing municipal support to have the Grand River as a State Designated Water Trail. At the last meeting in Portland, the Mayor and City Manager expressed great interest and signed a resolution in support. Wendy has been working with other communities in the Lower Grand for similar resolutions. The Partnership is also looking for land conservation opportunities with access sites in riparian communities. The MDNR is developing a Water Trails Manual and identifying prioritized activities needed to prepare application for designation. Elaine discussed the completion of the report for Ottawa County and the funding they are pursuing to provide planning documents for the Water Trail in Kent and Ionia Counties. The next meeting is scheduled to be in Grand Ledge May 15, 16, or 17.
 - c. Russ presented a report, "The Sustainability Work of Ulster County, NY", that outlines some of the regional green infrastructure concepts and planning done for that area. The Committee then discussed the opportunities for the Lower Grand and how to relay this information to more of the rural communities in the watershed.
4. Single Source Project –
- a. Wendy explained the progress of the Single Source and its goal of creating a consistent layer of zoning classification throughout the region. A Committee has been formed from local planners who have created 10 zoning classifications to be used by all communities. This is just a mapping exercise to be able to see large, similar tracts of land within the region instead of having it in fragmented blocks by jurisdiction.
 - b. The final map will integrate transportation, land use, and environmental concerns. Potential uses are to demonstrate economic development opportunities, natural connections incorporating sustainability function (people, planet, profit) – regional GI, climate resiliency studies, and farmland preservation.
5. Adjourn
- a. Next meeting scheduled for June 5, 2017 @ GVMC 1:30-2:30