

GRAND VALLEY METRO COUNCIL

Board Meeting

November 6, 2008

8:30 a.m.

Kent County Building
Commissioners Chambers

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:37 a.m. by Chairman Jim Buck.

Members Present:

Dale Bergman	Sparta Township
Jim Buck	City of Grandville
Daryl Delabbio	Kent County
Randy DeBruine	City of Belding
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Brian Donovan	City of East Grand Rapids
Jason Eppler	City of Ionia
Tom Fehsenfeld	At-Large Member
Cindy Fox	Cascade Township
Don Hilton, Sr.	Gaines Township
Denny Hoemke	Algoma Township
Jim Holtrop	Ottawa County
Elias Lumpkins, Jr.	City of Grand Rapids
Robert May	City of Hastings
George Meek	Plainfield Township
Jim Miedema	Jamestown Township
Cy Moore	Treasurer
David Pasquale	City of Lowell
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
Carol Sheets	City of Wyoming
Ken Snow	City of Greenville
Al Vanderberg	Ottawa County
Bill VerHulst	City of Wyoming
Michael Young	City of Rockford

Members Absent:

Bonnie Blackledge	Cannon Township
Marta Brechting	Alpine Township
Sharon DeLange	Village of Sparta
Pat Capek	City of Cedar Springs
Brian Harrison	Caledonia Township

Doyle Hayes	At-Large Member
Kurt Kimball	City of Grand Rapids
Pauline Luben	City of Hudsonville
Mick McGraw	At-large Member
Roger Morgan	Kent County
Lon Myers	Village of Middleville
Audrey Nevins	Byron Township
Deborah Nier	City of Wayland
Steven Patrick	City of Coopersville
Chuck Porter	Courtland Township
Milt Rohwer	City of Grand Rapids
Rob VerHeulen	City of Walker

Others Present:

Jash'd Belcher	
Andy Bowman	Grand Valley Metro Council
Abed Itani	Grand Valley Metro Council
Dharmesh Jain	Grand Valley Metro Council
Dennis Kent	MDOT
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Marsha Small	MDOT
Jim Smalligan	FTCH
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Peter Varga	The Rapid

2. Public Comment

None

3. Approval of Minutes

MOTION – To Approve the Minutes of the October 2008 GVMC Board Meeting. MOVE – Hilton. SUPPORT – Meek. MOTION CARRIED.

4. GVMC Grant Application to Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for Storm Water Phase II Compliance Activities

Don Stypula explained a possible grant request for required MDEQ activities.

Jim Smalligan of FTCH reviewed the grant proposal. The grant would be requested to carry out required GVMC area watershed activities. Elicit discharge requirements will go into effect as of 2010. This grant will cover 75% of the cost and would move up the activities to 2009. The application deadline is November 17, 2008.

MOTION – For Don Stypula to Work with FTCH and LGROW to Apply for This Grant Funding. MOVE – Sheets. SUPPORT – Donovan. MOTION CARRIED.

5. Transportation Funding Task Force Report

Peter Varga of The Rapid discussed the report on Transportation Funding. The task force had very good participation. In Detroit this is a very serious issue. Michigan is in a crisis of infrastructure funding. Next year we will lose \$1 billion in federal transportation funding as we won't be able to come up with the required match. A large number of bridges are structurally deficient. Pavement has deteriorated to the point that it needs replacement, not repair.

The report came up with a variety of options. To bring everything back up to good condition, we will need to increase investment and raise revenues. For Michigan to be competitive, current conditions need to be greatly improved. The commission is releasing its report on Monday. Very courageous decisions need to be made. It is uncertain if this will move during the lame duck session.

6. Proposal to Establish GVMC Region-wide Dispute Mediation Service

Don Stypula explained the proposed dispute mediation service. It would be a funding mechanism for member dispute resolution. GVMC would work as a conduit for the funding. The service would be free of charge to members. If the GVMC Board gives its approval, Don Stypula will engage the West Michigan Dispute Resolution Service and formally approach area foundations for funding.

George Meek asked what the cost to GVMC would be.

Don Stypula answered there will be no cost. He will approach area foundations to get funding. We will not be asking for a specific dollar amount. A formal agreement is reached when two or members want to engage in the service, and contact GVMC. Don will then contact funders and work with several dispute resolution centers. He will then step away, and monitor the progress. It is expected to cost \$100 - \$150 per hour. Nothing in the agreement would prohibit the parties from litigating. Don has spoken to GVSU, some communities, and funders and there is interest.

George Meek asked if there would be guidelines on what type of issue would be heard.

Don Stypula stated yes, definitely.

George Meek asked which ones.

Don Stypula stated there would be a wide range, and he doesn't know which ones, but would work with the services to see if he can get a list of narrow issues.

Mike DeVries asked if there was any need for this service. Is there any pending issue?

Don Stypula stated no, but in the future, if the service is available it may be helpful. In talking to the business community and economic development communities there is great support for this.

Mike DeVries asked what would be the foundations' motivation to fund this service.

Don Stypula stated it would send a message to investors that we have a formal mechanism to resolve difficult disputes. They find great value in that. The funders I have spoken to have given me a thumbs up.

Carol Sheets stated there are times when the Grand Rapids Press blows up a situation that we could have handled more civilly. It would be worth its economic value.

Tom Fehsenfeld stated whatever service we use, they need to employ people who have experience handling multi-party situations. Public situations are much more difficult to handle.

Cy Moore stated that Don Stypula will be following up with the Executive Committee regarding funding and non-members.

Cindy Fox asked if foundations would really be interested in funding this when money is so tight and it could be used for more altruistic endeavors.

Don Stypula indicated he would work with the foundations to find that out.

MOTION – To Move Forward on the Dispute Resolution Service and For Don Stypula to Investigate Further. MOVE – Meek. SUPPORT – Fehsenfeld. MOTION CARRIED.

7. Update: Division Avenue – Bus Rapid Transit Fishers Station – Design Charrette

Don Stypula showed slides and explained the Fishers Station charrette for the bus rapid transit line. There are many undeveloped parcels crying out for redevelopment at 54th Street & Division Ave. The proposal is for mixed use, which would also be tied to a bike trail, with development along the bus stops. This is a vision of how it could look which may attract investors.

Andy Bowman thanked investors including the Frey Foundation, People And Land Grant, Wege Foundation, Steelcase foundation, and Grand Rapids Foundation.

Andy explained this charrette is the culmination of many activities GVMC has been involved over its history including form based code and commerce centers. Thanks to Jay Hoekstra who did most of the work.

Rick Root stated this is important because of what it means for the future and other communities. These things don't happen without planning. It is not just good for a few communities, but a launching pad for the whole region and reflects a new tomorrow.

Don Hilton stated he felt the bus rapid transit line was stopping a mile or two short. We need to be very cautious that this is not described as light rail. There will be no tearing up roads for light rail. We have been working on a lot of these elements in Gaines Township for a long time such as trails which will connect. This will benefit the entire area.

8. Other

Jim Buck stated the "Film Friendly Michigan" discussion would be postponed until a later date.

The January GVMC Board Meeting will be moved to January 12, 2008 at the Prince Center.

9. Legislative Advocacy

Rick Root indicated the next Legislative Committee meeting would be November 12. The Legislative Breakfast will be December 15, at the Prince Center and will include newly elected officials.

10. Other

11. Adjournment – 10:00 a.m.

MOTION – To Adjourn. MOVE – Meek. SUPPORT – Delabbio. MOTION CARRIED.