

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

May 14, 2008

8:30 a.m.

GVMC Offices
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

MINUTES

1. Call To Order

2. Roll Call

Present:

Haris Alibasic	City of Grand Rapids
Jim Buck	City of Grandville
Rick Chapla	The Right Place
Steve Chester	MDEQ
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Don Hilton	Gaines Township
Denny Hoemke	Algoma Township
Andy Johnston	Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council

3. Call to Order

Chair Rick Root called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

4. Approval of Minutes from April, 2008

The minutes of the GVMC April, 2008, Legislative Committee meeting were accepted into record.

5. Steve Chester Special Presentation on Environmental Bond

Steve Chester, Director of MDEQ, reviewed the history and success of the current

environmental bond which is about to expire. Michigan is known for having the best brownfield program in the nation. It changed the liability to causation. Unfortunately it has resulted in orphan sites. 1988 & 98 bonds addressed this partially. Current funding has been exhausted. Thousands of sites are left without funding to pay for the cleanup. The 1988 & 98 bonds were overwhelmingly supported by the public and created many jobs. \$820 million of the bond is for brownfields and \$390 million is for protection and restoration of the Great Lakes. There are 14 areas of concern under Michigan jurisdiction. Money needs to be raised for local match.

In order for the bond to pass 2/3 of the legislature has to be convinced by June to put it on the ballot. Most of the business community supports it. MML supports. Michigan Manufacturers expressed reluctance as has environmentalists. The Michigan Chamber is not yet ready to support. GVMC's support is needed to send a message to legislators.

Haris Alibasic reported the City of Grand Rapids strongly supports this as it has used the brownfield program very successfully.

Andy Johnston stated the Chamber's members have concerns that new debt will be created as well as questions regarding oversight.

Steve Chester has been told MAC supports the proposal, MTA's position is unknown. He is drafting a letter to the Detroit Chamber which expresses the DEQ's intent to work with business. He will cc the various other organizations on the letter.

Rick Root asked if the committee is being asked for a resolution.

Don Stypula indicated the GVMC Board needs to express their intent first and then he will work with SEMCOG.

Don Stypula will forward a copy of Muskegon's resolution of support, as well as contact MTA and MML on the issue.

Rick Chapla reported they have been very aggressive in using the brownfield program and never viewed it as purely environmental; it is definitely an economic development tool.

Don Hilton asked if the farmland preservation portion of the program would provide funding over a 10 year period or immediately.

Steve Chester indicated he didn't know as the Department of Agriculture will administer the program, but he will check.

6. SB 1249 Storm Water Utilities

Don Stypula reported SB1249 was worded so it can go straight to the Supreme Court. It indicates a parcel by parcel analysis must be done to determine how much storm water runoff is coming for each one. In REGIS, Dr. Jain has worked in Las Vegas to develop a tool to do this via GIS with just a couple of clicks.

He asks for consensus to continue working on this and take it to the Board.

Haris Alibasic reported the City of Grand Rapids is very supportive of this bill. Under this bill, storm water utility would be optional for municipalities and not mandatory.

Don Stypula will bring a resolution next month and will indicate to Senator Birkholz GVMC will likely support it.

Mike DeVries would like an executive summary on both the bond and storm water issues sent to everyone to share with their Boards.

Don Stypula indicated he will forward those.

7. Other

Annexation

Mike DeVries reported there was a new annexation bill. Kuipers and Jansen voted against it. We need to get a letter to those two discussing our support. This follows the position we have already taken on annexation. The MML supports the Senate bill.

Don should copy everyone on this.

Haris Alibasic expressed concerns about the Senate Bill SB 1078 and wanted to discuss the GVMC letter with the City's Legislative committee.

Don Stypula indicated he would do this and copy all.

Other

Mike DeVries stated GVMC should remain consistent. If we say we support the bond proposal, we need to acknowledge it would result in additional debt.

Don Hilton added that maybe all the pieces included in the proposal don't need to be in the bond bill.

Mike DeVries indicated because of lack of time, the legislative priorities should be tabled until next meeting.

Don should also communicate to all candidates GVMC's priorities and copy GVMC members on the letter.

8. Adjourn – 10:00.