

**GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**January 14, 2009**

**8:30 a.m.**

GVMC Offices  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

**MINUTES**

**1. Call To Order**

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

**2. Roll Call**

Present:

Haris Alibasic	City of Grand Rapids
Jerry Alkema	Allendale Township
Alex Arends	Alpine Township
Sam Bolt	City of Wyoming
Jim Buck	City of Grandville
Jim Day	Kent County
Sharon De Lange	Village of Sparta
Denny Hoemke	Algoma Township
Abed Itani	Grand Valley Metro Council
Andy Johnston	Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Jim LaPeer	Cannon Township
Dale Mohr	Georgetown Township
Rick Root	City of Kentwood
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council
Keith Van Beek	Ottawa County

**3. Approval of Minutes from November, 2008**

**MOTION – To Accept the Minutes of the November 2008, GVMC Legislative Committee meeting into record. MOVE – Buck. SUPPORT – Hoemke.  
MOTION CARRIED.**

#### **4. Review of Legislative Breakfast**

Rick Root asked the committee for their input on the December Legislative Breakfast. What worked; what should be added and what should be done differently.

Don Stypula reported Rep. Dave Hildenbrand suggested the breakfasts be moved around to various city or township halls throughout GVMC's membership territory.

Rick Root stated the Prince Center works well as it is centrally located and neutral territory. Should it be moved to more suburban locations?

Jim Buck reported at the Board meeting, Carol Sheets suggested the breakfasts be held at least twice per year.

Rick Root added that was a great idea, and the timing of the breakfast would help determine its success.

Don Stypula reported we would have to work around legislative spring break; summer break; hunting and Thanksgiving break and Christmas break. The best day of the week to hold an event is on Monday.

Rick Root asked if we want to continue to use the same format where GVMC determines its issues, and uses the breakfast as a forum of educating the legislators; or if we should give the legislators a chance to talk about what they want.

Jim LaPeer stated he thought we should be topic specific so we both have time to prepare.

Rick Root asked if we are topic specific, would we send out the topics ahead of time and give everyone a chance to speak on the issue.

Jim Buck stated he feels the format we currently use is better than giving all legislators the floor and letting them speak as the first few people basically say everything there is to say, and the last few are left to just reiterate what has already been said. Our current format is much more affective.

Don Stypula asked if the committee would consider holding an event in Lansing. We could get a room at the MML building and share costs with the MML and MTA. It would require all of us to drive to Lansing. We should also include the legislative staffs. We would be coming to their territory. You would ask in advance to see if you could get on the floor with your legislator. It tells them we feel strongly enough about our issues. We could also set up individual meetings with our legislators.

They like visitors and roll out the red carpet for them. Is there any interest in this?

Rick Root stated being seen at their offices has some value, but I have a fear that many of us won't be able to be there. There needs to be enough participation.

Jim LaPeer stated he would be interested. He would like to see how things work.

Rick Root stated if the committee was in agreement, we will take it to the GVMC Board.

Elias Lumpkins asked how we could tie this in with the legislative staff.

Don Stypula reported he will make the first call and ask them to sit down with us and staff individually. You should also make an effort to meet with your individual representative in their office. If I get an O.K. from GVMC Executive committee and Board, I will pursue dates for the event. I talked with Arnold Weinfeld of the MML yesterday and asked him if we could use their room and he said certainly.

Rick Root said lets develop the idea and see what happens.

Sam Bolt asked if a luncheon would work better than a breakfast.

Alex Arends asked if we could get a bus so everyone could ride together.

Rick Root stated that could be a possibility.

Don Stypula said depending on what the Board says, he will go forward with making arrangements. He asked Haris Alibasic and Keith Van Beek if they could check with their legislative contacts to get some advice on timing of the event.

Keith Van Beek said he feels it is a show of goodwill to meet on the legislators' territory.

Rick Root reported relationships he has developed with legislators from other districts have proven very valuable.

## **5. City of Wyoming Request**

Don Stypula asked Sam Bolt to report on the City of Wyoming's request for help regarding the General Motor's 35<sup>th</sup> Street plant.

Sam Bolt reported as long as there is money out there for the automaker bailout and stimulus package, they would like to use it for redevelopment, not only of the 36<sup>th</sup> Street property, but also related companies which will be affected. GM claims they are not closing the 36<sup>th</sup> Street plant, but rather ceasing production.

Haris Alibasic asked how this situation would relate to the bail-out and stimulus packages and how can it be included.

Don Stypula explained the idea is to facilitate quick access to these locations by the local communities so they can help with redevelopment. It affects a lot of areas. A communication on behalf of GVMC to our US Senators and Representatives, with copies to the Governor and state legislators is what we are looking for. We would like an opportunity to include in the stimulus package money for redevelopment of these areas. Maybe it could be a modification of the Detroit 3 bail-out. It would force them to allow access to the location and an opportunity to market it for redevelopment.

Sam Bolt reported the document included in the agenda packet was sent on December 1, 2008.

Denny Hoemke stated the letter should be rewritten.

Rick Root stated closed facilities and quickly become shovel ready locations. Numerous locations around the area could be involved.

Don Stypula added there is a toxic substance issue also. We would be asking for funding in the stimulus package for communities to address environmental issues.

Sam Bolt reported Wyoming is working with a coalition on this.

Haris Alibasic stated at this time we really can't affect the bail-out package. But could work to include redevelopment in the stimulus package. We could also work through MMAC and the Obama transition team.

Don Stypula asked for approval from the committee to work on this issue and work with the coalition.

**MOTION – To Authorize the GVMC Executive Director to Work on the Redevelopment Issue and Create a Draft Document. MOVE – DeLange. SUPPORT – Hoemke. MOTION CARRIED.**

## **6. Update on Federal Stimulus Package**

Don Stypula asked Abed Itani for his thoughts on the stimulus package.

Abed Itani reported the MPO has a good process in place that looks at needs. To date, we have a list of about 100 projects. The Federal Highway Administration doesn't even know how the process will work. We think it will go through the MPO process. Others would like it to go directly to communities. The administration is demanding accountability, which can be done through the MPO process. Projects on

the TIP already have funding. The remaining projects are eligible for the stimulus package. Everything must move very fast. We don't know what the size will be for sure. We have heard ½ - 1 billion per year for two years per state. That would be 15 – 20 million per year for our area. The process would determine what will be funded. Any projects already obligated cannot be used.

Abed Itani added the focus will be on ready to go projects. The second year there will be time to go through a thorough process

Haris Alibasic added he believes the projects included in the stimulus package must be completed by 2010.

Denny Hoemke stated he didn't know if any of these funds would flow down to the township level. It doesn't seem like it. There isn't a mechanism in place to include them. Only through the county road commission.

Abed Itani stated some township projects are on the list. It is not too late to contact the road commission and have your projects added.

Rick Root reiterated there still may be time to get your projects on the list.

Don Stypula stated the stimulus package will also include projects to make government buildings more energy efficient.

Rick Root reported they have been told to include LED certification on any renovations or upgrades so they might qualify for the stimulus.

## **7. Transportation Funding**

Don Stypula reported there was nothing new and nothing was moving.

## **8. Other**

Haris Alibasic reported House Resolution III regarding super caps died when 2008 ended, but may be reintroduced as House Resolution Q.

Don Stypula stated later today new ergonomic standards were to be released which could cause a lot of headaches from business.

## **9. Adjourn – 10:00**