

# MEETING 2 MINUTES

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PROJECT: TRAIL PLANNING PROJECT  
DATE OF MEETING: FEBRUARY 8, 2017  
SUBJECT: MEETING 2

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On Wednesday February 8, 2017, trail stakeholders and partners met at Plainwell City Hall at 2pm to discuss the development of a trail that will connect the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail with the Kent County Trails system and eventually to the Grand River Greenway Trail. Below are the minutes from that meeting.

1. Get to know you question & introductions: Did you get a chance to check out the GIS website?
  - About 30-50% of the group did some investigating into the GIS website.
  - It was discussed how notes were added to show conflicts with certain routes. The conflicts pointed out are from a structural point of view, i.e., locations where bridges would need to be installed, locations where the path runs through wetlands, etc.
  
2. Project Branding Discussion
  - Discussion of what to call this project. The project may not necessarily follow the interurban line so “Interurban Trail” may not be the most appropriate name for the project.
  - We talked about how the name of group does not need to be the same as the name of the trail, we would like to get a name for the planning effort as soon as possible so that we can begin to build the website and blurbs.
    - i. Possible planning effort names that were suggested:
      - Maybe keep it Interurban for now until we receive grants/private donors
      - River to River (Kalamazoo River to Grand River) – This received a lot of positive feedback
  - The idea of integrating the trail naming process within the public input meetings to gain feedback was discussed.
    - i. This idea received good feedback
    - ii. Public naming contest was brought up. It would be similar to a contest a zoo threw for the naming of a baby elephant 40 years ago. It would be a way to get school and the public involved.
    - iii. Possible trail names that were suggested:
      - Kalamazoo-Grand Valley Trail
      - West Michigan Trail
      - Kal-Rapids
  - We discussed whether the group would like a planning effort logo
    - i. The logo can help with referencing the project, it can make it easier for the group to gain a domain name
    - ii. The Conesus from the group was “yes, we should have a logo”
    - iii. Logos will be developed for the planning effort with the name “River to River”
  
3. Public Meeting Rough Dates & Locations Discussion
  - 6 months, 4 meetings, set for April – September
  - Discussed setting linear locations, times, dates and target audience
  - Location & Date Ideas:
    - Cooper Township in May
    - Byron Township in July
    - Wayland in August
    - Allegan County Fair in September
  - The target audience at each of these meeting would be people in the surrounding communities. Each community leader in the meeting location would oversee reaching out to their constituents.

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- Discussed setting out a sign-up sheet at our March stakeholders meeting so that we could all sign up volunteer at the various public meetings
  - Idea was brought up to install trail head signs. These signs would be placed at the D Ave trailhead in Kalamazoo and the M-6 trailhead in Grand Rapids. The signs would say something like “Would you like to continue this trail?” and would information about dates and locations of public input meetings as well as pictures.
4. Public Meeting Format Discussion
- There will be interactive stations
  - There will be welcome stations that will include a sign-in sheet with instructions as well as a display board with purpose and goals of planning project
  - There will be large roll out maps that will allow the public to mark challenges, opportunities and destinations with sticker dots.
  - Are there any other ideas of what you would like to see on the maps and/or questions you would like to answered?
    - “How would you use the trail and where”
    - “My favorite place” vs. “Positive aspect”
      - Idea is that people will not be constrained to answering the question in reference to areas near the trail, they may list places like a splash pad, a brewery or a library that are not necessarily immediately connected to the trail.
    - A place where the public can donate funds and/or time with/to the group
      - This will be set up through the website
5. Project Website Discussion
- The project website will be up in March
  - Ideally the website will be handed off to a “friends of the trail group” when the planning project is complete.
  - The website will host an interactive mapping feature that will match the layout of the maps for the public meetings
  - Is there any other content that you would like to see on the website?
    - Graphic showing funds collected for the trail
    - “How Can I Help?” link. Maybe this holds the PayPal account, volunteer opportunities, etc.
  - The website will have a Survey Monkey link; what would you like to include in the survey?
    - Simple questions and trail name ideas
6. Trail Authority Discussion
- Handout was distributed with of information about Authorities
  - We can have other communities come in and discuss Authorities in more depth if the group is interested.
  - It was discussed that the tribe cannot join the authority but they can be a donor
  - We basically just need to know if the group is interested. Go back and talk with your continuants and let the group know what you think and/or any questions you have.
7. Trail Routes Pros and Cons Discussion
- US-131 under and overpass work is unlikely to be approved, however it does not cost anything to be in the right-of-way.
  - Bike trail running right next to US-131 sounds icky. It was noted that we can look at the existing trail running along M-6 for a reference of scale.
  - US-131 route is a good option if it is our only option but it’s not ideal because it does not go provide quiet areas, retail areas, etc. Also, it is not appealing for a leisure activity / ride.
  - How will the trail get across 100<sup>th</sup> street? Will the trail need run along US-131 at that point? Would we install an overpass across the highway? Interest in the idea of combining the 3 existing corridors.
  - Not liking the idea of riding the US-131 route.
  - Tribe supports the project. They own all the property from GLC to city limits (Reno Drive). They are interested in installing a trail spur and/or portion of the trail route

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- At Reno Drive and 133<sup>rd</sup> St on the Interurban trail route, the property owner south of Wayland said he is not interested in a trail running through his property. He has a lease with Consumers. Quite a few property owners have lease agreements with Consumers
- Reviewed pictures in Kalamazoo at D avenue looking North which show consumers prop vs. actual old Interurban trail.
- Okay with a small section of the route being along route 1 (US-131)
- Feels like the cheapest option will be route 3 (Interurban) from a constructability standpoint
- In the City of Wyoming, there is a paved section of the interurban trail currently.
- Off road trail option is our high focus/first choice whenever possible.
- User group is more than just bikers, because of this we should try to minimize amount of trail that goes on roadways so that the trail feels comfortable enough for every user group to use.
- Not everyone is going to go the whole route. People will be use little pieces, some will never use the whole trail.
- Would like safe, good looking, user friendly, quality trail. Trail along US-131 does not provide this. You would be reducing the number of users drastically.
- Entrance points to trail would be reduced with the US-131 route.

List of attendees:

Jennifer Antel

Ray Antel

Anne Armstrong Cusack

Megan Arndt

Larry Brown

Suzannah Deneau

Maxwell Dillivan

Laura Fredrickson

Brandy Gildea

Jim Goodknecht

Tom Hooker

David Jirousek

Dennis Kent

Ron Kopka

Donald Lowell

Tim McLean

Michael Mencarini

Kati Santee

Debbie Sewers

Denise Siegel

Denise Smith

Jeff Sorensen

Larry Stehouwer

Paul Wells

Erik Wilson

Any corrections or additions, please forward them to me. If you didn't check your name off of the sign-in sheet and we missed you, please let me know. Thank you.

Suzannah Deneau, [sdeneau@wightman-assoc.com](mailto:sdeneau@wightman-assoc.com)