

Lower Grand River Watershed Sustainability Subcommittee March 6th Meeting Notes

Date: March 6, 2002

Location: Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc. (FTC&H) Office Building, 1515 Arboretum Drive, Grand Rapids (off Cascade Rd, just south of Spalding Rd. See attached map)

Time: 1:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Those Present: Brian Donovan, Jim Oosting, Kristine Huizen, Jane Secord, Lori Larsen, John Hardy, Jason Buck, Wendy Ogilvie, Janice Tompkins

Input via e-mail: Corky Overmeyer

Sustainability Subcommittee Draft Goals

Goal 1: The Sustainability Subcommittee will maintain project momentum and develop strategies to make the Lower Grand River Watershed Management Plan an essential document for the protection and preservation of water resources in the watershed.

Goal 2: The Sustainability Subcommittee will develop a collaborative framework for the improvements and preservation of the quality of the Grand River Watershed's resources to continue. Actions that decision makers use to institutionalize watershed management principles that will be integrated into their standard operating procedures.

Goals 3: The sustainability Subcommittee will integrate watershed management goals into GVMC's programs for ongoing committee structure and long-term stability of watershed improvement efforts.

Purpose of this Meeting:

1) Build a team atmosphere, 2) Develop a draft vision statement, 3) Develop a draft mission statement, 4) Outline the watershed management system, 5) Develop draft short term goals, 6) Evaluation of meeting

1. Developed Ground Rules for Working Together:

- a. Allow people to finish their thought (Don't interrupt)
- b. Be respectful of all ideas
- c. No idea is stupid
- d. Equal participation
- e. Confidentially (This is difficult since these are public meetings. However, would be sensitive how what was discussed would be reported in the meeting notes.)
- f. Keep it simple (KIS)
- g. Okay to disagree
- h. Stay on Point

2. Vision and Mission Statement

There was much discussion and difference of opinion as to what should be in a vision statement. It was suggested that we have a time period for the strategic plan such as 5 yrs. This would prevent the committee from trying to do more than it can. Keep the task for developing a strategic plan doable. There was agreement that the focus of the vision statement should be on high quality water resources and an involved, invested, educated constituency. The subcommittee decided to go on for now and revisit the vision after it looked at some of the details.

The following is the draft vision and mission statement submitted by Corky Overmeyer via e-mail.

Draft Vision Statement: “The Lower Grand River Watershed Initiative will provide and advocate for state-of- art principles, policies, and practices that protect, preserve, and restore natural and man-made features in the watershed system supporting the highest quality of life for all citizens and visitors in the West Michigan area.”

Draft Mission Statement: “The Lower Grand River Initiative will provide information and support to diverse groups of people for the specific purpose of raising public awareness and educating citizens about sustainable living, planning, and development standards and principles that protect, preserve, and restore natural and man-made features in the watershed system that ultimately impacts the precious fresh water found in Lake Michigan.”

3. Outcomes

- a) Meets or Exceed the State Designated Use standards (recreation: boating, fishing, habitat quality)
- b) Meets or exceeds the State’s Water Quality Standards
- c) Effective Outreach Efforts
- d) Planning and Development Tools Developed and Implemented in the Watershed

4. Maze Game

The subcommittee felt the maze game was both fun and educational. The game provided a better understanding of how our assumptions and beliefs may impact working together. (I am not going to write more in case others have an opportunity to do it.)

5. Key Definitions

Sustainability includes the following: 1) Diverse income, 2) active participation, 3) high interest.

High water quality will mean the water resources meeting or exceeding their designated uses. (The designated uses as defined by the state are 1) agricultural, 2) industrial water supply, 3) fisheries (warm/cold water), 4) public water supply, 5) navigation, 6) partial body contact (Nov –April)/ total body contact (May – October), 7) recreation, 8) Other indigenous aquatic life and wildlife.)

6. Big Picture (System)

(See attachment: I also added two components to the diagram for the subcommittee consideration.)

7. Data Management

Assets

- a) Technology Advances
- b) Demand for the information (desire to know)
- c) Lots of group gathering data (enthusiasm)
- d) Economics

Challenges

- a) Determining what data is necessary (prevent taking excessive or meaningless data),

- b) Removing bias from the method of collection and interpretation (Prevent collectors with a personal motive)
- c) Proper training
- d) Develop well defined procedures and quality assurance protocol
- e) Consistency in data points
- f) Universal Access versus those who paid to develop it
- g) Fragmented
- h) No uniformity
- i) Gaps in information
- j) No communication system among the data collectors and users
- k) Bottlenecks in rules and regulations
- l) No central location
- m) Inefficient networking
- n) Territorialism

8. Funding

Assets

- a) Community /Region that shares and gives
- b) Population that supports funding for environmental issues
- c) Sense of ownership/funding

Challenges

- a) Not easy to match right funding source to right project
- b) Lack of clearing house
- c) budget crisis
- d) Not knowing what is available
- e) Up front costs to get funding
- f) Lack of knowledge in grant writing
- g) Stiff competition for limited dollars
- h) Government grants are cumbersome
- i) Lack of good plans
- j) Lack of leadership and organizational management skills among the watershed groups
- k) Lack of consistent funding
- l) Lack of connecting resources and needs
- m) Lack of good communication tools by the funders (ambiguous guidelines or not updated information.
- l) Lack of incentives

9. Evaluation of Meeting

What Was Good?

- a) Maze Game : 1) merit due to highlighting the importance of connection,
2) The design of the game allowed reaching out to others we don't know.
3) Kept it simple
- b) Good participation by everyone
- c) Liked the meeting being a ½ day

- d) Food was great
- e) Rooms were very nice

What Could Be Improved?

- a) Limit the time on the strategic plan to 5 yrs
- b) Provide examples of other watersheds strategic plans
- c) Models *
- d) other resources *

* I don't remember the context. Would someone remind me?

10. Assignments:

Jason, Wendy and Janice will look for other examples of watershed strategic plans.
Janice will send out agenda by April 10th. Subcommittee members are to review draft meeting notes and send Janice any comments that they may have.

11. Next Meeting Date: April 24th at FTCH from 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM