

Environment and River Gorge Committee
Longfellow Community Council
(Draft) Monthly Meeting Minutes

Date: October 5, 2022 |7:00 PM –8:00 PM

Present: Ian Young (Co-Chair), Wanja Kuria (LCC Staff), Christine Marlo-Triemstra, Carolyn Carr, Dan Schultz, Reed

Recorder: Wanja Kuria

Agenda Item

Notes/Comments

(River Gorge Festival recap and feedback, Park Dedication Survey recap and feedback, Lock & Dam Army Corp update, future committee work)

Discussion

Mission, Etiquette, and Minutes

Led by: Ian Young

Motion: Approve Agenda

Motioned by: Christina
Seconded by: Wanja

Note: No official September minutes were taken as the meeting was a partial social, partial River Gorge clean-up; No August minutes to approve due to absence of a quorum.

Approved without objection

Discussion: River Gorge Festival Recap

Event was successful and lots of fun. Logistics (event planning document) available in the River Gorge Festival folder in shared Drive. About 300-350 people came out with about that number of dilly bars

There hasn't been consistent documentation from previous years so it's a little hard to track changes in programming and the results/outcomes. Carolyn suspects some of the programming this year was different perhaps. Dan advised there was live music but no one is sure if we asked for tips or where the donation jar was displayed. Something to consider for next year.

Carolyn advised the committee should consider whether we want to make/keep restoration the focus of this event (e.g. focus on oak savannah tours, and FMR land flats restoration, kid-friendly arborators activities in lawn area, etc.) or adapt our focus elsewhere. We can always host oak savannah tours independent from the event. In years past gorge leaders led the tours but Carolyn did them this year as we didn't know if we'd have gorge leaders available on a Sunday.

If we're only doing a few activities and the primary objective is paddling, the top of the staircase is the way to go. The event used to be 2 hours long with the tour as the focus but over time, we've increased programming to include rowing and canoeing, along with the tour.

Another issue was the flow. We used to have the LCC table stationed at the top of the stairs where people would be required to pick up a ticket in order to take a canoe ride. Allowed us to tally the number of participants and made walking distance shorter. Do we want the LCC table at the top of the stairs next year or at the same spot?

Ian advised some people were unable to make it to the canoe rides because the walk was too far. Mobility challenges should be an important consideration for next year

Carolyn will email Wanja a 2019 River Gorge Festival draft plan to look over.

Discussion: Park
Dedication Survey Recap

Survey was closed and the results passed to the park board along with recommendations. Ian and Dan worked on the analysis and interpretation. They had to submit those results quickly and thus were unable to get input from all committee members on interpretation and recommendations.

Christina noticed Cooper has least funding but most engagement on the survey. Not sure what it means but wanted to note that.

Multiple people expressed interest in an initial update so as to consider whether the committee wants to be involved in the advocacy or to leave everything to the park board. This is the most involved the committee has been on something like this and it took a considerable amount of time to provide the analysis and interpretation. Want to make sure it's worth the time and effort.

Dan to follow up with Siciid about any updates/progress, whether committee's input will be incorporated, and an estimated timeline

Discussion: FMR Lock &
Dam Army Corp Update

The Army Corps will study the possibility of removal for Lower St. Anthony Falls lock and dam, and Lock and Dam 1, or the Ford dam. Their study on the Upper St. Anthony Falls lock has a different timeline and scope. Read FMR's update [here](#)

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Carolyn advised that Becketwood has been really involved and she will get a contact for us to follow up with.

Lots of interest in attending the upcoming public forums to hear more and potentially formulate a position as a committee.

- Tuesday, October 11, from 6-8 p.m. at Highland Middle School, 975 Snelling Avenue S, St. Paul, MN 55116
- Tuesday, October 25, from 6-8 p.m. at Dowling Elementary School, 3900 West River Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55406
- Friday, October 14, from 2-6 p.m., Lock and Dam 1, 5000 West River Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55417
- Saturday, October 15, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Lock and Dam 1, 5000 West River Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55417

Wanja advised she will confirm whether we're able to post those public forum dates on LCC's website and follow up.

Discussion: Interest in any Winter/Spring initiatives?

Ian: Now that our two largest projects are wrapped for the year, any other agenda items, interests in other projects, want to take a break, etc?

Folks expressed some interest in Winter Talks at the church by the river (St. Peder's?) as people aren't traveling as often during winter, but no one expressed interest in taking the lead. Reed expressed some concerns about COVID and the ways in which indoor gatherings may affect turnout/participation. If there's enough interest and someone wants to take the lead, we can play it by ear.

Some folks expressed an interest in hearing about Sophie's work in greater detail at one of these Winter Talks.

Others expressed interest in hearing about the University of Minnesota's Monarch butterfly preservation efforts.

Caroline expressed interest in having Thea Evans come back to speak about her work related to leaf nesting.

Ian suggested we can always revisit this idea for Spring and make it outdoors if it's warm enough or indoors if it's too cold but COVID numbers aren't bad.

Meeting adjourned

Summary of Meeting and Committee Work: *(The Environment and River Gorge (ERG) committee works to create environmentally focused programs, projects and events that help advance the greening of Greater Longfellow. By promoting and protecting the Mississippi River Gorge, we ensure its longevity.)*