

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Regional Environmental Planning Agency

Tuesday, November 30, 2004
10:00 AM

Kent County Road Commission
Grand Rapids, MI

Minutes

1. Call to Order:

Chair John Koches called the Regional Environmental Planning Agency to order at 10:00 AM. The following committee members were present:

Members Present:

Ray Bruggink	At-Large
Paul Geerlings	Ottawa County Drain Commissioner
Bob Homan	Plainfield Township
Curt Kempainen	Kent County, Public Works
John Koches	GVSU – Annis Water Resources Institute
Ken Krombeen	City of Grandville, City Manager
Roger Laninga	Kent County Drain Commission
Robb Meeuwsen	Zeeland Farm Services
Corky Overmyer	City of Grand Rapids – EPSD
Joe Stapf	City of Wyoming, Public Utilities
Janice Tompkins	MDEQ, Surface Water Quality Division
Ken Zarzecki	Ottawa County Road Commission

Members Absent:

Aaron Bodbyl-Mast	Ottawa County Planning & Grants
George Haga	Utility Advisory Board/Ada Township
Dale Kraker	Eastbrook Homes

Others Present:

Andy Bowman	Grand Valley Metro Council
Priscilla Martin	Grand Valley Metro Council
Jim Smalligan	Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr, & Huber
Don Stypula	Grand Valley Metro Council

2. Minutes:

MOTION by Bruggink, **SUPPORTED** by Laninga, to approve the minutes for August 24, 2004. **MOTION CARRIED.**

3. Staff Updates:

A. FEMA Grant – Roger Laninga

- Laninga stated that Kent County received a \$259,000 grant which will allow them to reestablish floodplain elevations for approximately 25 miles of county drains and creeks.
- The last time this was updated was in the 1960's.
- Ottawa and Eaton counties also received grants

B. NPDES Phase II – Jim Smalligan

- Submitted annual reports in October
- Entering final phase
- Participating communities will be submitting pollution stormwater initiatives

C. Lower Grand Watershed Project – Don Stypula

- GVMC received authorization from the Urban Cooperation Board to use \$50,000 to develop an interim watershed management organization which will be housed within GVMC.
- Looking for additional funding
- Also looking into contracting with professional consultants to create a business model, visioning, marketing, etc.

D. North End Sewer – Bob Homan

- The Authority board is meeting on Thursday to discuss a graphical representation of the financial data.
- New elected officials to be involved
- Joint community boards to meet on December 8th.
- Should have a decision on how to move forward by January/February 2005

E. Rogue River Watershed Project – John Koches

- 319 is now complete
- Boardwalk is done
- Wrapping up final report
- Rogue River Watershed Council is up and running.

4. Work Session: Vision for REPA

Bowman distributed a handout and discussed (attached).

A. PowerPoint on the Players - REPA's Role in More Efficient Environmental Management in West Michigan

- **Who are the players?**
 - Non-Profit Organizations
 - Land Conservancy of West Michigan
 - West Michigan Environmental Action Council
 - Center for Environmental Studies
 - Home and Building Association of GR
 - Academic Institutions
 - GVSU, WRI
 - Aquinas College
 - Calvin College
 - Watershed Organizations
 - Lower Grand River
 - Sand Creek
 - Rogue River
 - Thornapple River
 - Cold Water Creek
 - Local Projects
 - Bio-Diesel Demonstration Project
 - Grand Rapids IPP Users
 - MDEQ/Stakeholder Quarterly Meeting
 - Regional Entities

- Timberland RC & D
- West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum
- Grand Valley Metro Council
- Regional Environmental Planning Agency
- West Michigan Strategic Alliance
- West Michigan Regional Planning Commission
- West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission
- Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
- Ottawa County Planning Commission

Overmyer suggested other groups that should be included within the regional entities category including: Great Lakes Federations, EPA, Core of Engineers, DNR, Farm Bureaus, and Health Departments.

Other key players that were suggested to be included are:

- Foundations
- Professional Organizations
- Governments Groups
- **What roles do they play?**
 - See PowerPoint (Attached)
- **What are the areas of overlap?**
- **What may be missing?**
- **Is there a role for REPA?**

Comments:

- Bowman stated that we need to decide whether REPA should be municipal based or have a wider organizational base.
- Overmyer commented that REPA may be a way to bring order to everything that is being done separately.
- Tompkins remarked that we need to decide what each organization's assets and strengths are and then make sure not to duplicate their work, but build off of it.
- Bowman noted that the WMSA has started working on overall sustainability
- Koches mentioned that the City of Grand Rapids now has an Environmental Advisory Council and he asked if it fits in with REPA. Overmyer stated that he serves on this board.
- Bowman questioned whether we could create something that is big enough but also a specific enough aspect?
- Overmyer stated that we have to develop a partnership with businesses and that government should lead the way
- Koches summarized that we need to decide on three things:
 - Geographic extent: GVMC area?
 - Mission
 - Organization
- Tompkins stated that the current mission and functions are utility related. We need to either change the mission to fit what we discuss or change our discussions to fit the current mission.

B. Discussion about Organizational Design

- Laninga voiced that he thought the mission was too broad.
- Laninga and Stapf both commented that REPA should have got involved regarding the NKSA, but didn't.
- Stypula brought up the idea of creating sub-committees that report back to a larger REPA group.
- Kemppainen questioned whether there was really a need for a larger group and whether we needed that much structure? He suggested having 2 – 3 groups that report directly to Styplua/GVMC instead.
- Koches remarked that it had been discussed in the past to have three subcommittees: watershed, utilities and education that come together periodically to update one another.
- Stapf stated that this group was originally formed because of utility issues/discussions. He gave the opinion that nothing significant has come from this group since then. Stapf continued by stating that we need a group that focuses on utilities only and that he has no interest in other areas.
- Koches suggested creating two groups:
 - Utilities
 - Watersheds/sustainability (which might eventually split up if needed)
- Tompkins remarked that there have been other successes with this group regarding watershed management.
- Stapf question whether we initiate or advise on discussions? Koches replied that it has been both ways.

It was decided to email the REPA mailing list and see who would be interested in attending a Utilities sub-committee and/or a Watershed/Sustainability sub-committee.

5. Other Items of Business:

- None

6. Future Agenda Items/Meeting Date:

A future meeting date for the Regional Environmental Planning Agency was not decided on. Agenda items TBD.

7. Adjournment:

With no other issues before the Regional Environmental Planning Agency, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM.