

Minutes for March 15th, 2022 Virtual Meeting on Zoom at 7:00 PM

I. Welcome and Introductions (7:00)

- Everyone on the meeting introduced themselves (18 individuals)
- Meeting is recorded and will be posted on the website for those who could not attend

II. Strengthen Relations

Speakers:

Peter Grabow, Mayo Clinic External Affairs - Mayo Clinic Campus Plans and Q & A

- New project on West Avenue- “hospital of the future”
- Plugged the “Lighting the Flame” film that tells the history of Mayo Clinic in the context of the history of La Crosse (on their website)
- 2019- strategic plan included developing services to provide high value care and be the most trusted and affordable health care facility anywhere → invest in talent and technology, put people to work in service to others through medical practice
- Since 2019, Mayo in La Crosse has emerged with honors from several evaluative organizations
- \$198 million for a new 6-story facility on West Ave just north of Walgreens and south of Center for Advanced Medicine and Surgery
- 70 larger, comfortable private patient rooms, in-patient services, radiology and diagnostic services, will be attached on 1st and 2nd levels to ER and surgery and cancer center
- Will have state of the art everything, emblematic to conservation and green design (natural light)
- General safety studies of hospitals lead to more safety features throughout facility
- Each room will have patient control of lights, shades, etc., and access to a smart board to gain information and communicate with specialists remotely as needed
- Space for expansion as needed after initial building in 2024, eventually the old Franciscan building and the old Skemp building will be taken down and replaced with some parking, but mostly green space and walking space
- Hope that this project is a catalyst for neighborhood renewal as well
- Questions
 - How will construction affect traffic flow- probably won’t notice much difference, one closure for ½ block on Mississippi St for a while
 - As you shift facilities, will some of the specialties be shifting to Rochester- just the opposite, we are and will be adding specialties, opportunities for specialized care remotely will also be added
 - Are you planning to do a similar set-up as Rochester where once you enter the parking ramp, you no longer have to be outside- weren’t sure
 - Are you adding another parking ramp at some point- monitoring parking indicates that there is not a need for more, but will be re-organizing and beautifying current spaces, our current ramp is expandable to the east and up but no plans for this at the moment
- Feel free to reach out with any other questions or concerns (Grabow.peter@mayo.edu) (or send via the GENA email for GENA to pass on)

Kaitlyn O’Connor, Plant Ecologist, Owner of ISG - Native Plant Presentation and Q & A

- Presented information about gardening with native plants
- Integrate “nature” within the city, rather than only in parks and designated green spaces
- Native plants attract pollinators and birds, provide water quality, flooding benefits, and soil health (roots serve as a sponge and a filter)
- Choose plants based mostly on sun exposure and soil moisture
- Not all native plants are appropriate for urban environments: some are super aggressive and spread quickly; need plants that are relatively short (maximum 3-4 feet or waist height) and “well-behaved”
- Nice ones for sun include prairie dropseed alongside a pathway, prairie pussytoes as ground cover, blazing star
- Nice ones for shady environments include ephemerals like bluebells and celandine poppy and other “forest floor” type plants, interspersed with ferns

- Taller plants against a fence, but shorter next to entrances
- Better to have mass plantings of the same kind of plant- easier for pollinators to find them- than a few of many different kinds of plants
- Wild ginger is a good swap for hostas (short, green, mass planting)
- Can also lean in to more of a prairie restoration aesthetic with lots of biodiversity- great for soil health and water retention
- Rain gardens are areas known to collect water or areas where you are trying to collect water- shorter plants, planted in groups, lower diversity
- Facebook group: Native Plant Gardens in the Upper Midwest
- Questions (can also contact Driftless Area Natives or Prairie Moon or her directly Kaitlyn.OConnor@ISGInc.com)

Maureen Freedland, County Board Supervisor District 4 (unable to attend)

Barb Janssen, City Council and County Board Supervisor District 3

- City voted yesterday regarding Maple Grove Motel (if owner doesn't make needed repairs, the city can walk away from the contract)

Tim Acklin, City of La Crosse Planning Administrator

- Comprehensive plan update kicking into high gear (last one was adopted in 2002)
 - Includes goals, objectives, policies on infrastructure, land use, neighborhoods, economic development, housing, etc.- based on feedback from citizens
 - Marketing campaign will kick off in April- will use all kinds of platforms to encourage participation, remote and in-person
- Off street parking- eliminating minimums; not so much concern about eliminating off street parking in commercial zoned areas, but some for residential
- Meetings will be in person starting in April in City Hall again with a virtual element as well
- Inquiries about 24th and La Crosse Street near the historical district sign- there was interest by someone in purchasing it, but the way the La Crosse St construction will affect traffic there was a deal breaker for that purchase
- Questions
 - Any info on the Copper Rocks construction on the K-Mart site- yes, they are petitioning rezoning and have their design plans turned in; coming to the city with other financial request as well; plans to start the construction in late summer/early fall so they can work above ground in winter
 - Planning for museum- city working with La Crosse County Historical Society to find them a more permanent home so they can be more of a regional destination than they are currently, working with UWL on a preliminary feasibility study (much positive feedback so far) and how to fundraise; consulting firm has been hired to help

Larry Sleznikow, City Council District 4 (unable to attend)

III. Support Administration

- Approve November and February meeting minutes- didn't have a quorum so will postpone until next time (need 10 GENA members who have attended at least two meetings in the past year)
- Treasurer's Report: February beginning and ending balance \$1177.05 (Tree Fund \$158.22; General Fund \$1018.83)

IV. Enhance Livability

Large Item Pick Up scheduled May 16-27 on your regular recycling pick up day - see website for more details <https://www.cityoflacrosse.org/your-government/departments/refuse-recycling/collection-disposal-information/large-items>

V. Engage Members

GENA Gardens and volunteer opportunities

- City beautification project (Leah Miller, contact)
- Victory Garden at City Hall (Carolyn Dvorak, contact)- eight garden beds, 4' x 20', meet on Tuesdays to help with planting, watering, weeding, harvesting- provides food for anyone and people are starting to “know” about it; developing a website
- Gardens in GENA (Doug McVey, contact)- Campbell Street cul de sac, Crowley Park garden, Pine Street cul de sac, Campbell Street rain garden, roundabout at King and 17th, etc.- each garden has a specific “gardener” to take care of it and they will be seeking volunteers periodically via GENA

VI. Open Forum

Call for Announcements

Thank-Yous:

- Thanks to the volunteers taking the lead on maintaining the green spaces in our neighborhood!

VII. Upcoming Meetings and Events –

GENA Meeting April 19, 7 p.m. - Myrick Park Main Shelter (big red barn): masks are optional since this is an open air space

Adjournment at 8:20 pm