

Minutes for April 19th, 2022 IN-PERSON Meeting at 7:00 PM

Beginning at 6:30 pm, we were SUPER EXCITED to welcome the local band *The Last Men* who played for us while we were gathering.

I. Welcome and Introductions (7:00)

- Everyone in attendance introduced themselves

II. Strengthen Relations

Speakers:

Mayor Mitch Reynolds

- Made a pitch for being involved in the city's comprehensive plan process; super important to have as many people involved as possible because it's the first one of these for 20 years. Still making decisions based on a plan developed in 2002. It's how we figure out what we want our city to be. Share with others! Web site is www.forwardlacrosse.org
- Governor Evers is in La Crosse tomorrow, getting a ride on one of our new fully electric buses, a major push towards sustainability. Charged at the bus barn on Isle de Plume at a charging station. Eventually all the buses will be electric, providing a way for people to get around who do not have private transportation. The electricity for the buses will be generated from our waste! Took a little longer than we had hoped, but a crucial investment, and a model for other smaller utilities for their cities. Back-up batteries will also be present at the charging station to provide power in case of outages due to natural disasters. Learn as much as you can about it and share with others.
- This neighborhood association has been at the forefront of a lot of the issues related to sustainability- using the dollars that were enumerated for the north-south corridor to improve our local streets/roads and provide bicycle lanes. Thanks to this neighborhood for being on the forefront of fighting the north-south corridor.
- Discussions occurring about lead clean-up in the marsh (lead shot from the gun club from decades ago). Looking at serious ways to clean that up, including federal funding, rather than kicking the problem down the road. Requesting that we are advocates for taking care of the problem now.
 - How does lead impact wildlife? – Not seeing effects on migratory birds yet, but on other vertebrates. Lead could sit inert for decades, but the problem will persist.
- Questions?
 - PFAS contamination on French Island- how does that affect La Crosse and what can we do to help with that situation? – Three wells on French Island with two significantly impacted by PFAS in the ground water (see DNR web site for more information). Researchers think the river is carrying chemicals from the north here as well, affecting our wells. We received enough federal dollars to remediate one of our wells.
 - Can filters remove PFAS? – Yes, that can work, plus some experimental methods are being worked out. There are drawbacks to some of these methods (getting rid of waste, for example) but we are looking into other ways to remediate.
 - Kristen Lueth is our first communications coordinator for the city for engagement, transparency, and marketing – competing for people to live and work in our city.
 - Does the city have any ideas about opening a public charging facility for cars? – We are evaluating where best to place charging stations, probably some private and some public. Tons of opportunities for charging stations in the ramps downtown (if the structure can hold them). Get involved in the Climate Action Plan!
 - The 2-hour parking signs are spreading outward from campus. What are students supposed to do? – Barb Janssen took that one – more college rentals are leading to multiple cars per house so there are no places to park for visitors, but we are providing free parking stickers to those student houses to allow two or three cars to park for free in the 2-hour zones. (This could also be a way to find out which houses have more than the allowed 3 unrelated people living in them!) If you want the 2-hour parking on your street, you can contact the engineering department, and you need a percentage of people on the street to agree.
 - How would you enforce the 3 unrelated person rule? – Most of them are unknown because the city is restricted against inspections and the landlords who do this are good at skirting the issue.
 - Tim Acklin added that there are about 100 properties that have an affidavit that allows them to have up to 5 unrelated people in the house.
 - Construction in Riverside Park may be completed by Juneteenth? – Probably not complete, but will be accessible. The goal is to be done by Riverfest.

Barb Janssen, City Council and County Board Supervisor District 3

- Groundbreaking for Fire Station 2 just occurred so that's on track.
- County board chair was re-elected
- Had set aside funding for the county to work on improving child care, but apparently it wasn't well received, so will likely go back for discussion.
- La Crosse St construction will begin at the west side right after the track meet. Will transplant any small trees that can be saved. Stipulations in the contract that if they cannot finish the other end due to supply chain issues, they won't start it and leave it a mess, will return in Spring 2023. There is a line in the budget to add trees.

Tim Acklin, City of La Crosse Planning Administrator

- Please visit the www.forwardlacrosse.org web site!! There's more than just a survey there. Just starting the year and a half process. Will attend more meetings in the future to gather input in person as well.

Larry Sleznikow, City Council District 4

- Accessibility Plan for citizens with disabilities. Access challenges that they face daily are enormous. Community needs to be accessible for all, for accessing businesses and organizations, for visiting tourists, etc.

Maureen Freedland, County Board Supervisor District 4 (not able to be here tonight but thanks for re-electing me!)

III. Support Administration

- Approve November, February and March meeting minutes (M/S/P)
- Treasurer's Report: no change from last month - March beginning and ending balance \$1177.05 (Tree Fund \$158.22; General Fund \$1018.83)

IV. Open Forum

Call for Announcements

- Memorial Pool donor died recently (Mark Madison), also a huge supporter of many other institutions in the city
- Earth Fair is this coming Sunday 11-5 in Myrick Park (activities, food, music) – usually draws several thousand people <https://www.sustaininstitute.com/earthfairlacrosse> for more information!

Thank-Yous:

- To *The Last Men* (Lee, Karl, Greg, John)

V. Engage Members

Music and Marshmallows!

VI. Upcoming Meetings and Events –

GENA Meeting May 17, 7 p.m- location TBD

Adjournment at 8 pm