



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

DATE: June 4, 2014

TO: Gregory A. Sundstrom, City Manager

COMMITTEE: Committee of the Whole
LIAISON: Gregory Sundstrom, City Manager

FROM: George K. Heartwell, Mayor

SUBJECT: **RESOLUTION SUPPORTING GRAND RAPIDS WHITEWATER**

The attached resolution would acknowledge the past accomplishments and support future work of Grand Rapids Whitewater (GRWW). The GRWW organization was born out of the Green Grand Rapids Master Plan process. A non-profit group, GRWW was formed by Chris Muller and Chip Richards to actively study, plan, and design particular aspects of the river. The vision of GRWW is to return the rapids to the river for everyone's enjoyment. As Grand Rapids' most significant natural asset, the Grand River can and should play an increasingly important role in enhancing the city's quality of life.

Many city planning processes have recognized the value of the Grand River as an asset. As early as 1923, the City's master plan envisioned the river with a network of green spaces along the riverbank. The Grand River Edges Plan and Central Area River Land Policy recommendations reinforced this concept in the 1980's. More recent planning studies including the 2002 City of Grand Rapids Master Plan, the 2011 Green Grand Rapids Plan and Parks and Recreation Five Year Master Plan have expanded on these ideas and reflect a broader vision for making the Grand River the focus of a larger open space system. Current planning efforts by the Planning Department and Downtown Grand Rapids Incorporated will continue to re-imagine the downtown and river corridor and will further engage the community in dreaming about the river and its banks.

GRWW's advocacy for restoring the Grand's rapids has been met with support from the business and philanthropic community as well as State and Federal agencies. They have enlisted biologists, economists, educators, geologists, historians and engineers to study the river. Their intention is to let the "history and science" inform the decisions related to the restoration design. The goal is to create a river which is healthier, accessible to all, and which will have catalytic impacts of epic proportions.

The purpose of the attached resolution is to demonstrate a continued commitment and support of the work by Grand Rapids Whitewater. Planning staff, acting as the lead agency, is in constant contact with GRWW and is providing coordination assistance. The City's Design Team (comprised of Planning, Parks, Forestry, Engineering, Stormwater, Environmental Protection, Fire, Police, Traffic Safety, Water, Sewer, The Rapid, and others) is also engaged in providing

design and technical assistance to GRWW. The culmination of the Downtown, River Corridor and Restoration planning efforts is anticipated to be completed within 12 to 18 months.

Please forward the attached resolution for consideration at the next scheduled City Commission meeting.

GH/SS/js

Cc:

Chris Muller, GRWW Founder

Chip Richards, GRWW Founder

Mark VanPutten, Conservation Strategy

YOUR COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE recommends adoption of the following resolution to acknowledge past accomplishments and support future work of Grand Rapids Whitewater.

CORRECT IN FORM

DEPARTMENT OF LAW

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Com. _____, supported by Com. _____,
moved adoption of the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the City of Grand Rapids recognizes the Grand River as an extremely important asset to our quality of life and as an economic generator that benefits the West Michigan Region; and

WHEREAS, the City of Grand Rapids Master Plan amendment, Green Grand Rapids, and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan envision the river with an enhanced and improved riparian habitat; and

WHEREAS, the Grand Rapids Whitewater organization has created a vision to return the rapids to the Grand River for everyone's enjoyment; and

WHEREAS, the vision has been embraced by the City of Grand Rapids as the catalyst for river corridor redevelopment and as a focal point for the Downtown development plan; and

WHEREAS, business and philanthropic leaders as well as Federal and State agencies have expressed their support and advocacy for the project as evidenced by its designation as an Urban Waters Federal Partnership project; therefore

RESOLVED, that the City of Grand Rapids supports the efforts of Grand Rapids Whitewater to design, engineer, and restore the Grand River rapids, and wherever feasible will provide coordination and technical assistance.

	Yeas		Nays
	_____	Bliss	_____
	_____	Gutowski	_____
	_____	Kelly	_____
	_____	Lenear	_____
	_____	Lumpkins	_____
	_____	Shaffer	_____
	_____	Mayor Heartwell	_____
Yeas:	_____		Nays: _____
Adopted:	_____		Failed: _____