

# **River Hydro Communities: Grand River Webber Group**

6/11/24 | 9:00 AM

Muir Village Hall  
122 Superior Street  
Muir, Michigan

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## **Attendees**

- Elizabeth Riggs, PSC
  - Anna Lee, PSC
  - Kimberly Balke, Conservation Resource Alliance
  - Melissa Eldridge, ICD
  - J Allen Heise, ICD
  - Jessica Tramontana, Consumers Energy
  - Josh Burgett, Consumers Energy
  - Patrick Jordan, Ionia County
  - Ryan Wilson, Ionia County Economic Alliance
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## **Welcome**

- Melissa welcomed committee members.

## **Overview of Goals of the Meeting**

- Reviewed goals of the meeting, three present options:
  - Remove dam
  - Sell to verified buyer
  - Relicense dam
- All present introduced themselves.
- Next meeting includes visit to Webber Dam.
- Reminded attendees of discussion points from April.

# Planning for Prosperity in River Hydro Communities

## Grand River Webber Group

- Some additional considerations include invasive species (*Ficaria verna*).
- Burgett reminded attendees that divestment is still an option and that bidders are visiting the sites in June, 2024.

## Focus on Opportunities

- Which strengths/assets can we build upon with each dam if removed? Sold? Relicensed?

Results of discussion:

- If Removed:
  - Nature
    - Aquatic species that thrive in swift current (lotic) will have improved ecosystem
    - DNR is constructing a second boat launch below dam, needs an answer to determine if the construction should continue (2025-2026)
    - Revegetation unnecessary, natural shoreline will restore.
  - Economy
    - Kayakers, fishing
    - Flooding controlled naturally, removal of human element.
  - People
    - Under Consumers control, landowners who have water access would retain water access. Not guaranteed under different ownership.
- If Sold:
  - Nature
    - Community will likely wish to “keep our ponds”
  - Economy
    - Tax base
    - Property values could go up or down, depending on goals/desires of landowners.
  - People
    - Landowners will not want change unless it benefits them.
    - If sold and new buyer goes against the will of the community, Consumers will have a note from the community on file and make a recommendation to the new owner.
- If Relicensed:
  - Nature
    - Community will likely wish to “keep our ponds”
  - Economy
    - Tax base

# Planning for Prosperity in River Hydro Communities

## Grand River Webber Group

- Property values could go up or down, depending on goals/desires of landowners.
- People
  - Landowners will not want change unless it benefits them.
  - Public would like to leverage relationship with Consumers, nervous about a third party.

## Guest Speaker: Kimberly Balke, Program Director, Conservation Resource Alliance

- Three Dam Removals – Boardman Ottaway River
  - Three year decision process and feasibility study
  - Removal and modifications required partnership across many local stakeholders, created recreational opportunities.
  - Greening up took on average a year.
  - Fourth dam is being modified to be a fish pass that prevents the spread of lamprey.

## Wrap up and Next Steps

- Next meeting is in September
  - Review discussion results from June
  - Discuss land truce, maps, input from biologist and engineer
  - Visit dam