

Staff Thoughts on Developing Recommendations Agenda Item

The following are staff thoughts on how the council might go about making recommendations. These are not in any specific order and are not mutually exclusive.

Framing any solicitation of ideas and the recommendations:

1. The council could take some time up front to develop some guidance in addition to the constitution's language. This might include crafting a vision for the fund and the council.
2. The council could simply use the constitution's language to frame a call for funding requests.

Generating the programs and projects recommended for funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund:

3. The council could request the agencies and interest groups together develop an outdoor heritage preservation, restoration, and enhancement plan and return in February to present the plan. The council could stipulate that the plan include program and project requests in excess of the available funds and put the requests in priority order. The council could craft recommendations from this plan
4. The council could concentrate on low-hanging fruit by asking for ideas that are available for implementation immediately, through a request for priority program and project ideas. Low hanging fruit would be defined. For example: "The Lessard Council is seeking requests for funding for programs or projects ready for implementation and predicted to be completed within the next 12 months.' These would be reviewed in council hearings and added to recommendations.
5. The council can ask agencies in the environment and natural resources area to develop and operate categorical grant programs. For example, a categorical grant program for rough fish barriers could be developed. Eligible projects would be submitted by entities other than the agency running the program. The operating agency would solicit vet and rank the applications using professional staff versed in the grant category. These programs would have to conform to the policies of the Department of Administrations Grants Policies.

The council could maintain control of a grant program. The legislature, in the appropriations law, would stipulate that agency staff must return to the council prior to soliciting for council review and approval of the grant criteria and solicitation techniques. After solicitation and prioritization of grant requests, the agency would return to the council for approval of the scoring and final selection of recipients. Solicitation and review could take place after the end of session. If the council desired the agency could be required to solicit grants on a biennial, annual or six-month cycle. Frequent grant solicitations would widen the access to Outdoor Habitat Funds, and professional vetting would ensure projects are ready to go.

6. The council could develop and distribute a wide reaching request for proposals in a fashion similar to the LCCMR, hold hearings, and follow an allocation process like LCCMR. The first year's schedule would be quite compressed due to the April 1, 2009 delivery due date.