

Rotary Club of La Crosse - Centennial Committee

Summary of where we have been and where we are as of March 23, 2017:

To date, the Centennial Committee and sub-committees have held several meetings to determine an appropriate Signature Project to celebrate our Rotary Club of La Crosse's Centennial (100th) anniversary. The topic of a signature project has also been discussed in detail at the Board of Directors level.

While a specific project has not been agreed upon, the following items were consistently mentioned as critical in order to obtain club support from our members:

1. The project must allow for active club participation by our members
2. The project must be highly visible, significant and have a long useful life. If the project is not a capital asset or improvement, then the project must have a long term sustainability plan.
3. Rotary recognition needs to be prominent and clearly identified
4. Rotary needs to be able to provide direction and influence to the project
5. Fundraising for this project is expected
6. Completion date needs to closely coincide with our club's 100th anniversary date which is June 1, 2019.

What are the next steps?:

First, please understand that the opinions and conclusions in this document are those of Todd Restel's only. If you disagree, have other conclusions, etc., please share those with me so that I can make appropriate changes. At the end of the day, the goal of the process is to find the best project(s) available.

Selection of an appropriate project which meets all six of our club's critical requirements is our next step. The following is a list of projects that meet all six critical requirements. (Note that as of March 23, 2017, we only have one possible project, but I have sent out a letter to all club members requesting additional project submissions.)

Possible Project #1: Riverside Park – North End, which includes a new friendship garden, a new sculpture, and prominent Rotary recognition as proposed by Todd Restel.

Prior to introducing the Riverside Park – North End project, let me share the following core values which have served as the Rotary Club of La Crosse's guiding principles since our inception almost 100 years ago: service, fellowship, diversity, integrity, and leadership. Our Club's membership consists of a network of friends, neighbors, leaders and problem-solvers. Let's utilize this network to come together to make positive, lasting change in our community by adopting a project on the North End of Riverside Park. Specifically, the project would include a new garden, a new sculpture and

prominent Rotary recognition. This project will focus on the core value identified as “Diversity.”

According to the United States Census Bureau, the race composition of the County of La Crosse, Wisconsin was nearly 92% white in July 2015. Today, in early 2017, Riverside Park contains a tribute to six of our sister cities through a joint public-private partnership of the Riverside International Friendship Gardens (“Gardens”). Adjacent to the Gardens is a sculpture of Hiawatha, which was commissioned to honor the indigenous Native American population.

Years ago, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (“FSPA”), developed a relationship with the Republic of Cameroon. Cameroon is a coastal country in West Central Africa. Over the years, the relationship which began with the FSPA has grown into an officially recognized “Sister City” relationship with the city of Kumbo, Cameroon. Today, all of the countries with which La Crosse has a Sister Cities relationship are recognized in the Gardens, except for Cameroon. Recognizing this relationship with a garden would allow us to improve our cultural diversity.

While the Cameroon garden would be meant to honor and to further develop a newer relationship, the Native American population predates the first white settlers to come to this location. Back in 1961, a sculpture named Hiawatha was commissioned to honor this relationship with the Native Americans. Unfortunately, the sculpture missed its mark. Hiawatha is considered disrespectful and hurtful by our Native American community. It is time to remove this sculpture and commission a new one that will build community with the Native Americans instead of serving as an offensive icon.

To state the obvious, undertaking a project focused on two minorities (African Americans and the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin) within our community directly focuses on the core value of diversity. Additionally, while the Garden project is not controversial, the removal of the Hiawatha sculpture would be considered controversial. Finally, this project meets all six of our club’s critical requirements.

Possible Projects #2, #3, etc.: To Be Determined... Please send in ideas or expand on ideas from the chart below if you believe that the project does meet the six requirements.

NOTE: There is nothing stopping us from doing more than one project. For example, our club is big enough to create a film documentary and/or book per the suggested project table below and work on the Riverside Park – North End project. Additionally, the 100 Acts of Service could easily be layered in with any project(s) that we select. No possibilities have been ruled out yet.

Other projects that were suggested and identification of critical club requirements:

Keeping in mind the six critical items needed for our signature project, the following chart is a brief recap of projects reviewed to data that did not meet all requirements.

Suggested Projects		Critical Club Requirements Addressed					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Rebuild the Kid's Coulee		X	X		X	X
2	Building a new facility at Trane Park with an emphasis on children with autism		X			X	
3	Rebuild Riverside Park and the band shell		X			X	
4	"Make over" the Main Street plaza entrance at the Main library			X		X	X
5	Mobile Oil Site	X	X	X	X	X	
6	Rotary Docks - Build a dock system at Riverside Park with Transit Slips for downtown and park visitors		X			X	
7	Sponsor the production of a filmed documentary – "The History of La Crosse in honoe of the 100 th Anniversary of the Rotary club of La Crosse: 1919 to 2019"	X		X	X	X	X
8	Develop a hard cover history book: "100 Years of Rotary in La Crosse"	X		X	X	X	X
9	Club assume responsibility for the new restrooms for the band shell project. Have the bathrooms heated in the winter and include a shower stall so that the homeless can bathe.					X	
10	Solve the homeless problem (work with FSPA, Gov't, etc.)	X			X	X	
11	Support Mental Health Projects	X		X	X	X	
12	Projects at the County Landfill	X		X	X	X	X
13	Hixon Forest and the related trails	X		X	X	X	X
14	Redesign Cameron Park with emphasis on children, history and art to serve as an anchor for that part of town		X		X	X	
15	Invest in the lives of less fortunate children in our area by identifying 100 children per year to receive an annual gift of \$200 until they graduate from high school.	X		X	X	X	X
16	Address the issue of drug and alcohol abuse	X	X		X	X	
17	100 Acts of service: Get 100 club members to sign up for an act of service in one month	X		X	X	X	X