



# School Property Update 4-13-23

River Grove Board Meeting

# Background—How did we get here?



## September:

- Informed of letter of intent/purchase agreement between Wilder and Minnesota Catholic Youth Partnership (MCYP)
- Discussions with Manitou Fund on alternative site planning

## November:

- May Township eliminates Youth Camp as a potential conditional use in the conservancy zone (where the property is located)

## January-March:

- Conversations begin with Wilder/MCYP on a short-term lease extension
  - Wilder/MCYP indicate they will continue to move forward with the sale and camp plans, displacing River Grove long-term.
- Manitou continues to engage on possible contingencies

# Paths Formed as a Result of the Property Uncertainty

1. Remain at Wilder Forest through a lease extension until a build at the Warner Nature Center property is completed and/or Wilder property becomes available for purchase.
2. Find an alternative site on an interim basis. Board and administration pursued the following site options, including:
  - i. Architectural firm engagement regarding Warner site(s), including use of temporary buildings.
  - ii. Camp Lakamaga
  - iii. Arcola Mills

# Status of Wilder Lease Extension for 2023-24



Formal conversations were held with Wilder/MCYP near the end of March on initial proposed lease extension terms. Terms included in ongoing negotiations:

- The school assumes all responsibility for maintenance, repair, and upkeep of the property.
  - Wilder will no longer be providing a dedicated maintenance person.
  - Repair liability includes capital items and insurance deductible.
- The school calendar must end by May 17, 2024.
  - Possible additional week for adults to move items
- Renovations of the property to begin December 2023; school responsible for cost of accommodating displaced classrooms.
- MCYP requiring a “letter of support” from the school supporting their purchase and camp plans.
- \$100,000 security deposit to abide by all terms and conditions of the lease agreement.
- Contingent on Wilder, as the property owner, asking for and receiving approval from Washington County to delay septic system replacement for another year.

# Financial Implications of Lease Extension

<b>Expense</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Deposit	\$100,000
Maintenance staff member	\$60,000
Contracted maintenance services	\$40,000
Annual fire sprinkler, fire panel and fire extinguisher inspection	\$3,600
Septic pumping (pending Cty approval)	\$10,000+
Insurance deductibles	Unknown-\$10,000 deductible
Capital expenditures	Avg: \$94,000/year (over past 5 years)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$300,000→unlimited</b>

# Alternative Site: Zephyr Theatre Building



- Manitou Fund and River Grove leadership reached out to the Zephyr Theatre in January to discuss a potential partnership and use of their building as a temporary site.
- Conversations continued about what is possible in the space for River Grove.
- Planning and due diligence conversations occurred between Manitou Fund and Zephyr officials where a potential purchase discussion began.
- Manitou Fund architectural firm and contractors got involved to build a timeline for River Grove feasibility.
- Manitou's legal council reviewed ordinances and other matters.

# Relocation Opportunity to Zephyr



- Manitou Fund has entered into a purchase agreement with Zephyr to buy the theatre building in the past week.
- Manitou Fund plans a multi-million dollar renovation to create a multi-use flexible space for River Grove, including a performing arts center for the school and future Zephyr use.
- The plan will give River Grove an interim home while we continuing planning with Manitou Fund on a long-term forest location.
  - Lease for 2 years plus an option for 2 additional years
- Lease will be more accommodating with Manitou Fund.
- Lease terms will be finalized after the property closing, expected by mid-May.
- River Grove staff will have unlimited educational access to Manitou Fund's forest property as we continue our place-based, outdoor education focus.
  - River Grove owned buses will be available for regular routes between new school location and Warner Nature Center property



# Partnerships



- Dagmara Larsen: Principal, [MSR Design](#)
- Nicole Bartelt: Board Chair, [Zephyr Theatre](#)
- Carrie Jennings: Research and Policy Director, [Freshwater Association](#)
- Dr. Jim Zacchini: Executive Director at [Minnesota Guild of Public Schools](#)
- Dan Miller: River Grove Parent, Past River Grove Board Chair, River Grove–Manitou Fund Facilitator



# Next Steps

- Educational partnership/planning with RG teachers and staff
- Stillwater City partnerships: traffic, park usage, zoning, etc... Initial meeting, next week
- Downtown business/community partnerships
- Food service partnerships
- Moving logistics and communication
- Student and staff intent to return to go out next week
- Lease finalization
  - Closing date for Manitou/Zephyr mid-May
- Architecture/Design meetings, including nearby outdoor spaces, recess
- Parent outreach and support to assist with all of the above and more!