

Green Space Romeo

Embrace Nature Celebrate History

www.GreenSpaceRomeo.org

Ms. Vicki Laseke
Executive Director of Business Services
Romeo Community Schools
316 North Main Street
Romeo MI 48065

April 9, 2025

Dear Ms. Laseke:

Thank you for interviewing Kim Voss, Brian Minton and me on April 1. We appreciated the interview panel's thoughtful questions and discussion.

As follow up to that meeting, I am writing to submit Green Space Romeo's Best and Final proposal for the acquisition of 297 Prospect Street. We are providing requested information as well as summary responses to the questions asked by the interview panel.

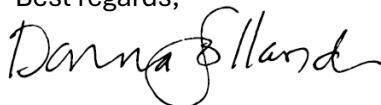
1. **Proposal:** Our proposal remains \$525,000. We reviewed our offer for potential adjustment and concluded that this is still the most feasible offer.
2. **Contact:** Donna Folland is the contact for information and negotiation and will represent the Green Space Romeo Board of Directors. All agreements will be reviewed with legal counsel.
3. **Financing details:** Green Space Romeo will finance property acquisition with donated funds and a loan. See details on the next page.
4. **Guarantee that property will remain green space:** Reselling the property for development would have significant negative consequences for all parties and would be a breach of community trust. A conservation easement was discussed at our interview as a potential solid guarantee. See discussion on the following pages.
5. **Questions asked by interview panel:** Clarification of organization name, explanation of bid amount, development timeline and budgets.

Two other items have been provided separately:

- **Loan details:** Loan information and contact information for Joe Wordan, Senior Vice President, Tri-County Bank
- **Bid documents and appendices:** Link to the digital files for the Green Space Romeo bid documents and appendices.

On behalf of the Green Space Romeo Board of Directors and the community members who support this vision, thank you for this opportunity. Please contact me with any questions.

Best regards,



Donna Folland, Chair
Green Space Romeo

Financing Details

Here is a breakdown of funds for the acquisition:

- \$20,000 – Four County Community Foundation green space fund
- \$305,000 – Pledges to the Four County Community Foundation
- \$200,000 – Loan from Tri-County Bank
- **\$525,000 - TOTAL**

Four County Community Foundation: The fund was established in early 2024. The current balance consists of donations and event revenue. From approximately \$20K in this fund, \$19K has been granted to GSR to provide part of the required Earnest Money.

Pledges to Four County Community Foundation: We have maintained communication with all pledgers and have confidence in the pledges. Out of the total of \$409,000 in pledges, we expect less than a 10% slippage rate. We received 18 pledges of \$5,000 or more each, totaling \$337,000. These larger pledges will be fulfilled with the Four County Community Foundation. Four County will use these funds to provide grants to Green Space Romeo for the acquisition (\$305,000) as well as for acquisition costs and other costs (\$32,000). The \$337,000 in pledges \$5,000 and over are summarized below:

- Diamond pledges (\$150,000 and more) – 1 pledge = \$150,000
- Platinum pledges (\$50,000-\$149,999) – 1 pledge = \$50,000
- Gold pledges (\$5,000-\$49,000) – 16 pledges = \$137,000

Loan from Tri-County Bank: Green Space Romeo has been approved for a loan of up to \$400,000 for acquisition of the property. The loan has three private guarantors. Joe Wordan, Senior Vice President at Tri-County Bank, is available to provide further details on the loan.

Green Space Romeo plans to borrow \$200,000 for property acquisition, which is an amount we feel confident in being able to repay within the one-year term of the loan by fulfilling the remaining pledges and launching a new fundraising campaign.

- Silver pledges (\$500-\$4,999) – 66 pledges = \$61,000
- Bronze pledges (\$1-\$499) – 97 pledges = \$11,000
- New campaign to raise a minimum of \$128,000
 - Fundraising target will be higher to compensate for potential slipped pledges, build the endowment at Four County Community Foundation, and provide 2 years in operating funds

Guarantee that the property remains green space

Our mission and commitment to the community: We absolutely guarantee that Green Space Romeo has no intent to resell any portion of 297 Prospect Street. We believe that the acquisition of 297 Prospect Street by Green Space Romeo and its subsequent development as a public green space will be a result that the Board of Education will be proud of and hold up as an exemplary community collaboration that has long-term positive impacts for the community and Romeo Community Schools. A successful collaboration between Romeo Green Space and the Board of Education will also result in an enthusiastic team of RCS supporters who are ready to advocate for the school district and its growth needs and bonding proposals.

Misuse of donor funds: Resale of the property for profit would violate the founding principles that established our Michigan nonprofit corporation and IRS tax-exempt status and would likely result in our standing being revoked. Green Space Romeo would be obligated to repay Four County Community Foundation over \$400,000 in grants that no longer meet the intended purpose, which would subsequently obligate Four County Community Foundation to deal with over \$400,000 in fulfilled pledges that no longer meet the intended purpose.

Breach of the community's trust: A decision to “flip” the property for a profit would be an unthinkable breach of trust to the community that has supported this project. We see no way that Green Space Romeo would profit from this action. The community standing of the Romeo Community Schools Board of Education, Four County Community Foundation, and Tri-County Bank would also be negatively impacted. The fallout from this negative experience would set our community back in making any progress towards integrating public green space and environmental enhancements into our day-to-day lives.

Conservation easement: For a guarantee beyond Green Space Romeo's organizational integrity and understanding of the consequences, the use of a conservation easement could provide a more concrete guarantee.

A conservation easement is a conveyance of a partial interest in the land. It is an agreement between a landowner and a nonprofit or government agency that protects the land by restricting the landowner's future use. A non-possessory property interest is severed from the underlying ownership of the parcel, and the property owner still retains ownership and, usually, limited use of the land. Conservation easements are recorded with the property deed and run with the deed.

The application of this instrument with 297 Prospect Street would entail Green Space Romeo holding the deed and Romeo Community Schools or another eligible entity holding the conservation easement. There are many examples of local governmental entities holding conservation easements and we feel this is a concept worth exploring.

Other questions asked by interview panel

Clarification of names: Green Space Romeo and Green Space on Prospect Street.

Green Space Romeo (GSR) is the name of the Michigan nonprofit corporation / IRS 501 c 3 tax-exempt organization. Green Space on Prospect Street (GSOPS) is the name of our project to acquire 297 Prospect Street and preserve it as a public green space in perpetuity. GSR developed from the GSOPS effort that began at the end of 2023 and has the following mission that goes beyond the GSOPS project:

“The mission of Green Space Romeo is to acquire and preserve the property at 297 Prospect Street in Romeo, Michigan as public green space for the benefit of all community members and to promote and support green spaces throughout the region for health and wellness, educational opportunities and improvement to the environment and the quality of life.”

Clarification of bid amount and change from 2024 offer

The interview panel asked us to explain why the Green Space Romeo current bid (\$525,000) is less than the offer made in 2024 (\$605,000). The 2024 offer considered the resale of the two smaller parcels as an option for financing the purchase of 297 Prospect Street. The BOE indicated that the preservation of the entire property was a priority, and they would not consider any proposal that included the resale of these parcels. We have committed to preserving the entire property in perpetuity – a decision that has also been enthusiastically endorsed by our supporters and has resulted in new support.

The Green Space Romeo offer of \$525,000 is a significant amount that is feasible for GSR to finance without risking our ability to sustainably develop and manage the property as a public green space. We understand that our offer is lower than that offered by residential developers. However, we believe our offer has benefits that exceed the benefits of residential development and that impact the entire community and school district.

Preliminary Phased Development Plan

This draft workplan below identifies five phases that correspond roughly with a five-and-a-half-year timeline – beginning with acquisition in 2025 and developing the property as described in the Site Concept Plan beginning in 2026 and continuing through 2030. Phases may be adjusted based on resources with elements being installed earlier or later depending on community need, partnerships and funding availability.

Phase	Tasks	Responsibility/ Resources
1	Planning	
	Secure property <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Property acquisition ▪ Liability insurance ▪ Establish endowment fund ▪ Volunteer maintenance and inspection plan ▪ Annual turf management and snow removal plan 	Four County Community Foundation Tri-County Bank Landscape contract Volunteers Potential maintenance partnership
	Organizational development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Board training ▪ Strategic plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Site specific planning – 297 Prospect Street – include park rules, group use guidelines, signage, technology, etc. ○ Community outreach, education and advocacy planning ▪ Build out Advisory Board with professionals, educators and subject matter experts ▪ Build out committees and create work plans ▪ Build out web site resource pages – history, education, pollinators, etc. 	Board of directors Volunteers Advancing Macomb Four County Community Foundation
	Partnerships and agreements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Romeo Community Schools and individual teachers for collaboration on designing the green space as a resource for outdoor education and student intern opportunities ▪ University education departments for outdoor education partnerships and internship opportunities ▪ Bruce Washington Romeo Parks and Recreation for potential use and/or maintenance agreement ▪ Village of Romeo for proposed agreement for GSR to mow Thompson Place Right-of-Way as open green space and to clarify liability responsibility; discuss management of parking, confirm regulatory compliance ▪ Bruce Township for parks partnership and to confirm regulatory compliance ▪ University landscape departments for design partnerships and student projects – University of Michigan, Lawrence Technological University ▪ Clinton River Watershed Council for continued bioswale development and participation in watershed programs ▪ ArbNet and American Public Gardens Association for education and advice on managing site for the public enjoyment and for education purposes 	Board of directors Committee chairs Romeo Community Schools Oakland University Bruce Washington Romeo Parks & Rec Village of Romeo Bruce Township Village of Romeo University of Michigan Lawrence Tech University Clinton River Watershed Council ArbNet American Public Gardens Association Romeo Historical Society Romeo District Library Archives Michigan History Center Macomb County Master Gardeners MSU Extension

Phase	Tasks	Responsibility/ Resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History partnerships with Romeo Historical Society, Romeo District Library Archives, and Michigan History Center to ensure quality of history scholarship Garden and landscape partnerships with Macomb County Master Gardeners and MSU Extension 	
	Design and engineering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create site plan, renderings and construction documents Site plan review as required 	Contracted or donated professional services or university partnerships Romeo Planning Commission
2	Arboretum, prairie restoration, pollinator gardens, amenities	
	Implement funding plan for tree planting, prairie restoration and pollinator gardens	State grants Green Macomb Releaf Michigan Named sponsorships
	Implement funding plan for amenities, including monument and interpretive signs, benches, play elements and raised community garden beds	Local fundraising Crowd-sourced funding Named sponsorships
	Establish arboretum – plant trees and establish labels/identification	Volunteers ArbNet
	Prepare prairie restoration area and seed	Contracted
	Install pollinator gardens as funding allows	Volunteers
	Install amenities as funding allows	Volunteers Contracted
3	Bioswales and green stormwater infrastructure (GSI)	
	Implement funding plan for bioswales and GSI	Watershed focused grantors
	Site plan review	Romeo Planning Commission
	Install bioswales and GSI	Contracted
4	Hardscapes, oaks	
	Site plan review for hardscapes as required	Romeo Planning Commission
	Implement funding plan for hardscapes	Patronicity challenge grant Crowd-sourced funding Private foundations
	Implement funding plan for oak trees within savanna	Green Macomb Releaf Michigan Named sponsorships
	Build hardscapes	Contracted
	Plant oak trees in prairie restoration	Volunteers
5	5-year capital improvement plan	
	Develop capital improvement plan with community engagement that includes scheduled replacement of existing assets and construction of new assets over the next 5 years. Potential new assets could include storage/tool shed, EV charger for landscape equipment, gathering pavilion, permanent restroom, rooftop or other solar installation.	Board of directors Committee chairs
	Site plan review	Romeo Planning Commission
	Implement funding plan for selected capital assets	Private foundations Crowd-sourced funding Individual sponsorships
	Construction of capital assets as funding permits	Volunteers Contracted Partnerships

Draft Operating Budget

Year One Budget - 2025							
REVENUE							
	Pledges	\$ 409,000	up to 10% slippage could reduce to \$369,000				
	Donations (4CCF)	\$ 20,000					
	Fundraising to pay loan	\$ 136,000	or up to \$176,000 depending on pledge slippage				
	Fundraising to plant trees	\$ 5,000	Pilot project for public support				
		\$ 570,000					
EXPENSE							
	Property acquisition	\$ 525,000	Donations: \$20K; Pledges: \$305K; Loan \$200K				
	Professional fees	\$ 3,000					
	Design fees	\$ 5,000	Seek university partnerships				
	Interest on loan	\$ 12,000					
	Endowment establishment	\$ 5,000					
	Insurance expense	\$ 10,000					
	Maintenance expense	\$ 5,000	Seek local partnership agreements				
	Tree planting	\$ 5,000					
		\$ 570,000					
Baseline Annual Operating Budget							
REVENUE							
	Annual event	\$ 10,000					
	Annual fund	\$ 15,000					
	Development grants	Varies					
		\$ 25,000					
EXPENSE							
	Professional fees	\$ 2,000					
	Endowment contribution	\$ 5,000					
	Insurance expense	\$ 10,000					
	Maintenance expense	\$ 5,000					
	Promotion and marketing	\$ 1,000					
	Emergency fund set aside	\$ 2,000					
	Development projects	Varies					
		\$ 25,000					

Draft Development Budget

Area	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Estimate	Subtotal / Source
Arboretum and Pollinator Gardens					
	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Estimate	
Tree seedlings	50 seedlings	1.00	\$ 100	\$ 100	Arbor Day foundation
Less common trees	5 gallon pot	5.00	\$ 400	\$ 2,000	
Trees	25 gallon pot	10.00	\$ 250	\$ 2,500	Weigands
Tree ball and burlap	each	10.00	\$ 250	\$ 2,500	
Shrubs	5 gallon pot	10.00	\$ 250	\$ 2,500	
Wildflowers/pollinators	Allowance	1.00	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	
Grasses	Allowance	1.00	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	
Amendment	Allowance	1.00	\$ 500	\$ 500	
Mulch beds	CY	260.00	\$ 11	\$ 2,860	
Installation	Allowance	1.00	\$ 500	\$ 500	
Deer enclosure	Allowance	1.00	\$ 200	\$ 200	
Equipment rental	Allowance	1.00	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	
Contingency	10%	0.10	\$ 18,660	\$ 1,866	
SUBTOTAL					\$ 20,526
Play Elements					
	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Estimate	
Landscape boulders	each	10.00	\$ 250	\$ 2,500	Landscape direct
Stump steppers	set of 3	3.00	\$ 3,000	\$ 9,000	Willy Goat
Balance beam	each	2.00	\$ 6,000	\$ 12,000	Willy Goat
Poured in place surface	Allowance	1.00	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	
Contingency	10%	0.10	\$ 33,500	\$ 3,350	
SUBTOTAL					\$ 36,850
Amenities					
	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Estimate	
Estimated total	Allowance	1.00	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	
Benches	each			\$ -	
Picnic Tables	each			\$ -	
Raised community garden beds				\$ -	
Monument Signs				\$ -	
Interpretive signs				\$ -	
Trash cans	each			\$ -	
Recycling container	each			\$ -	
SUBTOTAL					\$ 20,000
Bioswales and GSI					
	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Estimate	
Drummond Carpenter Estimate - 2024					
Mobilization (5%)	LSUM	1.00	\$ 3,300	\$ 3,300	
Traffic Control	LSUM	1.00	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	
Tree Removal	Each	1.00	\$ 2,200	\$ 2,200	
Site Documentation	LSUM	1.00	\$ 500	\$ 500	
Clearing and Grubbing	SY	1,421.00	\$ 4	\$ 6,252	

Draft Development Budget, continued

Area	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Estimate	Subtotal / Source
Bioswales and GSI, cont.	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Estimate	
Drummond Carpenter Estimate - 2024, continued					
Erosion Control	Acre	0.29	\$ 2,310	\$ 670	
Excavate and Haulaway	CY	47.00	\$ 66	\$ 3,102	
Educational Signage	Each	1.00	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	
Trees, 7 gal/1"cal	Each	5.00	\$ 300	\$ 1,500	
Pollinator seed mix	Acre	0.24	\$ 4,000	\$ 960	
Soil amendments and prep	Acre	0.24	\$ 72,725	\$ 17,454	
Herbaceous plants (1 plug/SF)	SF	2,293.00	\$ 6	\$ 12,612	
Bioretention soil	CY	7.00	\$ 131	\$ 916	
Mulch 3" depth	SY	255.00	\$ 8	\$ 1,964	
Stormwater structure adjustment	Each	1.00	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	
Outlet stone (~3" diam)	CY	0.50	\$ 100	\$ 50	
Underdrain w/cleanout	LF	60.00	\$ 66	\$ 3,960	
Tree protection	Each	1.00	\$ 330	\$ 330	
Contingency (20%)				\$ 13,550	
Contract administration (5%)				\$ 3,389	
SUBTOTAL					\$ 84,709
Hardscapes					
Design and engineering	10%	0.10	\$ 150,000	\$ 15,000	
East sidewalk to East Gathering Space 8' x 40'	SF	320.00	\$ 15	\$ 4,800	OC Parks SF unit cost concrete
East ROW to Center Gathering Space to East Gathering Space 8' x 250'	SF	2,000.00	\$ 15	\$ 30,000	
West Gathering Space to Central Gathering Space 8' xx 170'	SF	1,400.00	\$ 15	\$ 21,000	
Former staff entrance to East Gathering Space	SF	1,360.00	\$ 15	\$ 20,400	
East Gathering Space	SF	1,000.00	\$ 15	\$ 15,000	
West Gathering Space	SF	1,000.00	\$ 15	\$ 15,000	
Central Gathering Space	SF	4,000.00	\$ 15	\$ 60,000	
Contingency	10%	0.10	\$ 150,000	\$ 15,000	
SUBTOTAL					\$ 181,200
Savannah Restoration					
Red/White Oak Species	each	6.00	\$ 250	\$ 1,500	Landscape direct
Prairie restoration - contracted	Allowance	1.00	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	
Contingency	10%	0.10	\$ 11,500	\$ 1,150	
SUBTOTAL					\$ 12,650
TOTAL					\$ 355,935