



**RMC RESEARCH & EDUCATION FOUNDATION
PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING**

Tuesday, October 19, 2021, 11:00 a.m. Eastern
Via Zoom

MINUTES

Participants:

Bruce Christensen
Rodney Grogan
John Holliday
Pete Lyons
Adam Manatt
Jonathan Randall

Stephen Render
Filiberto Ruiz
Alan Wessel

Staff:

Julie Garbini
Jennifer LeFevre

I. **WELCOME & ANTITRUST STATEMENT** – Mr. Wessel welcomed Program Committee members and said that the call would be conducted in strict accordance with the Foundation’s Antitrust Statement and all U.S. Antitrust laws.

II. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** – Mr. Wessel asked if there were any additions or changes to the minutes from the April 12, 2021, call and there were none.

MOTION APPROVED: The Program Committee hereby approves the minutes from the April 12, 2021, conference call.

III. **PROJECT FUNDING AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW** – Mrs. Garbini noted that there are several proposals on the agenda so that she would make her report brief in the interest of time and especially since many of the participants may have seen her report from NRMCA’s recent Board meeting. She encouraged everyone to view the five-minute MIT video if they had not already seen it. She reported that we have several new releases pending over the next three to six months. Mrs. Garbini also reported that several projects were behind because of delays caused by COVID last year but that things were getting back on schedule. She referred participants to the Project Payment Schedule. She said that while we may go over our budget for program funding this year, it was because the money was not spent last year as originally planned. She reminded the group that everything is measured for success, such as dollars saved, yards converted, changes in codes and standards, the number of downloads, etc.

Mrs. Garbini asked if there were any questions and there were none.

IV. **FINANCIAL STATUS/BUDGET** – Mrs. Garbini reported that the endowment is currently at \$28 million, though that will decrease as there are several significant program payments pending this month. She noted that the 2022 budget will be a major topic of discussion as part of the upcoming Board of Trustees meeting, though she anticipates new program funding beyond MIT and other previously approved programs will be in the range of \$150,000 - \$200,000. Mrs.

Garbini also reported that the Portland Cement Association has officially given notice of their intention to end their support of the MIT Concrete Sustainability Hub, though she believes they will renegotiate support at a lower level and noted that this will be a major topic as part of the Foundation's upcoming Board meeting. She said that PCA currently has several funding challenges, including the inability to hold the annual IEEE conference the last two years and the loss of a member resulting in their need to re-work their budget.

Mr. Ruiz agreed that not being able to hold the IEEE conference over the last two years, which will be brought back next year, has been a problem. He also noted that PCA's main focus is now on the Roadmap to Carbon Neutrality and they want to ensure that the MIT work also helps to support the goals of the Roadmap. He said he believes that PCA will fund MIT at some level but that they were not yet ready to commit to a specific figure.

Mrs. Garbini reported that LafargeHolcim had agreed to support the MIT CSHub individually through an annual donation of \$250,000 from 2022 to 2024, with the money coming through the Foundation. She noted that some of MIT's work was critical to the support of the Roadmap goals. She also noted that time was of the essence because they have not been able to hire an executive director and other staff may move on should decisions not be made soon, though she did note that she believes Jeremy Gregory, in his new capacity as executive director of MIT's Climate and Sustainability Consortium, will continue to be a supporter of the industry's sustainability efforts.

In response to Mr. Wessel's question about when a decision will need to be made, Mrs. Garbini responded that she believed by the end of the year. She said that Randy Kirchain, who is currently serving as the Hubs interim executive director, would be likely to leave soon after that point. She noted that a decision on the Foundation's side would not be made until the Board meeting in November and it is unclear when PCA will make their decision.

Mrs. Garbini asked if there were any questions regarding the Foundation's financials and budget and there were none.

V. **PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. Mr. Wessel recommended that the group table in one slate the three projects that the Advisory Council voted to table. Mrs. Garbini briefly noted the main reasons for tabling:
 - Project 21-09: Proposal for a Concrete Management Certificate, \$150,000 over approximately 24 months, submitted by University of St. Thomas: The Advisory Council wanted to receive feedback and support from the CIM National Steering Committee before making a decision. The NSC will be meeting later in the month.
 - Project 21-10: Low-Cost Solution for Initial Curing of Acceptance Test Specimens, \$70,000 over approximately 24 months, submitted by the NRMCA Lab: Mrs. Garbini reported that there was support for this project by the Advisory Council but some concerns about methodology that need to be worked out.
 - Project 21-12: Rethinking Driver Recruitment and Retention Strategies for the RMC Industry, \$99,878 over 18 months, submitted by Clemson University: The Advisory Council is definitely in favor of working on ways to bring more drivers into the industry but was unsure if this was the right project to address the issue. They want more feedback from NRMCA's Workforce Development Committee before moving forward.

MOTION APPROVED: To recommend that Projects 21-09, 21-10 and 21-12 be tabled.

- b. Project 21-08: Comparison of Cost & Energy Performance: Houses Built with ICF vs. Conventional Construction, \$29,800 over 20 months, submitted by University of Oklahoma: Mrs. Garbini reported that there is support and active participation in this project from Foundation donor Dolese Bros. She said the project would be a true comparison of almost-identical houses in the same geographical location but built with different materials – ICF and conventional wood framing. She also noted that this project would have national implications. Committee members agreed it was a good project at a reasonable cost.

MOTION APPROVED: To recommend that Project 21-08 be approved for funding.

- c. Project 21-11: Compilation of Acoustic Data for Concrete Construction, \$13,000 in 2021, submitted by Acentech with co-funding and support by NRMCA: Mrs. Garbini noted that this is one of three proposals which NRMCA intends to co-fund at 50%. She noted that in discussing it with NRMCA's Lionel Lemay, they believed it was better to share funding for a few projects rather than request full funding for just one and that the projects would all be in support of the Build With Strength initiative. Mrs. Garbini noted that acoustic data for concrete construction was not aggregated and that this project seeks to develop a website to make the data easily accessible as it is something that developers and designers are seeking.

Committee members thought this is an important issue particularly for multifamily housing. They also agreed that the cost was reasonable, and Mrs. Garbini noted that this would be a project with a deliverable in a relatively short period of time.

MOTION APPROVED: To recommend that Project 21-11 be approved for funding.

- d. Project 21-13: Validation of Reduced Reinforcing Spacing in Concrete Walls, \$32,000 over 9 months, submitted by Smith-Emery with co-funding and support by NRMCA: Mrs. Garbini noted this is the second of the proposals NRMCA is seeking to co-fund with the Foundation. She said this project is a continuation of the previously approved project from the University of Washington examining steel reinforcement of ICF buildings. She reminded the group that they had rejected a project earlier this year from U of W because it was too expensive, primarily due to the university's overhead. She said that the current proposal was much more reasonable. The project would validate the modeling from the first phase and the Committee members agreed the second phase was important to fund.

MOTION APPROVED: To recommend that Project 21-13 be approved for funding.

- e. Project 21-14: Examining the Abrasion and Carbonation of Portland Limestone Cement (PLC) Systems for Industrial Floors, \$69,994 over 15 months, submitted by Temple University: Mrs. Garbini said that the Advisory Council did believe that this project was an important one. However, there were concerns that others, such as PCA and possibly NSSGA, should also be involved and should co-fund it. She noted that given their budgetary constraints, she was unsure whether PCA would be willing to co-fund. She also noted that Lehigh was supportive of this project and planned to provide materials in-kind.

Committee members felt that this is an important project and agreed that additional funding partners should be sought before making a decision so they voted to table further consideration until funding partners could be identified.

MOTION APPROVED: To recommend that Project 21-14 be tabled.

- f. Project 21-15: Reliable Measurement and Speciation of Sulfur in Concrete Aggregates, \$75,000 over 24 months, submitted by R J Lee Group: Mrs. Garbini reminded the group that a larger scale version of this project had been considered previously, but was rejected because the issue was largely confined to Connecticut and it was too expensive. She noted that ACI's Concrete Research Council had approved funding for this issue, but it had been contingent on other industry funding. Mrs. Garbini reported that the Advisory Council did feel this issue should be addressed as there is a growing potential for this problem to spread to other areas. She also noted that the Advisory Council strongly felt that since this is an aggregate problem, that NSSGA should also be involved and help to fund the project.

Program Committee members agreed that NSSGA should be approached for co-funding. Some members felt that the Foundation could support the project at a lower funding level to help ensure the ACI CRC co-funding. Most members felt that a commitment of \$10,000 to \$15,000 would be appropriate. Others wondered if the project should be tabled until co-funding could be secured. It was decided to recommend the lower level of funding contingent on the project being made viable with co-funding from other partners. Mrs. Garbini said she would reach out to NSSGA ahead of the Board meeting in November.

MOTION APPROVED: To recommend that Project 21-15 be approved for funding of \$15,000 contingent upon securing co-funding to make the project viable.

- g. Project 21-16: Comparison of Earthquake Resilience of ICF to Other Materials for Multi-Family Multi-Story Apartment Building, \$15,000 in 2021, submitted by USRC with co-funding and support by NRMCA: Mrs. Garbini noted that this project is from the US Resiliency Council and is the third project with support and co-funding from NRMCA. She noted it would help to boost resiliency messaging for the Build With Strength program. The Program Members agreed it was a worthy project.

MOTION APPROVED: To recommend that Project 21-16 be approved for funding.

Mrs. Garbini reiterated that the projects will need to be approved by the full Board and that the budget variables will also need to be considered. She also noted that attacking the workforce challenges faced by the industry will become an area of emphasis in 2022.

- VI. **OTHER BUSINESS** – Mrs. Garbini welcomed Pete Lyons to the call as a new Trustee. She reminded the group that on Tuesday, November 9th, there is planned a MIT Executive Briefing and that the full Board of Trustees meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 10th.

Mr. Wessel asked if there was any other business and there was none.

- VII. **ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing no other business, the call was adjourned.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted:

Jennifer LeFevre, Recorder