



**Rouge River Watershed Local Management Assembly
Executive Committee Meeting
October 8, 2003 at 1:30pm
Farmington Hills**

- Allen Park
- Auburn Hills
- Beverly Hills
- Bingham Farms
- Birmingham
- Bloomfield Hills
- Bloomfield Twp.
- Canton Twp.
- Dearborn
- Dearborn Heights
- Farmington
- Farmington Hills
- Franklin
- Garden City
- Inkster
- Lathrup Village
- Melvindale
- Northville
- Northville Twp.
- Novi
- Oakland County
- Plymouth
- Plymouth Twp.
- Pontiac
- Redford Twp.
- Rochester Hills
- Romulus
- Southfield
- Superior Twp.
- Troy
- Van Buren Twp.
- Walled Lake
- Washtenaw County
- Wayne
- Wayne County
- West Bloomfield Twp.
- Westland
- Wixom

1. Welcome

Tom Biasell, Chair of the Rouge River Watershed Local Management Assembly (Rouge Assembly), welcomed everyone to the meeting and to Farmington Hills.

Jack Bails prepared binders for all the members of the Rouge Assembly. The members can add to the binders with new and updated information.

2. Role Call and Introduction of Members

The Executive Committee is made up of the three elected chairs of the Rouge Assembly, a representative of the three counties, and a representative from each of the seven Subwatershed Advisory Groups (SWAGs). The Chair of the Organization Committee was in attendance at the meeting. In addition, there were several observers in attendance at the meeting including alternates for the counties, alternates for the SWAGs, SWAG facilitators, and others.

Members of the Executive Committee present at the meeting are listed below.

Attendee	Representing
Tom Biasell	Chair, Rouge Assembly
James Anulewicz	Vice Chair, Rouge Assembly
Gary Mekjian	Treasurer, Rouge Assembly
Kurt Heise	Wayne County
Janis Bobrin	Washtenaw County
Joe Colaianne	Oakland County
Shawn Keenan	Main 1 & 2 SWAG
John Kozuh	Main 3 & 4 SWAG
Ron Caryl	Upper SWAG
Dave Maurice	Middle 1 SWAG
Tom Wilson (Kevin Buford represented the Middle 3 SWAG until Wilson joined the meeting)	Middle 3 SWAG
Dan Swallow	Lower 1 SWAG
Margaret Horvath	Lower 2 SWAG
Ramzi El-Gharib	Lower 2 SWAG
Dave Payne	Chair, Organization Committee
Jack Bails	Staff Support, Rouge Assembly

3. Agenda Additions/Corrections

There were no changes or additions to the meeting agenda.

4. Review Executive Committee Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Rouge Assembly Executive Committee were reviewed.

- The Executive Committee shall operate under a consensus. Each member receives one vote.
- The Executive Committee will meet at a minimum of 5 times a year.
- The Executive Committee will coordinate the transition from Wayne County to the Rouge Assembly. Wayne County will continue to have rounds of funding for subgrants, but they will be diminished from previous years. Tom Biasell and Kurt Heise, Director, Wayne County Department of Environment met this week to discuss the transition. Wayne County has been very supportive of the Rouge Assembly and has committed to assisting with the transition.
- Support Services to the Executive Committee will be provided by Jack Bails of the Rouge Program Office (RPO).
- The Executive Committee will provide a forum for discussion.
- The initial charge of the Rouge Assembly is limited to storm water.
- The Drafting Committee determined the Rouge Assembly should be a dynamic organization. The Drafting Committee purposefully drafted the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to be a loose structure so the Rouge Assembly has the freedom to transition to several types of organizations. The Drafting Committee also wanted to stress the ground-up community driven approach, and to avoid instruction from the top down.
- The next General Meeting of the Rouge Assembly is December 10 at 1:30pm in Southfield Library.

5. Budget – Treasurer’s Report

Gary Mekjian, Treasurer of the Rouge Assembly, provided the Treasurer’s Report.

Wayne County has agreed to serve as the fiduciary for the Rouge Assembly. Mekjian has been working with Razik Alsaigh, Wayne County Grants Manager. Wayne County has received assessments from member communities of \$169,917 to date. There is \$128,622 outstanding. The expenses paid to date include \$62,480 for the monitoring program and \$33,976 for SWAG facilitation. Both of these numbers are below the budgets authorized at the August 5, 2003 general meeting of the Rouge Assembly. Mekjian and Alsaigh are working towards a generic structure for the tracking of funds for future use by the Rouge Assembly.

Heise reminded members that if dues are not paid the services provided by the Rouge Project Office (RPO) will not continue. Ramzi El-Gharib suggested a reminder be sent to communities who have not paid their assessment. Bails reminded communities the bill they received was for the 2003 assessment. Communities will receive a bill for 2004 once the budget has been finalized.

6. Support Services

6a. Options for 2003

The Rouge Project Office (RPO) is currently providing support services to the Rouge Assembly. The RPO is familiar with the whole program.

A motion was made by Ramzi El-Gharib to continue RPO services for 2003. John Kozuh seconded the motion.

Heise and Kelly Cave explained the status of the RPO. The RPO is a consortium of 27 entities including Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), United States Geological Survey (USGS), consultants, and Wayne County. Wayne County serves a variety of roles including management of the grants and public involvement and illicit discharge elimination program (IDEP) services. Wayne County is the recipient of the Rouge Project Grants and the administrator of the RPO. Wayne County administers hundred of contracts for subgrants that extend through 2005. The Wayne County Executive authorizes the RPO to do work by contracts and agreements with the various entities. The federal grants have many conditions that must be complied with and the possibility of an audit always exists. The Rouge Assembly could be the RPO in the future.

The vote was unanimous to continue Support Services to the Rouge Assembly through 2003.

6b. 2004 Support Services

Support Services to the Rouge Assembly in 2004.

Biasell indicated the Rouge Assembly is not currently a legal entity and will not be one in 2004. The Rouge Assembly can therefore not enter into contracts and any contracts for the Rouge Assembly must remain with Wayne County. Wayne County has been helpful in facilitating the formation of the Rouge Assembly for the benefit of the entire watershed. The Treasurer needs guidance in preparing the budget for 2004 so a determination of support services for 2004 must be completed soon.

Ron Caryl made a motion for the Rouge Assembly Organization Committee to provide a recommendation on whether to continue the RPO providing support services in 2004. John Kozuh seconded the motion. The motion carried 11 to 3.

Rouge Assembly Involvement in Rouge Project Subgrants.

Biasell indicated he and Wayne County have reached an understanding where the Rouge Assembly will be involved in the Rouge Project subgrant process. Heise suggested the Rouge Assembly designate a committee, possibly the technical

committee, to examine and prioritize the subgrant proposals on a watershed basis. The projects would also be reviewed by the RPO selection committee, whose members are chosen to minimize conflicts of interest.

Several members indicated the SWAGs are effective in evaluating the proposals and would like the prioritization of subgrants by the SWAGs continue. Heise offered to explain the current subgrant process at the first meeting of the Organization Committee. Bails suggested an alternate would be for the Rouge Assembly to provide input to Wayne County on the criteria for the grants and the eligible categories of funding.

7. Transition Issues

The group spent considerable time discussing the transition of the Rouge Assembly from its current arrangement to its permanent arrangement beginning in January 2005.

It was suggested that the Organization Committee start looking at a new legal entity. It must be determined if the Rouge Assembly will be an inter-governmental organization, operate under a statute of authority, organize similar to SEMCOG, create a consortium, operate under Chapter 20 Drain Code, or something else. If the Rouge Assembly becomes a legal entity it would be eligible to receive funds from the State of Michigan to use as match for federal funds.

Biasell reported the Chair of the Rouge Assembly has been given a seat on the Water Quality Consortium.

The MOA for the Rouge Assembly expires in December 2004. The Organization Committee will provide guidance on the long-term structure of the Rouge Assembly, but by the end of 2004 the Assembly should have success stories to report to community councils for future funding.

Anulewicz indicated that the members of the Executive Committee were charged by their governing boards and councils to make the Rouge Assembly work. The governing bodies want to do the right thing and limit dictates from the above that that will cause the communities to spend more money with fewer results. The committees will be the key to the Rouge Assembly. The Rouge Assembly must continue to move forward.

Colaianne suggested the Rouge Assembly should ensure there is no duplication of effort. Heise indicated Rouge Watershed communities have certain activities they must complete as part of their storm water permit and storm water permit prevention initiatives (SWPPIs). Several activities in communities' SWPPIs are already completed by the RPO, such as monitoring and data collection. Wayne County is funding several items, such as monitoring, so the communities don't

have to. He also suggested Public Involvement should be addressed in the future. Wayne County will present a summary of the RPO at the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

Bobrin suggested services provided by the Rouge Assembly be offered with some flexibility for member communities to pick and choose. Communities could use materials to meet all or part of their Phase II needs.

8. Direction for Standing and Special Committees

8a. Finance Committee

The Chair of the Finance is the Treasurer of the Rouge Assembly, Gary Mekjian.

Biasell suggested the Finance Committee investigate the possibility of other dollars beyond community assessments and Rouge Project grant dollars. U.S. EPA is very interested in the Rouge Assembly.

Mekjian indicated help is needed for the finance committee. The committee needs to determine the annual budget and what services should be provided.

Wilson suggested that a valuable tool for future governing body approval of participation in the Rouge Assembly will be to report the communities' assessments to the Rouge Assembly are less expensive than the cost of conducting permit required activities on their own. Biasell agreed that future approval of the Rouge Assembly will be difficult.

Caryl commented a useful tool is the document and presentation put together by Bails explaining the Rouge Assembly. Bails indicated he would bring that presentation to the Organization Committee.

Community assessments collected in 2003 and 2004 are being matched by federal dollars from the Rouge Project.

The possibility of community in-kind services being used as local match was discussed. Cave indicated in-kind services cannot be used for match at this time, but may be used in the future depending on the structure of the agreement.

8b. Technical Committee Proposed Charge

Tom Biasell is the Chair of the Technical Committee. Biasell indicated he will designate a co-chair.

Heise indicated sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) issues are before Judge Feikens as part of the Water Quality Consortium. Wayne County would like to assist

communities in meeting their SSO obligations. Some possibilities include a unified permit and developing a funding scheme.

Biasell indicated a representative of the technical committee meetings will attend the MDEQ-RPO Quarterly Meetings. The next meeting is October 27 at 9:00am.

Heise indicated the representative is also invited to attend the monthly Rouge Project Management Committee Meetings. The next RPO MCM will be October 27 at 1pm at Wayne County - Commerce Court.

Bails suggested the Drafting Committee initially limited the Rouge Assembly to storm water because the CSO and SSO issues would overwhelm the discussion.

Biasell indicated revised SWPPIs are due in December. The Rouge Assembly may be able to provide guidance on common elements and save communities time and money.

8c. Public Involvement Committee Proposed Charge

Janis Bobrin has agreed to be co-chair of the Public Involvement Committee.

SEMCOG has a regional PI group that is discussing area-wide public involvement issues.

It was suggested that the Public Involvement committee address publicity for the Rouge Assembly. Mr. Biasell indicated there will be more publicity following the next general Rouge Assembly meeting.

8d. Organization Committee Proposed Charge

The Chair of the Organization Committee and its members will be confirmed at the next general meeting of the Rouge Assembly. The Chair of the Organization Committee is Dave Payne of Bloomfield Township. The Co-Chair is Kurt Heise.

Heise indicated there are several charges to the organization committee:

- Determining whether to continue with RPO services through 2004.
- Examine the various options to form a new legal entity and determine the type of entity the Rouge Assembly should be. A goal of the entity should be at the ability to receive and spend grant monies.
- Involve other non- storm water permitted groups in the Rouge Assembly.

Colaianne suggested there is a recent SEMCOG publication that may be useful to the Organization Committee. He also suggested the Rouge Assembly should try to avoid the duplication of efforts and inventory the various on-going watershed activities and sources of activities.

Keenan indicated SEMCOG's regional PI committee has already begun an inventory of public involvement products and is determining which products generated as part of the Rouge Project can be genericized for local community use.

Colaianne suggested nested jurisdictions should be investigated.

Biasell requested each member of the Executive Committee indicate key items for consideration by the organizational committee. There were a variety of answers: securing political support, clarifying the objectives, creating a sense of ownership, examining the pros and cons of various organizations as models for the Rouge Assembly, recognizing the Rouge Assembly has an uphill battle to fight in a short time period, involving political leadership, increasing community involvement, representing the diverse communities across the watershed, moving forward under the advice of Wayne County and the RPO, being wise and taking good small steps, examining the possible benefits, determining how the Rouge Assembly may replace existing organization, looking towards the RPO for structure, and creating community buy-in.

Several members reminded the group that if the Rouge Assembly does not continue someone will step up to fill the void, likely the Federal Court, which will increase the costs and reduce productivity. The Rouge Assembly is premised on home rule, which the communities want to continue.

Biasell suggested another topic is how the Rouge Assembly relates to the SWAGs. The relationship should be appropriate and the groups should complement each other. The combined effort of 40 communities can have an impact, such as advocacy with MDEQ on fees, CSO, and SSO issues. The Organization Committee should determine how that impact will manifest itself and create long-term buy-in for the Rouge Assembly.

8e. Membership Committee

Kurt Giberson will chair the membership committee. Giberson was unable to attend the Executive Committee meeting.

Bails suggested the membership committee examine the involvement of schools that are getting storm water permits.

9. Information and Notices

9a. Review Calendar

The next General Meeting of the Rouge Assembly will be December 10 at 1:30pm in the Southfield Library.

Committee Chairs are asked to send their meeting dates to Jack Bails at Jbails@pscinc.com.

Note: Following the meeting the Finance Committee meeting was set for November 4 from 10am to noon at Wayne County - Commerce Court.

9b. Schedule for Next Executive Committee Meeting

The next meeting of the Executive Committee of the Rouge Assembly will be December 2 at 1:30pm at the Farmington-Farmington Hills Main Library.

10. Other Business

There were no other items of business discussed at that time.

11. Adjourn

Mr. Biasell thanked everyone for the attendance and adjourned the meeting.