

Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC)
Draft Meeting Summary
January 24, 2019



Attendees:

Attended?	Name	Attended?	Names
Y	Ashley Allen, HRC	N	Marie McCormick, Friends of the Rouge
Y	Paulina Appel, Livonia	N	Karen Mondora, Farmington Hills
N	Alice Bailey, Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC)	N	Doug Moore, Livonia
Y	Dan Ballnik, Chair	Y	Noel Mullett, Wayne County Dept. of Public Services
Y	John Beisel, Farmington Hills	N	Rob Myllyoja, Stantec
N	Marty Boote, ARC	N	Caitlin Nigrelli, EPA Liaison Sea Grant
N	Cory Borton, Bloomfield Twp.	Y	Chris O'Meara, ARC
N	Jeff Braunscheidel, MDNR	Y	John O'Meara, ARC
Y	Bill Craig, Vice Chair and SPAC representative	Y	Sally Petrella, Friends of the Rouge
N	Annette DeMaria, ARC	Y	Heather Rice, Washtenaw County Water Resource Commissioners Office
N	Rose Ellison, EPA Representative	Y	Brandy Siedlaczek, Southfield
N	Trisha Gabriel, Livonia	Y	Jennifer Tewkesbury, MDNR AOC Coordinator
Y	Jacy Garrison, Oakland County Water Resources Commissioners Office	N	Dean Tuomari, Citizen
N	Orin Gelderloos, U-M Dearborn	N	Sue Thompson, WCDPS-WQMD
N	Kevin Goodwin, MDEQ	N	Barb Matthews, HRC
N	Barb Goryca, Dearborn citizen	Y	Paul Seelbach, UM SEAS

Introductions

Introductions were completed.

Meeting Summary

The meeting summary from December 10, 2018 was reviewed and approved. The motion to approve the summary was made by B. Craig and seconded by N. Mullett and passed unanimously.

AOC Course at UM SEAS Presentation

P. Seelbach gave a brief presentation about the class that he is teaching and the involvement that he hopes to have with the RRAC. He expressed that this class is a bridge between academics and how things really happen. There are two master's program students involved with the Rouge. The class is working with the Office of the Great Lakes on how the AOC program is progressing and the process. They will be meeting with all agencies and then will be making recommendations to the OGL of what they can do better in the "last bucket AOCs." They will be looking at how the State can facilitate success. He expects that the RRAC would meet twice with the students to discuss the history and then later to review the plan and recommendations of process or capacity changes that could be made. P. Seelbach also invited the members to attend the final class to hear what they findings are from the students on April 29 from 3-5 p.m. The first meeting was scheduled for February 9 at 9 a.m. with a tour to follow.

Old Business

J. O'Meara reviewed the draft economic impact handout for the Rouge and asked that any comments be sent to him within the next week.

SPAC Report

B. Craig reported that the SPAC bylaws are still being reviewed and are planned to be voted on at the next SPAC meeting. B. Craig informed the council that he will be attending the Great Lakes Public Forum June 17-19, 2019 in Milwaukee along with the AOC Conference September 11-12, 2019 in Cleveland.

MDNR Update

J. Tewkesbury reported that the new Governor has not made any changes yet. She reported that Jon Allen will be there until March. She reported that they are hoping to offer more money for SPAC grants and may just fund direct to PACs, more to come on this.

J. Tewkesbury informed the Council that the CMI funds are depleted which funded water monitoring programs. This funding is going away which means that some of the USGS gauges will be shut off and fish tissue samples will not be available. She also shared that no sediment sampling will be done either until new funding is found. J. Tewkesbury will share a list of which gauges will be affected.

EPA Update

J. Tewkesbury reported on behalf of R. Ellison was not in attendance. She stated that the concrete channel continues to move forward with monitoring, feasibility study and design efforts. She reported that they continue working on the Old Channel efforts but are waiting for decisions by EPA but it has slowed due to the shutdown. She stated that a construction meeting is planned for February with sediment work beginning in February/March. She also said that a water intake issue with a Dearborn facility is being addressed.

NOAA Application/Rouge AOC List Update

J. O'Meara reported that the NOAA partnership application with the Friends of the Detroit River is due February 12 which includes a detailed summary of projects. J. O'Meara will share with the group once complete.

Existing Grants Update

2018 GLC PAC support Grant – Fish Community Survey

S. Petrella reported that they have a draft of the fish report and will plan to give a presentation of the survey results at the next meeting.

2018 GLC PAC support Grant – Habitat Project Descriptions

J. O'Meara reported that staff continue to flush out the next round of project descriptions which include Phoenix Lake Habitat Improvements, Wilcox Lake Habitat Improvements and Venoy Wetlands and Fish Habitat Structures. The grant ends at the end of February. As projects are finalized, they will be added to the RRAC website.

There was some discussion about the need to check with the entities with projects on the BUI list to confirm that the future projects are still in their plans if funded including LTU, firefighters' park etc.

Wayne County Invasives

N. Mullett informed the Council that he has received the final report from FOTR and that he is still hoping to have a final committee meeting in February.

Wayne County EPA Habitat Grant – HFE Fishway/Oxbow Phase 3 Implementation/Nankin Lake

J. O'Meara reported that the projects are going well. He stated that the water was released into the fishway at the Henry Ford Estate at the end of January. He reported that the bridge for the Oxbow was placed. He added that the concepts are being developed for Nankin and hope to have that ready within the next month.

USDA Forest Service Grant

J. O'Meara reported that the Forest Service grant is ongoing with some communities planting trees and submitting their reports last fall with the rest being completed in the spring of 2019. J. O'Meara

reported that the ARC plans to submit a proposal for the next round of funding to continue this type of work.

ARC Rouge AOC Habitat Restoration – Tamarack Creek/Johnson Creek

J. O’Meara reported that project design continues. Soil sediment work is being done with lab results starting to come in.

Other Projects of Note

There were no new projects of note brought up by the RRAC members. J. O’Meara reminded the group that if they learn of any projects that need funding to let ARC staff know.

OGL-PAC Support Grant Activities/Ideas

J. O’Meara asked the group to suggest items to be included in the next funding request under the PAC Support Grant. Forward any ideas to J. O’Meara. Items suggested at the meeting include:

- More project descriptions
- Continue fish monitoring
- Maybe add other benthic monitoring
- Maybe ARC GIS story board (online/website)
- Update to the Report Card (Bill)
- Five Year Vision updated (Noel)
- Funding to include RRAC products in the Water School events (Noel)

N. Mullett asked J. Tewkesbury to find out from MDNR what role the fish/bug sampling play in the BUI removal.

New Business

J. O’Meara informed the RRAC members that the event that the ARC hosts celebrating the GLRI every 3 threes will again this year.

B. Craig informed the group that the AOC conference is scheduled for September 11-12 in Cleveland.

D. Ballnik asked about the drones and possibly budgeting that into the PAC Support grant. J. Tewkesbury said she believed they have drones inhouse that she would check into.

Comments

B. Craig expressed his concern with the good work we are doing revitalizing the AOC and how it leads to not so good work. The efforts are bringing economic and recreation benefits including a restored Wilcox Lake and a better recreation building. Unfortunately, it also increases the property values and Wayne County wants to sell land for housing which leads to development of limited habitat. He also talked about the water trail which stimulates recreation and the economy but putting a bike trail in will also reduce the habitat. He reiterated that there is good and bad – the results of progress.

N. Mullett asked if the RRAC should have a MDEQ representative now that MDNR is under the OGL. J. Tewkesbury said she would research who would be an appropriate addition.

Adjourn

The motion was made to adjourn the meeting by B. Craig and seconded by S. Petrella. The motion passed.