

**Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC)
Draft Meeting Summary
December 16, 2019**



Attendees:

Attended?	Name	Attended?	Names
Y	Ashley Allen, HRC	Y	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	John Bauman, MDNR	Y	John O'Meara, ARC
Y	Bill Craig, Vice Chair and SPAC representative	Y	Sally Petrella, Friends of the Rouge
Y	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, EGLE AOC Coordinator
N	Jacy Garrison, Oakland County Water Resources Commissioners Office	Y	Dean Tuomari, Citizen
N	Orin Gelderloos, U-M Dearborn	N	Sue Thompson, WCDPS-WQMD
N	Kevin Goodwin, EGLE	N	Barb Matthews, HRC
N	Barb Goryca, Dearborn citizen	N	Paul Seelbach, UM SEAS

Introductions

Introductions were completed. Guests included Shawn Duke and Tim McAlister, CARDNO.

Meeting Summary

The meeting summary from August 27, 2019 was reviewed and approved with edits provided by N. Mullett. The motion to approve the summary with edits was made by B. Craig and seconded by S. Petrella and passed unanimously.

Old Business

There was no old business.

SPAC Report

Bill Craig reported that he attended the 2019 Great Lakes Areas of Concern Conference on September 11-12, 2019 in Cleveland, Ohio. Also attending were Dan Ballnik, Sally Petrella, Jen Tewkesbury, Rose Ellison, Marty Boote, Alice Bailey. Conference agenda and information from conference may be on various websites.

Bill reported that there was a lengthy delay in processing the RFP for PAC support grants but it was released earlier this month still. SPAC did not have a Fall Business Meeting or Legislative Briefing on October. There is no SPAC meeting scheduled at this time.

EGLE Update

J. Tewkesbury reported that EGLE continues to integrate the financial layers of the administration which slowed the release of the PAC support grants. She reported that it was announced mid-December. She reported that she has met with their federal partners and is hopeful that more money may be coming. She reported that their other focus was on sediment in the Rouge and Detroit rivers. She said that the Rouge is not as advanced in sediment activities and they will be focusing on this moving forward. She

said that the Detroit and Rouge may be one project and she expects more movement on sediment projects at the federal level.

EPA Update

J. Tewkesbury reported on the concrete channel progress, reporting that they have come up with different restoration scenarios and sampling has shown sediment hot spots so some concrete will need to stay as a cap. They are discussing habitat enhancements and expect to meet in the spring to see what the options and designs are. She stated that there are wetlands in the area and their may be an option to reconnect the Beaumont oxbow.

J. O'Meara reported that Senator Stabenow was looking into support of WRDA funding in the next bill with additional money going to the Army Corps of Engineers.

J. Tewkesbury reported on behalf of R. Ellison who was not in attendance. She reported that the LRROC clean-up has progressed with the installation of the wall completed. They continue to pull debris and conduct turbidity monitoring for water quality.

B. Craig suggested looking at how to piggyback on the LRROC contract to include habitat enhancement elements on the back end of this effort. Possibly include fish shelves or bird habitat.

New EGLE PAC Support Grant Application

J. O'Meara reviewed the new grant application which was just released. He stated that there is no timeline of a due date, it is a rolling application. ARC staff are looking at the RRAC grant having a budget of \$75,000 over a 2-year period. There was discussion on items to include in the application including monitoring and project description writeups. There was some discussion on other items that could be included in the grant application including updating the Rouge River Report Card and public education on the BUI removal and AOCs and ways to get out message out. There was some discussion on the monitoring and determining when effort would be included in this grant application. It was decided that the highest priority monitoring effort is the fall activities. J. Tewkesbury felt that the project descriptions continuing are the biggest priority for the RRAC at this point. She also suggested scaling back the fish sampling to gather data around some of the completed projects.

M. McCormick shared how well FOTR is doing with promoting activities on social media and offered those services to RRAC. She also informed the council that FOTR is in the design phase of preparing a watershed report card that would be useful and educational. Erb Family Foundation is interested in funding activities similar to the Report Card including canopy cover, biological monitoring, BUIs and green infrastructure in 2020. M. McCormick said they are looking at doing something similar to the Ausable Bayfield report card (<https://www.abca.ca/watershedreportcard/2013>). J. Tewkesbury expressed concern with a watershed report card would be skewed because of the last 4 miles at the mouth of the Rouge River. S. Petrella stated that it would be by subwatershed.

Existing Grants Update

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

N. Mullett reported that work at the oxbow is complete and was celebrated at the grand opening during the October Great Lakes Restoration Celebration event at The Henry Ford. Senator Stabenow and Wayne County Executive Evans were on hand for the ribbon cutting ceremony. There was some discussion on the public outreach in regard to the HFE Fishway, J. O'Meara stated that they are holding off on public outreach until the work starts again. N. Mullett said they would pass along information on the project to the RRAC partners when available. N. Mullett reported that the Nankin permits are expected soon and that the bid packages are ready and expected to be on the street in early February with construction beginning in the spring.

USDA Forest Service Grant

J. O'Meara reported that the ARC submitted a proposal for the next round of funding to continue planting trees affected by the EAB infestation. Unfortunately, the ARC's application was not funded for 2019. ARC Staff are reviewing ways to improve our application for the next round of grants offered through the Forest Service.

ARC Rouge AOC Habitat Restoration – Tamarack Creek/Johnson Creek Design

J. O'Meara reported that the Tamarack Creek work is a little behind because of additional data gathering and working with property owners. J. O'Meara informed the council that the Johnson Creek bid package is almost ready and expects that it will be available in January as long as the winter activities are completed. B. Craig asked if the parking lots are going to be fixed at Johnson Creek. J. O'Meara stated that they will be doing a bioswale in the areas. J. O'Meara shared that the EPA is continuing this project by providing direct funding to the ARC for the implementation of the Tamarack Creek/Johnson Creek project.

ARC Seeley Creek Habitat Restoration

J. O'Meara reported that the ARC received direct funding from EPA to complete both the design and build of 5 acres of riparian wetland and 1,600 feet of Seeley Creek. This project addresses the BUIs associated with fish and wildlife habitat including degraded fish and wildlife populations, degradation of benthos and loss of fish and wildlife habitat. This project is also from the RRAC's Habitat Project List. The QAPP is being developed now.

NOAA Partnership

J. O'Meara reported that this grant was awarded to Friends of the Detroit River. He reported that the first two projects in this grant are in the Detroit River and then the rest of the funds in the future may, based on NOAA priorities, go to the other partners, including the ARC, to fund projects.

GLC Volunteer River, Stream and Creek Cleanup Program Grant

M. McCormick reported that this grant is complete with the ARC acting as fiduciary. The project included funding to support activities at 9 Rouge Rescue sites in 2019 with 272 volunteers affecting 4.5 river miles.

Other Projects of Note

J. O'Meara reminded the council members that we need projects to populate our "other projects list" that aren't necessarily linked to the habitat BUI removal, but are still projects that ARC staff can have ready when funding sources call looking for projects that are ready. If you have a project idea forward them to J. O'Meara.

New Business

S. Petrella reported that the Rouge Burn anniversary fundraiser on October 10 at 4:00 p.m. at MPC and the related press conference were a huge success.

J. O'Meara reported that the Great Lakes Restoration Celebration on October 18 hosted by the ARC at The Henry Ford was also a success with attendance by Senator Stabenow and Wayne County Executive Evans. The event was sponsored by ECT, SEMCOG and The Henry Ford.

Comments

M. McCormick invited RRAC members to attend their annual meeting on March 19 and will be held at the Downey Brewing Company with several food trucks providing dinner.

Adjourn

The motion was made to adjourn the meeting by B. Craig and seconded by D. Tuomari. The motion passed.