

**Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC)
Draft Meeting Summary
October 18, 2022**



List of Attendees:

Voting Members:

Marie McCormick, Chair - *Present*
Dan Ballnik, Vice Chair - *Present*
Bill Craig, SPAC representative - *Present*
Jacy Garrison, Oakland County - *Absent*
Doug Moore, Livonia - *Present*
Noel Mullett, Wayne Co. DPS - *Present*
Heather Rice, Washtenaw Co. WRC Office - *Absent*
Brandy Siedlaczek, Southfield - *Present*
Tyler Sonoga, Farmington Hills - *Present*

Others Present:

Chris O'Meara, ARC
Tennille Newsome, ARC
John O'Meara, ARC
Sally Petrella, FOTR
Adam Gerlach, Plymouth
Lorena Villanueva, University of Maryland
Ashley Allen, HRC
Stephanie Petriello, OCWRC
Michelle McCrackin, Citizen
Dean Tuomari, Citizen
Jen Tewkesbury, EGLE
Erma Leaphart
Chris Raschke, Dearborn

Introductions

Marie McCormick started the meeting. Marie McCormick completed roll call by calling on attendees listed in the Teams meeting. Attendees gave their name, affiliation and title. Chris O'Meara reminded attendees to add their name and affiliation in the chat box. Introductions were completed.

Approval of Meeting Summary

Marie McCormick reviewed the meeting summary from July 21, 2022 and asked if there were any questions. There were none. The meeting summary of the July 21, 2022, meeting was approved with no comments. The motion to approve the meeting summary was made by Doug Moore and seconded by Dan Ballnik.

Old Business

Report from Bylaws Committee

Marie McCormick reported to the members that the RRAC now has a new set of bylaws and thanked all who served on the bylaws committee. Marie informed members that they can click the link on the agenda provided by Chris O'Meara to view the bylaws. Marie stated that the RRAC bylaws will be displayed on EGLE's website and hopes the process will be a foundation for the RRAC to recruit additional members to the group and allow others to see themselves as participants within RRAC.

Bylaws Report

Sally Petrella reported on the bylaws (Chris O'Meara displayed the bylaws on the screen). Sally also thanked the committee that helped revise the bylaws. Sally reported some highlights of the bylaws:

- Background information, mission statement, scope, membership which detailed voting members which entailed minimum and maximum amounts of memberships. Sally stated an election will need to be held early next year and that a member will serve a term of two years. Marie McCormick wanted to confirm there is no limit on the number of terms a member can serve.
- Voting, Officers, conflict of interest, administrative support, terms of office, election, how often meetings will be held which will be no less than 4 times per calendar year. Marie stated that

meetings are going to be set for a year in advance (to be discussed later in this meeting) with an agenda being sent out 10 days in advance. Email votes, rules of procedures, agendas

- Executive Committee: which consists of the officers. Marie stated that if an existing voting member would like to be included in the executive committee meeting to send her an email.
- Nominating Committee: which consists of Vice Chair, SPAC Rep and voting/non-voting member to be designated by Marie. Marie asked if any members were interested to please send her an email.
- Recruitment and Retention Committee: to look into recruiting new members of the ARC. Sally stated if anyone was interested in this committee that they are designated by the Chairperson. Marie stated that if members would like to serve on this committee to let her know.
- Ad Hoc Committee: will include voting and non-voting members
- Fiduciary, Amendments

Marie asked if there were any questions regarding the bylaws, there were none. Dan Ballnik stated he had a comment about alternates and how that works. Sally stated if you are a voting member you can designate an alternate within your organization but if you are serving as a citizen you cannot designate an alternate.

Sally also reported that the bylaws committee put together a document of questions regarding procedures, etc. and attempts to answer the questions. The bylaws created RRAC Procedures, Guidelines and Policy Draft Framework Exploration (Chris O'Meara shared the document on the screen) document. Marie went through the document with questions or comments that came up in the bylaws committee meetings and the committee answered questions as they saw fit. The topics in the document were recommended to not be included in the bylaws as they are more procedural. Marie stated it will be left up to the members if they would like the procedures formalized. Marie thanked Sally and the committee again and hopes that other SPACs will look to the RRAC as leaders as they move to update their own bylaws. Marie asked if there were any questions, there were none.

SPAC Report

Bill Craig reported the following:

October 11-12 SPAC Meeting

Bill stated the Michigan State SPAC had a meeting on October 11th and 12th which included all representatives of all PACs. The business meeting at the River Raisin Battlefield Park Business Center and was hosted by the River Raisin AOC, City of Monroe. Bill stated meeting minutes would be provided at a later date including links to items that were discussed as some overlap in the RRACs discussion topics today. Bill stated some of the highlights were:

- Tour of some of their AOC projects including fish passages, infrastructure changes and Invasive species management
- Nomination of new chair and vice chair. Bill stated there were volunteers for those leadership roles. The terms ended with the October meeting and new roles will take over in 2023.
- Retirement recognition of Rick Horbla, AOC program manager. Jen T. typed in the chat that Rick had 45 years in with EGLE.
- Dinner with the Mayor, City Council members and Commissioners
- Viewing of River Raisin AOC legacy project documentary that is 48 minutes long. Bill stated it was an impressive project and would set an example for any AOCs to do in time.
- Discussions on EJ-DEI, SPAC Habitat, SPAC bylaws and bylaws in general with other AOCs, PAC grants,
- PAC reports from AOC representatives who gave highlights of their projects. Bill mentioned he had two pages of highlights for the 18 RRAC projects in process thanks to John O'Meara.
- EGLE and EPA updates were given

Marie state the representatives for the Rouge at the SPAC meeting were Bill Craig, Erma Leaphart, Marie McCormick and John O'Meara. There was a special guest appearance on Tuesday from Michigan EGLE Director Liesl Clark who joined in the meeting and the tour.

SPAC Habitat Subcommittee

Bill Craig, the new chair of the committee reported there was a third meeting was held through Teams on October 3rd. The main discussion was on scope and goals for the committee. The chair requested ideas and questions from member to bring focus to the agenda in general asking the 5 W's (Who, What, When, Where and Why) how maintenance could be done. The next meeting has not been scheduled. Bill Craig stated he sat with the Mayor of Monroe and City Council members for the dinner and discussed Amy O'Leary as SEMCOG's Executive Director.

SPAC EJ-DEI Subcommittee

Marie McCormick reported that the group is considering whether or not some of the funding from the state should require PACs participation in training and values as a prerequisite for funding. Marie stated that it was unanimously agreed upon. The EJ-DEI is looking to foster additional training opportunities at the state level and there is a request to see that filter to the individual PACs and offer more opportunity for participation. Marie also reported that the implicit bias training was well received by those who attended and there was some recommendation for further training that could be implemented. Marie mentioned it is a good subcommittee to be a part of and is open to anyone. Marie also stated another conversation that came up around SPAC around DEI was some of the themes and successes and integration of processes that could be beneficial to answering the question of long term maintenance and how to develop intentional meaningful stewards of the projects.

If you are interested in being part of the EJ-DEI subcommittee to please let Marie know.

Marie asked Erma Leaphart if she had anything to add about the subcommittee. Erma stated that Marie mentioned all the high points. Erma did mention that one important thing was that maybe PACs would be eligible for additional funding to do the work/incentive.

Marie asked if there were any questions for her or Bill, there were none.

Marie read off a comment from the chat box from Noel that History of PAC isn't quite right. RPO never housed the PAC. The RPO provided funding through EGLE/MDEQ and the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project (RRNWWDP) to support the RAP/RRAC process. MDEQ was the administrator and provided support and appointed the RRAC. FOTR was at one time an RRAC support grant recipient. I think the 2005 Report Card was the major deliverable at that time/under that contract.

EGLE Update

Jen Tewkesbury reported they had the capacity grant approved by EPA so the state can start spending their funds. With that, the RFP for PAC support grant is out and applications can be submitted. There is an option of backdating to October 1st for costs that have been accrued over the last couple of weeks or the date could be November 1st. Jen also reported next month is EGLE's federal partners meeting in Lansing to go through each AOC and discuss management options and how other agencies can assist with the work. Jen stated most of the focus for the Rouge was going to still be on sediment and the remainder of the habitat projects.

EPA Update

Jen Tewkesbury reported EPA and ACOE is still working on contracts for the lower rouge river old channel. Jen also reported that the lower rouge river main channel has a signed partnership agreement with the

nonfederal partners and is currently being reviewed by EPA. Jen stated the remedial investigation and feasibility study is complete and will now move to design and what role the nonfederal partners will have.

Sally Petrella asked Jen if the old channel work won't begin until next years. Jen confirmed yes, contracts are still in the process and it is due to the wall collapse on Zug Island.

Rouge AOC Grants Update

Status of Projects

John O'Meara reported that there was a written report of the updates of all current Rouge AOC in today's meeting packet that was emailed previously by Chris O'Meara. Chris O'Meara also shared the report on the screen. John stated there are 18 projects in process. John mentioned the implementation grant was just received for Wilcox, Phoenix and LTU. Johnson Creek Intercounty Drain Restoration also received their implementation grant through Washtenaw County. John O'Meara stated that on the lower rouge reforestation project, Friends of the Rouge (with the ARC) will complete assessments of other areas this fall and final plantings of those zones will occur next spring.

Jen T. asked John if he wanted to speak about the EJ and the Inkster project meeting with EPA. John O'Meara mentioned the EPA with other funding are interested in work in underserved areas. John mentioned there is a chance to piggyback habitat work in Inkster park by adding some connectivity passive recreational items to the project and is in the grant process to get funding from the EPA the first of the year.

Marie McCormick asked John O'Meara what the process is of removing the sediment bags at Nankin Lake. John stated about 15,000 yards has already been removed and currently there is a landfill issue of where they classify the sediment as liquid and the landfill can only take a total of 10% liquid a month in a landfill total due to solid waste laws. The contractor is currently working on the process. Marie stated Friends of the Rouge is always getting questions regarding that and asked if John could put a note on social media explaining the project.

Sally Petrella asked about the Johnson Creek Intercounty Drain project and would like to know the boundaries of the project. John O'Meara asked Sally to send him an email and he would respond because he doesn't know off hand without looking at a drawing.

Marie McCormick asked John what outreach and engagement has been done on Wilcox and Phoenix lake on input for the design. John stated they met with the Township representatives yesterday. John mentioned the project team is planning for a meeting this fall/winter taking about all the projects.

Tyler Sonoga asked if any precon meeting has happened on Seeley Creek now that the project has been awarded. John O'Meara stated the contract has been approved by the ARC and once the contract is signed, a precon meeting will be scheduled and Tyler would be invited to.

EGLE PAC Grant

John O'Meara mentioned the sub group of the RRAC group had a meeting in July regarding initial thoughts of ideas that were presented of what they may do. John stated the group will put together the next round for the PAC grant including continuing business activities and continuing monitoring activities.

Marie McCormick stated Friends of the Rouge worked to get funding to support a watershed report card through University of Maryland with Erb support and thought that it could be something they could find funding for through arts and theater funding to look for more creative ways.

Marie McCormick asked if there were any questions, there were none.

Project Presentation

John O'Meara stated there is not a specific project presentation at this time as projects are wrapping up but next meeting there will be a presentation on the Wayne County Parks (5 sites).

Marie mentioned that Olivia Williams with University of Michigan Master student will do a report on the electroshocking that was done this summer but is no complete.

Other Related Watershed Projects

Update on Fish Surveys

Sally McCormick reported FOTR completed sampling of 22 sites and were tasked of 20 sites. A link to the report is available here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/196rbMCqjpS6ClO5em_OT23wPFh3uo0a1/view?usp=sharing

Sally stated there was great benefit in working with Olivia. Sally mentioned they went onsite with DNR to some deeper water sites like Oxbow and up and around the fishway. Sally reported the data is all in the report. Sally also reported that in working with Olivia she also sampled an additional 30 sites.

Olivia Williams stated Sally gave a great update and she hopes to have the data put together by spring and enjoyed working with Friends of the Rouge.

Education and Outreach Grant & Letter of Support

Marie McCormick reported FOTR was invited to submit a grant application to the Erb Family Foundation and the purpose of the project is to create tools and strategies that will allow them to expand inclusive engagement. Some other goals of the project is to build lasting relationships with community groups not yet engaged, to create meaningful opportunities for stewardship development, collaborate on future projects and secure shared funding. Part of the focus will broadly engage the full watershed communities and a secondary focus will empower local communities to become long time stewards of the GLRI AOC habitat projects.

Marie McCormick asked the group if a general letter of support would be provided by the RRAC for FOTR to apply. Marie was unsure as to whether or not she could sign the letter or not due to her conflict. It was decided that Dan Ballnik will sign the letter of support from the RRAC.

Marie asked if there were any questions, there were none.

Marie McCormick mentioned she met with some staff from Michigan Environmental Council today regarding legislative briefing. She stated that as a board member of MEC, that it would be a great way to partner with MEC. Marie stated that Ellen Vial and Joe Bower and interested in hosting a co-shared information legislative briefing with AOCs and would be organize through MEC. MEC, AOCs, legislators and the general public would get together and discuss challenges and opportunities to work together on.

Bill Craig stated he supports the effort as he has attended some legislative briefings over the years. Bill stated MEC would have more resources and gather a larger audience for SPAC to partner.

New Business

Future Meetings

Marie McCormick reported the new bylaws call for four (4) meetings per year and would like to schedule the meetings in advance for 2023. Marie suggested the third Tuesday at 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. every 3 months with the first on January 17, 2023. Marie scheduled the future RRAC meetings to be held on April 18, July 18, October 17 for 2023. Bill Craig suggested possibly having the midyear meetings in person and having various hosts that will have capacity for the meetings at their facility. Chris O'Meara will send out calendar invites.

Comments

Members

Marie McCormick asked if there were any comments or questions. Dan Ballnik stated that he had been trying to get a CSO basin tour in Dearborn for Dearborn High School science students. Chris Rashcke advised Dan that he could either call him at 734-943-3088 or email him.

Bill Craig stated he would like to see the draft EGLE PAC grant ideas to be shared with all members of the RRAC. Chris O'Meara stated that the document was sent out previously and that she would resend the document out.

Sally Petrella had an announcement that FOTR is hosting their Haunted Paddle this Saturday from 9:30-1:00pm. Registration information can be found with this link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSee21mrQ9Uilknq0UWZjVgaG-bFauwk2hYHYNRQjwfiRfRGg/viewform>

Sally also reported that FOTR finished their fall bug hunt. They sent out 16 teams and completed 31 sites. A few more sites will be scheduled and they are examining the bugs this week.

Sally also wanted to say happy anniversary of the Clean Water Act, 50 years ago the CWA was signed.

General Public

Marie McCormick asked if there were any comments or questions, there were none.

Review of Action Items

- Approved the meeting summary from July 21, 2022.
- Voting members to let Marie know if they are interested in serving on any of the committees that were discussed in the bylaws section of this meeting.
- Members to let Marie know if they are interested in being a part of the EJ-DEI subcommittee.
- Dan Ballnik will sign a letter of support for FOTR in place of Marie.
- Chris O'Meara to send out 2023 meeting invites
- Chris O'Meara to resend EGLE PAC Grant ideas/items out to the members
- Members interested in the haunted paddle to let Sally know and/or register with the link provided in the chat.

Dan Ballnik made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Bill Craig seconded the Motion. Marie McCormick asked if there was any further discussion, there was none. The meeting was adjourned.