

**Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC)  
Draft Meeting Summary  
November 2, 2021**



**Attendees:**

Attended?	Name	Attended?	Nam
Y	Ashley Allen, HRC	N	Karen Mondora, Farmington Hills
Y	Dan Ballnik, Chair	Y	Doug Moore, Livonia
N	John Bauman, MDNR Lake Erie Management Unit	Y	Noel Mullett, Wayne County Dept. of Public Services
N	Marty Boote, Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC)	N	Rob Myllyoja, ECT
N	Cory Borton, Bloomfield Township	Y	Tennille Newsome, ARC
Y	Bill Craig, Vice Chair and SPAC representative	N	Caitlin Nigrelli, Liaison to USEPA-GLNPO
N	Annette DeMaria, ARC	Y	Chris O'Meara, ARC
Y	Rose Ellison, EPA	Y	John O'Meara, ARC
Y	Jacy Garrison, Oakland County WRC Office	Y	Sally Petrella, Friends of the Rouge
N	Orin Gelderloos, U-M Dearborn	Y	Heather Rice, Washtenaw County WRC Office
N	Kevin Goodwin, EGLE	Y	Brandy Siedlaczek, Southfield
N	Barb Goryca, Citizen	Y	Tyler Sonoga, Farmington Hills
Y	Katie Grantham, SEMCOG	Y	Jennifer Tewkesbury, Michigan EGLE
Y	Marie McCormick, Friends of the Rouge	Y	Dean Tuomari, Citizen
N	Erma Leaphart-Gouch, Sierra Club MI Chapter		

**Introductions**

Dan Ballnik started the meeting. Rose Ellison stated Leah Medley would be attending on behalf of EPA. Tennille Newsome completed roll call. Additional attendees were:

- Shawn Duke with Cardno
- Tricia Gabriel with Livonia
- Kyle Pettibone with Wade Trim
- Stephanie Petriello with OCWRC

**Approval of Meeting Summary**

Dan sought approval of the meeting summary from September 21, 2021 and asked if there were any questions. There were none.

The meeting summary of the September 21, 2021 meeting was approved with no comments. The motion to approve the meeting summary was made by Bill Craig, RRAC and seconded by Heather Rice, Washtenaw County.

**Old Business**

RRAC Membership

Dan Ballnik reported a nominating committee was put together for membership elections which are due in January. The nominating committee consists of Brandy Siedlaczek, Bill Craig, Sally Petrella (Chair), Noel Mullett and Heather Rice.

Sally Petrella reported a meeting was held and discussed RRAC membership and how the by-laws are not clear about RRAC membership. Sally stated they went back to the original membership appointments that was done through the DNR, Kathy Bean and looked at the organizations as community partners that were still active. Chris O'Meara provided the list and the committee discussed the list. The draft RRAC voting members list was displayed on the screen that Chris O. shared.

Sally also reported the next task would be to work on nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair.

John O'Meara stated the by-laws do not make a distinction between voting members and members. He asked what the definition of member is. He also stated from the original by-law changes it was for citizen, government and industry. John mentioned that there was no industry representative on the draft list and asked if there was a reason for that. Sally stated the reason for that was Dan represented that and "grandfathered" him in.

Brandy Siedlaczek stated there was struggle following the by-laws and they want to start over and move forward while removing the state representatives and multiple representatives from the members list.

Bill Craig stated the voting members list is a first step of tracking down members and is asking the RRAC to consider the list of Draft RRAC Voting Members for the next election, then the next Chair can nominate a by-laws subcommittee to have it arranged.

Dan Ballnik suggested having an alternate for an organization. John O. stated that he didn't think you could have an alternate since the RRAC is person based and not organization based.

Dan asked if there were any objections to the RRAC voting members list. There were none. Sally asked if the next step for the nominating committee would be to put together the slate of nominees and leave it open for additional nominees and take a vote at the next RRAC meeting.

Bill Craig suggested that the following attendees be removed from the roll call/RRAC membership: Cory Borton, Barb Goryca and Orin Gelderloos. Cory Borton, Orin Gelderloos, Kyle Pettibone would like to kept on RRAC email list, not as a member.

### **SPAC Report**

Bill Craig reported that SPAC had a meeting via Teams on October 30, 2021. Bill also reported the meeting minutes from that meeting were provided to the RRAC members via email by Chris O'Meara. Bill stated the key elements of the meeting were:

- Meeting minutes – 28 pages provide details.
- Attending were Jen Tewkesbury, John O'Meara, Marie McCormick and Bill Craig.
- Erma Leaphart of Sierra Club, Healing Our Waters and Detroit River PAC was guest.
- Erma has interest in SPAC EJ/DEI subcommittee work.
- EGLE and EPA had updates.
- EJ/DEI subcommittee reported out their discussion on Implicit Bias training for PAC leadership, being provided by Michigan Department of Civil Rights.
- Marie McCormick volunteered to represent RRAC on this subcommittee.
- PAC provided reports.
- SPAC members supported an all-PAC members meeting sometime in February 2022. This virtual meeting would be open to all members of every PAC. Topics of common interest to be developed.
- AOC Conference postponed until May 2022.
- Presentation – SPAC BUI Update.
- Rouge River in 2025 bucket.
- Most important slide was last – Michigan FY22 AOC Project Prioritization List.
- Note: 7 of 15 are Rouge River AOC.
- Note: There is column on list – Project has a clear and direct link to EJ.
- This column is worth some discussion.
- The 2022 SPAC meeting schedule is being determined.

## **EGLE Update**

Jen Tewkesbury reported the following:

- EGLE is currently working remotely until December and/or January 2022.
- Jen T. stated she physically moved to Kalamazoo and will still have the Rouge AOC. She will be working out of the Lansing District Office.
- The EPA is requesting from EGLE that they provide an AOCs prioritized projects list for funding for FY 23-26. Federal Partners meeting will be held November 17 and 18 with EPA, NOAA, etc. and will discuss the prioritization list and what EPA is looking for.
- The environmental justice component will also be included.
- The main channel work is in progress. The sediment sampling was completed a couple of weeks ago. All samples have been sent to the lab and will receive results in a couple of weeks. A report will be put together once all received by the scale of contaminants and where they are located.
- A meeting was held with Jon Allan and the work he has been doing with EPA. Jon has been in communication with 3 industrial partners. Jen stated they are not partners yet, they are currently in the communication process.
- PAC Support Grants RFP hopes to be out in February 2022 and will have a due date of March/April.
- Lake St. Clair Conference is virtual and will be held November 9.

## **EPA Update**

Jen T. reported the lower Rouge River channel project is continuing with contract modifications. There are engineering concerns with the walls with stockpiling. The contractor expects to be out there next spring for dredging.

Jen also reported that Rose Ellison is retiring from EPA early next year. Rose's replacement will be Leah Medley. Leah will participate in the phone calls.

## **Rouge AOC Grants Update**

### EGLE PAC Support Grant

John O'Meara reported the EGLE PAC support grant is ongoing.

- 2021 Fish Survey  
Sally Petrella with FOTR reported all the fish survey sites were completed.
- 2021 Fall Bug Hunt  
Sally Petrella reported 31 sites were completed and some sites were difficult to get to. A report for 2020 and 2021 bug surveys will be prepared.
- Rouge Story Map  
John O'Meara reported background data has been received and compiled. Katie Grantham received the data and is currently reviewing to prepare a base map in the next couple of weeks.
- Concrete Channel  
John O'Meara reported that the EPA and ACOE are reaching out to landowners in the area to judge interest in participating in any habitat restoration as it relates to their property and what plans they have in mind for their property. The group is meeting on a bi-weekly basis.
- 2022 PAC Grant Activities  
John O'Meara reported the PAC Grant will be out in February. John asked RRAC members to get him suggestions of grant activities they would like to have included for the next round of SPAC funding. The activities may start in Spring. Sally Petrella asked if the Story Map would be

completed by then. John O. stated yes. Katie stated she is creating a dashboard and once that is complete then she will create the story map and hopes to have it done by the end of this year.

#### Wayne County EPA Habitat Grant – HFE–Fishway Implementation/Nankin Lake Restoration

HFE Fishway: John O'Meara reported additional funding is going to be received from EPA due to major flood events. The contractor is currently completing vegetation. The site will not be open for flow until 2023. There is a potential for trickle flow to allow the channel to be flushed out.

Nankin: John O'Meara reported initial invasive species clearing has been completed. The major work will start in January with removing sediment from the lake.

#### ARC Rouge AOC Habitat Restoration - Tamarack Creek/ Johnson Creek Fish Hatchery

Johnson Creek Fish Hatchery: John O'Meara reported the site is currently in vegetation monitoring phase. The project will have another year of maintenance.

Tamarack Creek: John O'Meara reported the heavy construction is complete and vegetation is currently being installed. The site should be completed by Thanksgiving then will be just vegetation maintenance.

#### WC/ARC - 5 Parks Restoration-Riverview, Lola, Bell Creek, Sherwood, Lower Rouge

John O'Meara reported the following:

- Lower Rouge reforestation FOTR will lead the effort. The log jam removal has a contractor currently under contract.
- The IAA has been approved by Wayne Commission with allows the ARC to do any work on Wayne County property.
- Sherwood Park, Colonial and Venoy hope to be bid out by December. Construction will begin in Spring of 2022
- Bell Creek Park will be ready for contractor advertising in the winter for 2022 construction
- Lola Valley Park will be ready for contractor advertising in the winter for 2022 construction
- Riverview (Levan Knoll) is scheduled for construction in 2023

#### ARC Seely Creek Habitat Restoration

John O'Meara reported the Drain Commissioner's office has been working on drain easements and plan to be finalized within the next few weeks and then will be ready to go out to bid. Construction will be in Summer 2022.

#### WC WRC – Johnson Creek Intercounty Drain Restoration Design

Heather Rice reported the design phase is at 30-50% and working on easements. The site plans are not available yet.

John O'Meara reported the project is on target to be finished Spring 2022. A stakeholder engagement event is planned for December 14 in Northville Township and concurrently on Zoom. More detailed information will follow as it is received.

#### ARC LTU Wetland Habitat Design

John O'Meara reported the QAPP has been approved and have started collecting data. Initial concepts have begun for the floodplain wetlands on campus.

#### ARC Wilcox, Inkster, Phoenix Design

John O'Meara reported the QAPP is awaiting approval from EPA. Once approved, data will be collected within the next month after approval. The implementation of this project is on the anticipated projection list.

John O'Meara suggested the RRAC members select a grant project from the list above for John to give more detailed information of the project at the next meeting.

Bill Craig stated he would be interested in the Lower Rouge project.

### **Other Projects of Note**

None to report.

### **New Business**

None to report.

### **Comments**

#### Members

- Bill Craig wanted to acknowledge the passing of Jim Zoumbaris.
- Bill Craig also reported there is another project of interest for the advisory council which is a Watersheds Report Card Initiative that will begin on Thursday. Bill expects very complimentary outreach information with the story map effort.
- Heather Rice stated she wanted to give thanks to the voting committee for their time and effort.

#### General Public

None to report.

### **Review of Action Items**

- Approved September 21, 2021 meeting summary.
- The RRAC voting member list was approved.
- RRAC members to get a write up of suggestions to John O'Meara of activities for what they would like to be included in the next round of SPAC funding.
- RRAC members to select a grant project from the list above for John to give more detailed information of the project.
- Next Meeting is January 11, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.

Noel Mullett made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Bill Craig seconded the Motion. The meeting was adjourned.