

**Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC)  
Draft Meeting Summary  
July 21, 2022**



**List of Attendees:**

**Voting Members:**

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

**Others Present:**

Chris O'Meara, ARC  
Tennille Newsome, ARC  
Annette DeMaria, ARC  
John O'Meara, ARC  
Rob Myllyoja, ECT  
Charles Humphriss, ECT  
Rebecca Runkel, Novi  
John Buszkiewicz, DNR  
Sally Petrella, FOTR  
Olivia Williams, FOTR  
Cyndi Ross, FOTR  
Renato Marimon, FOTR  
Leah Medley, EPA  
Trisha Gabriel, Livonia  
Ashley Allen, HRC  
Stephanie Petriello, OCWRC  
Michelle McCrackin, Citizen  
Dean Tuomari, Citizen  
Jordan Twardy, Dearborn Economic Dev.

**Introductions**

Marie McCormick started the meeting. Marie McCormick completed roll call by calling on attendees listed in the Teams meeting. Attendees introduced their name, affiliation and title. Introductions were completed.

**Approval of Meeting Summary**

Marie McCormick reviewed the meeting summary from May 9, 2022 and asked if there were any questions. There were none. The meeting summary of the May 9, 2022, meeting was approved with no comments. The motion to approve the meeting summary was made by Bill Craig and seconded by Noel Mullett.

**Old Business**

**Report from Bylaws Committee**

Marie McCormick reported to the members that draft bylaws were included in today's RRAC meeting packet emailed previously by Chris O'Meara. Sally Petrella reported the bylaws committee met on June 1<sup>st</sup> to work through questions regarding membership and whether or not SEMCOG, etc. would be included as voting members. The committee decided that SEMCOG would be included along with agencies such as EPA and EGLE as Non-Voting Members. Sally reported there were no questions or comments to the bylaws that were distributed. Marie McCormick stated she received a question regarding Section 2.2 that aside from voting members are all other RRAC attendees considered non-voting members? Bill Craig suggested they would be non-voting members. John O'Meara stated there could be an exception if a member had someone call in to the meeting in their place. Dan Ballnik asked if an "alternate" was defined in the bylaws. Marie confirmed yes, in item A of Section 2.2. Sally suggested adding a statement

under item B of Section 2.2. John O'Meara suggested to Marie to remove the bylaws from today's vote and have it ready for the next meeting so that the confusion regarding voting members vs non-voting members can be clarified throughout.

Marie asked if these clarification revisions were made to the bylaws would an e-vote be made versus waiting until October's RRAC meeting. Bill Craig was ok with that. John O'Meara suggested that it get sent to all members versus voting members.

## **SPAC Report**

Bill Craig reported the following:

### AOC Conference

The AOC Conference was held on May 24, 25 and 26 in Muskegon, MI.

- Attendees were: Bill Craig, John O'Meara, Jen Tewkesbury, Erma Leaphart.

Bill Craig stated the main speaker of the conference reported that there was additional funds for more BUI removals in the AOC program. The AOC program had good support and showed a lot of success. The Muskegon AOC and delisting was highlighted along with project and site visits. Bill Craig stated he attended some site visits that were very informative and attended the breakout sessions of DEI and habitat maintenance. Erma Leapeart was a speaker of the DEI session and was knowledgeable about that subject matter. Bill stated he and Jen T. was impressed by Muskegon's story videos and they suggested those for the PAC grant.

### June 14 SPAC Meeting

Bill stated the SPAC had a business meeting held on June 14<sup>th</sup> via Zoom and the minutes were provided with today's meeting packet. Some attendees were, Jen, Erma, John O., Marie and Bill. Bill stated the SPAC is taking new nominations for new officers (a chair and vice chair for next session). The next SPAC meeting will be held in person in Monroe, Michigan October 11-12<sup>th</sup> and will be hosted by the Raisin River AOC PAC.

### SPAC Habitat Subcommittee

Bill Craig reported Jen T. was to give a report on the habitat subcommittee but Jen T. was unable to attend today's meeting. Bill for Jen T. stated he went to the first meeting that went well. Bill stated habitat maintenance is a concern for all the projects. Concerns for projects being completed include; are there any maintenance to the projects while they await delisting, what happens to those projects after they are delisted and how they are monitored. Bill stated he was unable to attend the second meeting and that a third meeting was to be scheduled. Sally Petrella indicated that Jen T. mentioned the meeting will be scheduled after field season.

### SPAC EJ-DEI Subcommittee

Marie McCormick reported the subcommittee will have their next meeting in October. Melanie Foose updated Marie of their last meeting that Marie was unable to attend. Some highlights the subcommittee plans to do:

- work on a goals, missions/value statement
- work on a PAC recruitment package to make bylaws more inclusive
- part of the work is sharing ideas on outreach and communications with other organizations and communities
- implicit bias training was very helpful

Marie stated she was interested in another training and would like to see every voting member of the RRAC attend.

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

### **EGLE Update**

Marie McCormick asked if Leah Medley had an update from EGLE in Jen's absence, Leah did not.

Bill Craig stated there was an EGLE update regarding the GLRI opportunities that will be coming. Bill stated John O'Meara sent out some information about the PAC grants. Bill mentioned EGLE is still working remotely, with some time in the office. John O'Meara mentioned the PAC support grants guidance will be out in the next month/end of August and will be effective October 1<sup>st</sup>. John O. stated it will most likely be 2-3 years as to the timing.

### **EGLE PAC Grant**

John O'Meara mentioned there has been initial discussion on activities for the next PAC grant. A group of people met to share ideas. The memo is included in today's RRAC member packet previously emailed to members by Chris O'Meara. John O. mentioned if you have any ideas that are not listed to email or contact John O., Marie McCormick or Sally Petrella. Chris O'Meara shared on her screen the suggested items to be funded in the next EGLE PAC Support Grant from the 6/13/22 focus meeting. Marie McCormick suggested money not be spent on "Report Card" that is on the list. The members discussed some items on the list.

Leah Medley advised the group that some items on the list regarding sampling, monitoring, or removal of the BUIs that she could get that information and funding would not need to be used.

Sally P. mentioned the sampling supports the work Friends of the Rouge does. Sally mentioned it is not at the level of delisting. John O'Meara advised Leah that FOTR annual benthic (fall, spring and winter) and fish sampling that is an annual project that FOTR handles with volunteers. Leah mentioned to the group that if they any targeted sampling and need to know the status of the BUIs that can be worked on.

John O'Meara suggested to Sally P. that she give her project presentation of benthic and fish sampling at the October meeting.

### **EPA Update**

Leah Medley asked the members to let her know what information they would like to hear from her. She reported they had some grant requests approved a while back and are working on the process of getting them into grants.gov and getting the funding awarded. Leah stated she plans to visit the AOC next week and is excited to see some of the projects.

Marie McCormick mentioned there was a great article on Nankin Lake.

### **Rouge AOC Grants Update**

Marie McCormick thanked John O'Meara for providing a written report of the updates of all current Rouge AOC in today's meeting packet that was emailed previously by Chris O'Meara.

Sally Petrella asked John O'Meara to give an update on the HFE Fishway as she heard it had been partially opened. John O'Meara stated it had not been opened as of today and that the contractor is still working on some items before it is partially opened but should be within the next week.

Bill Craig mentioned he wanted to thank whoever was able to take care of the large blockage and open up the area. John O'Meara stated it was done as part of the Fishway project.

Marie McCormick stated that she was able to take many groups from Dearborn Hill Golf Club and float all the way down to the Detroit River.

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

### **Project Presentation-Lower Rouge Reforestation**

Renato with FOTR and Charles Humphriss with ECT gave a project presentation on the Lower Rouge Reforestation project. Charles shared his screen and provided background information on the project.

Highlights of the presentation were:

- Project vicinity including Wayne, Westland and Inkster communities
- Project funding through EPA/GLRI; project was divided into two projects. One for Lower Rouge Logjams which is being handled by Inland Lakes Landscaping and one for Lower Rouge Reforestation which is being handled by Friends of the Rouge
- Project goals: improve wildlife habitat that was lost to the emerald ash borer; 80 acres of improve riparian forest habitat

Renato Marimon shared his screen and provided implementation information on the project and highlights were:

- Project location
- Work Summary to date of trees planted and number of acres of planted areas in open areas and forested areas
- Native species were planted and additional trees are scheduled for Spring 2023
- Volunteer participation: 355 participants in 20 work days, 4 hours a day, 1,420 volunteer hours
- Media coverage and marketing: TV news/interviews, social media and E-news (Rouge Rundown)
- Volunteer training on introduction to the projects, planting methodology by FOTR
- Plantings areas were in Inkster Park, Colonial Park, Inkster Valley Golf Course, Venoy Road, Dynamite Park and residential areas by Newburgh Road and John Hix Road.
- Next Steps of the project: Weed mats to be installed this summer 2022, 30 acres of land will be reforested during the spring 2023, a total of 4,467 native trees are to be planted.
- Acknowledgements: ARC, WCP, Canton Township Public Works and Volunteers

Renato and Charles asked if there were any questions. Marie McCormick thanked them for sharing the project with the RRAC. Noel Mullett also said great work. Dean Tuomari asked if Elm disease was still a problem in Michigan. Marie stated she would have Renato look into that. Bill Craig asked if there was a watering strategy due to the drought, Renato stated no. John O'Meara stated that the plantings are in the floodplain which will help them stay moist.

Marie McCormick asked if there were any other questions, there were none and if there are any other questions to email Marie, Renato or Chris O'Meara.

### **Other Related Watershed Projects**

Nothing to update.

### **New Business**

Sally Petrella and Olivia Williams gave an update that the fish sampling work. Sally reported that FOTR with the PAC grant was tasked to sample 20 sites and are close to completion. As of Friday, FOTR will go out with the DNR to sample the Oxbow, concrete channel and below the Fishway with the boomshocker boat. In addition to the 20 sites, Olivia was able to get funding through and fellowship and working on her own to collectively sample over 50 sites. Olivia reported the FOTR has made great progress and are looking to sample at Western Golf Course but has not heard from them and asked if anyone had any contacts that would be great. Olivia stated a more formal update will be available at October's meeting.

Sally P. also mentioned that FOTR is tasked with promoting RRAC projects through their social media and if anyone has any write ups to let them know so they can promote them.

Marie McCormick asked if there was any new business, there was none.

## **Comments**

### Members

Marie McCormick asked if there were any comments or questions. Bill Craig stated as a member of the SPAC subcommittee that he would like to see Wayne County Parks a member of the Advisory Council as most of the work performed is on their property regarding long term maintenance of their habitat projects. Marie McCormick stated once bylaws packet is finalized, she could share and communicate with Wayne County Parks for RRAC.

### General Public

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

## **Review of Action Items**

- Approved the meeting summary from May 9, 2022.
- Marie McCormick and Sally Petrella will update the bylaws with comments provided at today's meeting and share with Chris O'Meara to provide a possible e-vote.

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