

MISSION

To restore, protect, and enhance the Rouge River watershed through stewardship, education, and collaboration.

Directors Present:

Laura Wagner (LW), Erma Leaphart (EL), Samra'a W. Luqman (SL), Brandy Siedlaczek (BS), Susan "Sue" Thompson (ST), Carol Snodgrass (CS), Paul Draus (PD), Dave Norwood (DN), Jessica Elland Anders (JA), Myra Tetteh (MT), Gerry VanAcker (GV), Nick Leonard (NL) (12total)

Directors Not Present:

Madelin Maher (MM2), Jeremiah Steen (JS), Alice Bailey (AB) (3 total)

Staff Members Present: Marie McCormick (MMC), Karen Hanna (KH) (2 total)

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Laura Wagner called the meeting to order at 5:03pm. Board member Erma Leaphart agreed to take minutes for the meeting. New FOTR Board members 1. Nick Leonard (Executive Director, Great Lakes Environmental Law Clinic) and 2. Gerry VanAcker (Retired, Chief Operating Officer, Detroit Zoological Society)

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve agenda by DN, seconded by CS. Motion carried

3. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Motion to approve May 11, 2022 and June 15, 2022 meeting minutes by EL, seconded by Samra'a. Motion carried

Meeting minutes for September 14, November 9 and December 14 will be voted on March 8th.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

LW gave an overview of officer duties and opened the floor for nominations, as follows:

President – Jessica Anders

Secretary – Gerry VanAcker

Vice President (Development committee chair) – Alice Bailey

Treasurer (Finance committee chair) -Carol Snodgrass

Member-at-Large (Board Development chair) - Mike McNulty

DN motioned to close nominations, seconded by EL. The board unanimously elected the slate as presented.

- 5. STAFF PRESENTATION** – MMC shared information regarding staff presentations for 2023. A list will be provided to board members as well as various ways board members can become more involved with programming. She also shared that board meetings are open to the public and a registration link to attend is on the FOTR webpage. If a closed meeting is needed, a break out room can be set up specifically for board members.

6. **REPORTS** (also refer to reports in Board meeting packet for further information)
- a. Executive Committee:
This committee meets once per month for about 1 hour. The committee sets the agenda for the BOD meetings.
 - b. Executive Directors Report: MMC reported
 - Wayne County Economic Development Corporation Received funding from American Rescue Plan Act dollars for Phase 2 Rouge Gateway Greenway Project (FRoG) was approved for funding (\$5,093,000) and Belanger Park Project (\$550,000) and Kessey Field House (administered by the city of Melvindale). FOTR will act as fiduciary for the two projects (FRoG and Belanger Park). As fiduciary, FOTR received a "Notice of Award" for Phase 2 construction of the FRoG project. However, there were issues so FOTR will have to wait for Round III. MMC is confident that the funding will be received.
 - Brand development is going well so far. This includes a new web page and brand guidelines.
 - LGBT training opportunities for both Board and Staff are being offered but are not required. The next virtual training is February 24th from 11 am to 1 pm. An invitation is being sent to those who requested and to new board members.
 - Personnel: Sarah Steenburg was hired as the new Landscape Architect. Sally Petrella is moving to part-time and her position will change to Aquatic Ecologist; she will have less administrative duties spending more time in the river monitoring bugs. The replacement position will not be advertised widely. Other vacancies include Community Organizer (part-time or full-time) and a Development Assistant to help Laura Edwards (Development Manager).
 - c. Education (REP Committee)
 - A weather station has been installed at PARC providing real time weather reports.
 - d. Restoration Committee
 - Working on an MOU Collaboration with three other watershed groups. Each organization works individually on their own projects, but the MOU involves a shared marketing plan, including supplies and materials. The marketing plan is still in the development phase.
 - Master Rain Garden program starts in February and all four watershed groups are collaborating on providing this program.
 - e. Monitoring Committee
 - A FOTR volunteer was the first to find an invasive red swamp crayfish. This species is very problematic for the watershed.
 - Continuing to work with the Ecology Center on the PFAS in fish study.
 - A stonefly search and count is coming up with Alliance for Rouge Communities (ARC). Board members are encouraged to sign up and participate.

- f. Water Trail Committee
 - Board members are encouraged to join paddle the rouge events, using FOTR kayaks. Also, FOTR anticipates hiring a local kayak rental business owned by an African American female, Detroit Mobile Kayak, for our industrial trail tour.
 - FRoG Greenway kayak launch: intending to obtain direct EPA funding and has a permit from EGLE to do the work. However, EPA is concerned about the kayak launch being constructed in a polluted flood zone. The next step is to speak with EPA to discuss engineering options.
 - g. Membership Committee
 - h. Board Development Committee
 - i. Fund Development Committee
 - FOTR raised \$73,000 during the End of Year giving. This was the largest amount ever raised for this event. This is attributed to more people contributing. People are giving a little less per person but are giving regularly.
 - j. Finance Committee / Treasurer
 - i. Financial reports are not available. They will be available for the March 2023 meeting. Board members can review the draft income statement and call KH if you have any questions.
 - k. Advocacy Committee: No activity to report.
- 7. NEW BUSINESS**
- a. Walk-ins: None
8. **REMINDERS** – there is no meeting in February. The next meeting is at 5:00 pm on March 8th. It will be held virtually.
9. **ADJOURNMENT:** SL made the motion to adjourn, DN seconded the motion, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Erma Leaphart
FOTR Board Member