

Friends of the Rouge Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2021
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MISSION OF FRIENDS OF THE ROUGE

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

VISION OF FRIENDS OF THE ROUGE

We envision a future where a clean and vibrant Rouge River is the center of our community. Individual and community actions protect and improve the health of the Rouge River, assuring that its natural, economic, and recreational value enhance the quality of life in the Rouge River ecosystem.

I. ROLL CALL

Directors Present:

- Laura Wagner (LW), President
- Alice Bailey (AB), Vice President
- Sam Lulkin (SL), Treasurer
- Sara Rubino (SR), Secretary
- John Deslippe (JD)
- Paul Draus (PD)
- Orin Gelderloos (OG)
- Erma Leaphart (EL)
- Mike McNulty (MM)
- Dave Norwood (DN)
- Brandy Siedlaczek (BS)
- Susan Thompson (ST)
- Al VanKerckhove (AVK)
- Melissa Weydendorf (MW)

Total Directors Present - 14

Directors Excused:

- None

Total Directors Excused – 0

Directors Absent:

- Bill Hazel (BH)

Total Directors Unexcused - 1

Staff Members Present:

- Marie McCormick (MMC), Executive Director
- Karen Hannah (KH), Operations Manager
- Lara Edwards (LE), Fund Development Coordinator

Total Staff Members Present - 3

Guests/Members Present:

- Morgain B. MacDonald

Total Guests/Members Present - 1

II. CALL TO ORDER

President LW called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was modified to move the presentation by Morgain B. MacDonald to the beginning of the meeting. A motion to approve the modified agenda for the March 10, 2021 Board meeting was made by EL. Motion seconded by ST. Motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF PRIOR BOARD MINUTES

No discussion. A motion to approve the January 13, 2021 board minutes was made by MM. Motion seconded by SL. Motion carried.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS (Please refer to reports in Board packet.)

(A) Executive Committee Report by LW.

- The Executive Committee (EC) report was covered during the presentation by Morgain A. MacDonald. Please refer to the New Business section below.

(B) Executive Director Report by MCC

- Refer to reports attached for highlights.
- Special thank you to LE for Cleveland Cliffs donation to plant trees in the South Dearborn area.
- OG requested updates on several matters discussed during prior meetings and MCC provided the same as follows:
 1. FOTR continues to work with Wayne County Parks in a variety of capacities, including, the Connecting the Rouge project; developing a Framework Plan for the regional trail network Plan and Water Trail Work, including accessible launching and working together for funding.
 2. FOTR is collaborating on a RFP to use funds set aside by EGLE for a green social water enterprise, asset mapping and staff training.
 3. FOTR took part in the Healing Our Waters Coalition - Great Lakes Day. Special thanks to EL for leadership with the program.

(C) Education (REP) Report

- Refer to reports attached for highlights.
- Special thank you to Erin Cassidy for her work on the WeSpire platform which is an engagement tool for students and teachers. WeSpire is live now so please check it out.

(D) Restoration/Monitoring (PI) Report

- Refer to reports attached for highlights.
- The position for restoration coordinator was filled but is now open again. Please spread the word and let MMC know if anyone is interested.

(E) Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Report

- No report.

(F) Membership Committee

- Refer to reports attached for highlights.
- No questions.
- MMC reported over 486 members. Special thanks to LE for her continued efforts to increase membership.

(G) Board Development Committee

- Reminder to register for upcoming DEI training.
- Expectations and fundraising discussions will be discussed next.

(H) Fund Development Committee

- On Monday, AB sent out list of expectations for Board members. There are suggested and required activities; required includes financial commitment by each Board member on a personal level. Requested gift toward at least one fund raising campaign. Please pick 2 out of the 7 activities.
- Presentation by LE.
 - Board members should select activities that each member feels the most comfortable. Many ways to support fundraising to give it a lift and participate in activities.
 - Every year there are three major FOTR events: (1) the Annual Meeting; (2) the Rouge Rescue (working towards making it more of a program than annual event) and (3) the Rouge Cruise / The Un-Cruise.
 - MMC advised that all Board members should also attend the DEIJ training.
 - In accordance with the FOTR Bylaws, any Board members need to be members of FOTR and should make meaningful gifts.
 - Please participate in any special events (contribute as you can); thank donors (phone calls make a huge impact); serve as FOTR Ambassador; become a FOTR Influencer; cultivate individual major donors; cultivate business/organizational relationships; draft written public support; or encourage legacy giving.
- Motion made by ST to include the list of Board member activities with onboarding documents. Motion seconded by JD. Motion passed.
- MMC will add responsibilities to the Board Matrix.

(I) Finance Committee / Treasurer Report by SL.

- Please refer to report in packet. SL open to adjusting format of report.
- KH noted: (i) in the beginning of the year, there is not a lot of revenue coming in but there was a carryover of \$445,223; (ii) there is a large expenditure for

the park project expected and (iii) the short term loan for the park has been paid back.

- Motion to approve the January 2021 Financials made by DN. Motion seconded by ST. Motion passed.

(J) Advocacy Committee Report by DN.

- No report.
- Brief discussion regarding Healthy Urban Waters Program.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A) DEIJ Audit Results

- Presentation by Morgain MacDonald
 - Results of DEI Audit (provided).
 - DEI training includes executive coaching, staff and Board training.
 - Conducted 8 key stake holder interviews and reviewed of all policies for FOTR.
 - Successes are that the FOTR staff is informed, confident and friendly. FOTR makes a large impact for the size of organization. Strong DEI integration already. Strong leadership.
 - Challenges include the lack of racial and ethnic diversity in staff, Board and membership. Lack of measurements. Scarcity of time.
 - Recommendations: (1) make DEI formal piece of organization design; (2) develop program evaluation and (3) continued training and assessment.

B) Updated Parental Leave Policy

- SR reported the current maternity and paternity policies are being merged into one “Parental Leave” policy and are being updated to include gender neutral language.

C) Additional Issues from the Floor

- None.

D) Exclude PI, REP and Water Trail Committees from Board requirements.

- The PI, REP and Water Trial committees are operational; Board members are welcome to attend meetings but should not count toward Board member obligations.
- ST made a motion to exclude the PI, REP and Water Trail Committees from Board requirements. Motion seconded by SR. DN abstained from voting. Motion passed.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The March 10, 2021 FOTR Board meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Sara B. Rubino
FOTR Secretary

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