

Friends of the Rouge Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2020
Google Meet Virtual

MISSION

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

VISION

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.

Directors Present: Alice Bailey (AB), John Deslip (JD), Paul Draus (PD), Orin Gelderloos (OG), Mike McNulty (MM), Dave Norwood (DN), Elizabeth Palazzola (EP), Brandy Siedlaczek (BS), Susan Thompson (ST), Al VanKerckhove (AVK), Laura Wagner (LW) (11 total)

Directors Excused: Andrew Hoffman (AH) (1 total)

Directors Absent: Dave Maurice (DM), Bill Hazel (BH) (2 total)

Staff Members Present: Marie McCormick (MMC) (1 total)

Guests:

1) CALL TO ORDER

President LW called the meeting to order at 5:08pm

2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve agenda made by ST, seconded by DN. Motion carried

3) APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

a. May13, 2020

Minutes not ready for presentation for approval at this meeting

4) REPORTS (also refer to reports in Board packet)

a. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (EC) is scheduled to hold calls on a monthly basis. The committee met the week before the Board meeting to create the agenda, and discussion of return to office protocols, the resignation of a board member, FOTR statement regarding racism, and goals to increase diversity

b. Executive Director

Refer to reports attached for highlights

Private announcement regarding FOTR 319 funding and PARC- full announcement next week

Rouge “UnCruise” being developed- doing modules highlighting different sections of the river and its history

The Virtual Rouge Rescue had 327 people participate online

Rain barrel sales are going well

c. Education (REP Committee)

Refer to reports attached for highlights

d. Restoration/Monitoring (PI Committee)

Refer to reports attached for highlights

By 2023 need a new source of funding for Rain Gardens to the Rescue

The WDM grant did not come through

e. Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee

Cancelled last meeting as a lot of the municipal partners were not available

There are funding opportunities available for the water trail

f. Membership/Committee

Sixty-four new members

Explore the Rouge and Free Press Marathon updates

No in person Explore the Rouge and the status of the Free Press Marathon for the fall and how a cancellation or change to a virtual event impacts persons registering for the events is not known at this time

AVK would like to do a Plymouth bike ride

g. Board Development Committee

Refer to new business item 5. b Open Board Position

h. Fund Development Committee

Thank you for the support on Giving Tuesday. Donation dollars were quadrupled. Thank staff and LE for the hard work on this.

The Fund Development Committee met last week and it was decided that the Rouge Cruise would be cancelled. The Rouge Cruise generates \$18,000 in revenue for FOTR annually.

A Virtual Cruise “UnCruise” is being planned to take the place of the Rouge Cruise and consideration of charging \$5.00 per person to register for each trip segment. Potential stops for the virtual cruise are Marine Pollution Control, Ford, and the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

Other suggestions as to virtual events are Flower Talks (Friends of the Rouge Toronto does these) 20-30 minute virtual talks

Please share your fundraising suggestions to AB

i. Finance Committee/Treasurer

i. March and April 2020

The financials and cash flow are in good shape considering the present circumstances

Motion to approve the March and April 2020 financial reports made by DN, seconded by AVK. Motion carried..

5) NEW BUSINESS

a. Board Training: *Equity Foundations Training Module 1- The Opportunity for Government to Advance Racial Equity: Seattle, A Case Study-see worksheet*

Some examples of institutional racism in metropolitan Detroit discussed: I-375, “redlining,” “sundown” communities, Orville Hubbard, and the police role in institutional racism

Tying conservation to social justice: look at areas degraded in the Rouge River watershed, less work done in communities of color. Uniting Rouge communities through the river; the Rouge is unique due to its diversity

How can FOTR impact racial disproportionality?

Focus efforts in the City of Detroit; bringing students to the river; extension of activities in the Main Rouge; opportunities to partner; and restore greenspaces

What challenge does FOTR face moving forward?

Lack of diversity on the board and staff, funding history, potential backlash, and approach to communities.

b. Open Board Position

Mike Rudell resigned from the Board. Discussion regarding making an appointment to fill the remainder of the term, or to wait until the next election. The Board Development Committee will evaluate names of interested persons and report back to the Board.

c. FOTR response to racial injustices
Discussed during ED report

d. COVID19 Preparedness and Response Plan Update
Need a plan in place and flexibility for the Executive Committee to approve amendments as needed
Motion to approve the FOTR COVID19 Preparedness and Response Plan made by PD, seconded by DN.
Motion carried.

e. Permit to discharge into Johnson Creek- Advanced Disposal
Advanced Disposal submitted permit application to build a treatment facility to discharge treated leachate into Johnson Creek in Northville Township.

FOTR issued a general statement that appeared in the 'Ville regarding the discharge permit.
Northville Township is not allowing Advanced Disposal to discharge leachate into the sewerage system, prompting the Advanced Disposal request for two permit modifications to allow discharge to Johnson Creek- one permit is for the compost water, up to 15,000 gallons/day and the second is for the closed section of the landfill- up to 100,000 gallons/day.

Other solution to the leachate disposal situation is to pump and haul the leachate offsite to a treatment facility.
Odor and other concerns with the landfill management are ongoing in the Northville Township community and the neighborhoods near the landfill.

Wayne County Conservation District- requesting statement regarding the opposition of the removal of a 24 acre wet mesic flatwoods forest for the expansion of the Woodland Meadows Landfill.

Leased land for parking lot development on Wayne County Parkland at Merriman Road- FOTR is asked for a position on this project

MMC needs assistance in responding to the requests for advocacy like the ones listed above. It is recommended that the Board develop a policy and process to address.

The Board is willing to create a subcommittee to work on these issues, develop a process, assist in vetting requests and issues and developing position statements and letters as needed.

This group is to be called the Advocacy Committee.

The Advocacy Committee will meet and discuss the three issues detailed above and determine how to address each, and develop guidance for issuing statements in the future.

f. GLRI Grant Application-possible partnership with ARC
Tree canopy along the Lower Rouge River is the GLRI grant

g. Additional issues from the floor

6) ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by DN, seconded by MM. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50pm

Respectfully Submitted by:

Susan Thompson

FOTR Secretary