

Friends of the Rouge Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
November 11, 2020
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

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 Deslippe (JD), Orin Gelderloos (OG), Erma Leaphart (EL), Mike McNulty (MM), Dave Norwood (DN), Susan Thompson (ST), Al VanKerckhove (AVK), Laura Wagner (LW) (9 total)

Directors Excused: Paul Draus (PD), Andrew Hoffman (AH), Brandy Siedlaczek (BS) (3 total)

Directors Absent: Bill Hazel (BH), Elizabeth Palazzola (EP), Dave Maurice (DM) (3 total)

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

Guests:

1) CALL TO ORDER

President LW called the meeting to order at 5:10pm

2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve agenda made by JD, seconded by AVK. Motion carried

3) APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

a. October 14, 2020

Motion to approve the October 14, 2020 board minutes made by DN, seconded by AVK. Motion carried

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 last week to prepare agenda for the board meeting. All items discussed are on the agenda for this meeting

Update on a volunteer who was disruptive at a FOTR volunteer event was provided to the Board. This individual was reported to several local police agencies and a trespass notice is on file. Given the individual's history, police officials do not recommend issuing the trespass due to it may serve to refocus the person's interest back to FOTR. FOTR staff was briefed on how to address if the individual is sighted and to notify local police.

The EC conducted MMC's annual performance review

b. Executive Director Report

Refer to reports attached for highlights

The Trails Coordinator position was posted and distributed

Participated in a ribbon cutting for the Fort Street Bridge Park on October 22, 2020. FOTR will serve as fiduciary for Phase II of the project's design, development and construction and facilitate interactions with the

river- kayak launch, boardwalk, green infrastructure, etc. The Board approved accepting the fiduciary responsibility, and FOTR will be fundraising for Phase II and building capacity for recreation and trails

Ralph C. Wilson Grant awarded to FOTR is being finalized. The amount awarded is \$326,000 and will allow for funding of a full time trail manager

A new intern was hired to support Rain Gardens to the Rescue and Water Words that Work projects

c. Education (REP Committee)

Refer to reports attached for highlights

Earthforce partnership to help deliver REP programming

d. Restoration/Monitoring (PI Committee)

Refer to reports attached for highlights

Applying for some pretty significant grants including a \$300,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Thanks to FOTR staff for all their hard work on the grants

e. Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee

FOTR now hiring for the Trails coordinator and the job description shared widely. This position will be funded with monies from the National Kidney Foundation for two years.

A Ralph C. Wilson Foundation grant proposal was submitted that would support work on the Rouge Gateway Connector, boat launches at the Bessey Field House in Melvindale and Belanger Park in River Rouge. Funding amount is \$326,000.

f. Membership/Committee

Memberships have increased and memberships are being granted to persons giving donations at any level. There are over 450 members currently. Thanks to Lara Edwards for her efforts to broaden membership

g. Board Development Committee

MMC and MM worked on board development and recruitment

The list of Board candidates is going to be discussed later in item 5.b of the agenda

h. Fund Development Committee

“Giving Tuesday” is coming up

The next fundraising goal is #Giving Tuesday

There is a \$2500 pledge from a donor to match

The Fund Development Committee will be creating expectations for giving levels for Board members and key donors

i. Finance Committee/Treasurer

i. August, September 2020

There is an excess of \$376,485 for this quarter and without this amount, there would be a deficit

Bank balance is solid as of now. The 2020 Audit is finalized and the Form 990 and budget submitted to the Finance Committee for review and approval

Motion to approve the financial reports for August and September by DN, seconded by JD. Motion carried.

j. Advocacy Committee

DN reports on the Advocacy Committee activities. The committee is does not have any active items it is considering at this time

5) NEW BUSINESS

a. Review Safeguarding Guidelines

A pro bono attorney reviewed the draft Safeguarding Policy. It is important to have this policy available for staff, team leaders and board members

A training session for staff on the policy was held

The policy will be posted on the website and distributed to participants and team leaders in advance of events

b. Approve list of FOTR Board Candidates for 2021

The candidates for the FOTR Board of Directors are as follows:

Jeff Dobson
Sam Lulkin
Mike McNulty
Sara Rubino
Susan Thompson
Dan Wellman
Melissa Wydendorf

Motion to approve and present the list of FOTR Board candidates made by MM, seconded by OG. Motion carried

c. 2021 Budget

The 2021 Budget was sent to the Finance Committee for review. It will be discussed in the Executive Committee and submitted for Board approval at the December meeting

d. Additional Issues from the Floor

Welcome to new Board member Erma Leaphart and a roundtable of introductions from the Board

6) ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:07 pm

Respectfully Submitted by:

Susan Thompson
FOTR Secretary