

Friends of the Rouge Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
May 12, 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)
- Orin Gelderloos (OG)
- Erma Leaphart (EL)
- Mike McNulty (MM)
- Dave Norwood (DN)
- Brandy Siedlaczek (BS)
- Susan Thompson (ST)
- Melissa Weydendorf (MW)
- Bill Hazel (BH)

Total Directors Present - 13

Directors Excused:

- Al VanKerckhove (AVK)

Total Directors Excused – 1

Directors Absent:

- Paul Draus (PD)

Total Directors Unexcused - 1

Staff Members Present:

- Marie McCormick (MMC), Executive Director
- Karen Hannah (KH), Operations Manager

Total Staff Members Present - 2

Guests/Members Present:

- Tricia Blicharski, Friends of the Detroit River

Total Guests/Members Present - 1

II. CALL TO ORDER

LR called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MMC added discussion of Director attendance to the agenda. DN made a motion to approve the agenda for the May 12, 2021 Board meeting. Motion seconded by ST. Motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF PRIOR BOARD MINUTES

A motion to approve the March 10, 2021 Board meeting minutes was made by BS. Motion seconded by MW. Motion passed.

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

(A) Executive Committee Report by LE.

- The Executive Committee is focusing on keeping the Board full and strong. Focus on meeting potential new Board members and trying to set up formal recruiting docs and templates for bios for existing and potential Board members.

(B) Executive Director Report by MCC

- Refer to reports attached for highlights.
- Welcome to Tricia Blicharski, Director of Operations for Friends of the Detroit River.
- FOTR recently secured new funding, including a large amount from the NFWF. FOTR was provided nearly \$50,00 for Ford Street Bridge Park Phase 2 project.
- FOTR is hosting the Rouge Rescue on Saturday, May 15th.
- There are many grants in the hopper.

- If you have any questions about the meetings MCC has been attending over the past few months, please reach out to her.
 - MMC noted that FOTR now has 9 full time employees, 3 part time employees, 3 interns and 2 fellows. Introductions for new employees will be in the e-news letter to follow.
- (C) Education (REP) Report
- KH reported that the rain barrel and native plants pick-up will be this Saturday, May 15, 2021 and the total raised from the sales was just over \$35,000.
- (D) Restoration/Monitoring (PI) Report
- No report.
- (E) Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Report
- No report.
- (F) Membership Committee Report
- Refer to reports attached for highlights.
 - SR reported that the next Membership Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 26, 2021 at 8:00 a.m.
- (G) Board Development Committee Report
- MM reported that his report would be covered during new business.
- (H) Fund Development Committee Report
- MMC sent out a sharing link with a document titled 2021 Board Committees and Fundraising. The document is the finished product from what was discussed at the last Board meeting. All Board members should review the document. All Board members and select staff members will have access to the document. Please message MMC if there are any corrections needed. Membership expiration is also listed on the spreadsheet. Reminder that all Board members must be active members. MMC will make the document available to any Board members who cannot access via the link.
 - DEI training videos will be made available for 2 more weeks.
 - AB reported that there are no upcoming committee meetings scheduled but that she has been talking with Lara Edwards regularly. Thank you to MM for attending Charity Partner webinar today. FOTR will be a Charity Partner again. The event will be in October, more details in the Fall.
 - Stay tuned for more info on the Un-Cruise. MMC reported the focus will be on two specific areas this year. First, going up-stream and characterizing the history of the Rouge Park. The second area will be the lower to mid-stream by Dearborn Golf Club. 2 instead of five. AB will need help getting sponsors for the Event.

- Per AB, Lara Edwards wanted to express her thanks to the Board members making thank-you calls for donation calls. More calls will be needed soon.
- (I) Finance Committee / Treasurer Report
- Please refer to report in packet.
 - SL reported there was a small mistake in February but that it was corrected in March. Financials look good and KH is doing a great job. Note for people in the office to use tax exemption certificate for every purchase made.
 - KH reported that she took out the month to date variants because it makes report too busy but it can be added back in if that was preferred. Wanted to focus on YTD budget for comparison.
 - KH received the draft audit late this afternoon and it will be going to the finance committee.
 - Motion to approve the February and March 2021 Financials made by ST. Motion seconded by DN. Motion passed.
- (J) Advocacy Committee Report
- No report.
 - DN stated that the committee would be getting together in next week or two to discuss some recent events.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A) Employee Manual Updates
- MMC reported that only minor changes were made to the Employee Manual and the changes were primarily to make pronouns gender neutral. Language in Benefits Section 5(A) allowed the shift of holidays that aligned with personal beliefs. Language in Benefits Section 5(B) provided clarification of how staff would request PTO if they were going to be “off grid” for an extended period of time. Benefits Section 8(G), regarding bereavement leave, was modified so that the definition of immediate family is more inclusive of relationships that are similar to immediate family members.
 - SR made a motion to approve the Employee Manual updates. The motion was seconded by MM. Motion passed.
- B) Gift Accept Guidelines
- MMC reported that the Gift Acceptance Guidelines are just guidelines and not a policy. The guidelines were a recommendation from the DEI audit to update pronouns to be gender neutral.

- C) Conflict of Interest Policy
- MMC reported that there was just one shift of a pronoun in this policy.
 - A motion to approve the updated Conflict of Interest Policy was made by DN. The motion was seconded by SL. Motion passed.
- D) Parental Leave Policy
- MMC explained the consolidation of the existing maternity leave and separate paternity leave policy into one blended policy which is more detailed and more equitable to those individuals who do not give birth. SR explained that the policy was developed based on the results of the DEI audit, as well as, review of other organizations' parental policies and the policy was designed, in part, to be progressive and keep FOTR a competitive employer.
 - Motion to replace the old polices with the new policy was made by MW. The motion was seconded by DN. The motion passed with two abstentions from EL and JD.
- E) Board Recruitment Documents
- MM reported that the Executive Committee met, and were provided with guidance from Morgain B. MacDonald, to help strengthen the FOTR Board recruitment process by and identifying specific needs and goals of the Board, as well as putting together a clearly defined processes. A timeline for recruiting was also set to help usher the process along. The timeline includes events like, identifying needs early, identifying candidates, and when the recruitment process should start. Packets will be provided to potential candidates with overview of FOTR, as well as expectations of FOTR Board members.
 - EL suggested including an orientation for the new board members and MMC suggested pairing with an existing member.
- F) Additional Issues from the Floor
- LW announced board team building event to build a rain garden. Date is still TBD. The announcement was met with support from the Board!
 - SL asked about the Earth Day Appeal numbers. KH will report on the numbers. MMC reported that Lara Edwards did not use social media as an option to give in the Earth Day Appeal and Lara thought that may have impacted the amount of donations.
 - MMC initiated discussion regarding in person Board meetings as restrictions related to COVID-19 begin to loosen. General agreement that, weather permitting, outdoor meetings would be welcome. The September meeting is tentatively set to be held at an outdoor location.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

ST made a motion to adjourn the May 12, 2021 FOTR Board meeting. Motion seconded by DN. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Sara B. Rubino
FOTR Secretary

4835-7350-3712 v2 [99998-3291]