

***Friends of the Rouge Board of Directors***  
***Meeting Minutes***

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**June 8, 2022**

**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:** Laura Wagner (LW), Alice Bailey (AB), Carol Snodgrass (CS), Dave Norwood (DN), Madelin Maher (MM), Erma Leaphart (EL), Mike McNulty (MMN), Myra Tetteh (MT), Alicia Bradford (AB)

**Staff Present:** Sally Petrella (SP), Lara Edwards (LE), Karen Hanna (KH), Marie McCormick (MMC)

**Walk-ins Present:** Annette DeMaria (ADM)

**1. Call to order**

Meeting called to order at 5:04 pm on January 12, 2022, by Laura Wagner via Zoom Meeting.

**2. Approval of Agenda:**

Motion to approve agenda made by DN, seconded by EL. Motion carried with no objections or changes.

**3. Approval of Board Minutes – May 11, 2022**

MMC stated she did not receive a copy of the previous board minutes, so the minutes could not be approved.

**4. Staff Presentation – Monitoring (Sally Petrella).**

MMC reminded any new viewers that Friends of the Rouge (FOTR) have started doing Staff Updates or Program Updates, usually ten to fifteen minutes long, focusing on one aspect of who we are and what we do, so that Officers, Board Members, and those in attendance can better represent FOTR to the public.

SP gave a broad overview of the various monitoring programs and introduced Sam Davis (SD), who works part-time with Monitoring, and part-time with Education programs

5. **Reports** - If you're new, we typically don't go into much detail on the reports as they should be included in your packet, for your leisurely reading.

a. **Executive Committee:** The report is this agenda, because we talk about things we want to put on the agenda, a lot of things that may come up on future agendas, or just general discussion between the members of the executive committee.

b. **Executive Director:**

MMC: Gave report on the River Rally conference held in Washington, D.C., and the presentation given with Executive Director of Huron River Watershed Council, Rebecca Esselman, and our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consultant, Morgan McDonald.

- Reminder: we have some key trainings coming up: details are in your Board packet. In September, our Board Retreat in Farmington Hills' Heritage Park where we will start the conversation about the next Five-Year Strategic Plan, so it's very critical that whoever can come, should. Your voice is important in how we shape the future of this organization for the next five years.
- We had a planned power outage for a little over seven days. Karen and Stan were instrumental in transferring equipment to and from the City of Berkley, who was very gracious in agreeing to host our equipment during that time.
- Two other updates: MMC was nominated and confirmed to the Executive Committee of the Sustainable Business Network of Detroit. Nominated by Dr. Hawkins from the Erb Foundation. MMC also nominated and confirmed as a new Board Member to the Michigan Environmental Council.
- Per the program officers' recommendation, MMC submitted an application to the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan that focuses on community outreach and engagement, and stewardship building. MMC Gave details on the goals of that grant and asked for feedback. The goal is to encourage community-led projects, rather than FOTR-identified projects.

Motion made by ST to provide overall support from the Board, seconded by EL. Motion carried.

- c. **Education Committee** – report in board packet
- d. **Restoration Committee** – report in board packet
- e. **Monitoring Committee** – report in board packet
- f. **Water Trail Committee** – report in board packet
- g. **Membership Committee** – no updates
- h. **Board Development Committee**

- a. Elect Treasurer LW: Opened the floor for nominations for the Treasurer's position on the Board Development Committee.

MMN: MM and CS have both expressed interest in the position. Asked that both take a moment to refresh everyone's memory on their respective backgrounds in finance and accounting.

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MM: Asked for a private DM from board members with their choice sometime during this meeting. Results to be announced later in meeting.

MM: Two openings at the end of the year and we have identified two potential candidates. One is Jeremiah Steen, who was brought to us by Jessica, (I don't think Jessica's on the call tonight). Jeremiah is an undergrad at U of D. He's a member of the Audubon Society; on the President's Council of the Skillman Foundation; it sounds like he has his own family foundation, too, the Steen Foundation. He seems to bring a lot of energy, and he's expressed and reaffirmed his interest. The other is Tyler Schmidt. He is an Environmental Engineer for Burns & McDonnell, which is a nationwide, international engineering firm. He's expressed interest in attending a Rouge Rescue event. He was to submit his bio to me if he wanted to run at the end of the year. As an FYI, Burns & McDonnell have supported us the last few years for the Rouge Cruise. I've been trying to develop that relationship, and in my opinion, this might be a step to further that goal. That's all I have.

#### i. **Fund Development Committee**

AB: Right now our main focus is the Heart of the Rouge event that is happening August 11<sup>th</sup>.

We are looking for two things from each of you:

1. Your attendance at the event to show a strong Board support.
2. Please work on getting sponsors, corporate sponsors for this event.

LE: Report on progress of the Heart of the Rouge fundraiser and history of the venue (Phoenix Mill). Details on special advance purchase tickets with extra perks. Sponsorship level benefit information. Listed some of the live demonstrations available during the event. Asked for Board Member participation as volunteers for the registration tables, parking, etc..

#### j. **Finance Committee/Treasurer**

MM: OK. Our new Treasurer is Carol (Snodgrass—CS). Congratulations on filling a tough role.

LW: Now on to the Financial Report and Treasurer's Report. We have the April financials as well as a Q3 budget amendment to discuss.

KH presented the April financial board reports. Opened the floor for any questions about the Financial Report.

MMC commented: I signed the contract with the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr., Foundation this morning. FOTR will be working on making a public announcement, but I can say that on June 17<sup>th</sup>, we will be getting one million dollars in cash. We will be setting up a separate account for the money meant to go toward the Built Environment project so that those can be separate.

LW: Is this amendment to the budget something that needs to be done at this meeting to address upcoming expenses? When do we next meet?

ST motioned to make an email vote, MT seconded. Motion carried.

k. **Advocacy Committee** – no updates

## 6. **New Business**

a. Walk-Ins: ADM stated that she was not prepared to present anything in the meeting.

## 7. **Reminders:**

1. Annual fundraiser, Heart of the Rouge, asking for 100% of the Board to be there;
2. Board Retreat on Sept. 21<sup>st</sup> to start updating our five-year business plan;
3. Volunteer for tabling events sent to you via email;
4. If you're new and haven't yet met with Lara or Marie, please make time to do so.

## 8. **Adjournment:**

MM made a motion to adjourn, ST seconded. Motion carried.