

MISSION

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-President, Alice Bailey called the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

2. ROLL CALL

a. Directors Present:

Alice Bailey (AB), Paul Draus (PD), Erma Leaphart (EL), Samraa Luqman (SL), Mike McNulty (MMN), Brandy Siedlaczek (BS), Carol Snodgrass (CS), Myra Tetteh (MT), Susan Thompson (ST), Gerry VanAcker (GVA) (10 total)

b. Directors Not Present:

Jessica Eiland Anders (JEA), Madelin Maher (MM), Dave Norwood (DN), Nick Leonard (NL), Jeremiah Steen (JS), (5 total)

c. Staff Members Present:

Marie McCormick (MMC), Jaclyn Heikkila-Stafiej (JHS), Karen Hanna (KH) (3 total)

d. Guests Present:

Kathleen Rossie

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

a. Agenda was moved (SL)/(EL) and approved.

4. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

a. Minutes were moved (SL)/(GV) and approved.

5. STAFF PRESENTATION – Jaclyn Heikkila-Stafiej, Restoration Coordinator - Rain Gardens to the Rescue

6. BOARD ELECTIONS

a. 5 openings/5 candidates - no write-in votes

i. Official results - everyone on the ballot was voted in: Carol Snodgrass, Mike McNulty, Jeremiah Steen, Sue Thompson, Myra Tetteh

b. Executive board voting in January - if you have an interest in serving, please let Marie know.

c. AB stated that she only has 2 years left in her role and invites anyone who is interested in the Vice President role should contact her.

d. EC meets monthly for 1-1.5 hours.

7. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. **Executive Committee:** GVA reported

i. Marie will cover.

b. **Finance Committee:** CS Reported

- i. CS presented the October Treasurer's Reports and board financial reports.
- ii. Financial reports were moved (SL)/(EL) and approved.
- iii. CS presented the 2024 organizational budget - Finance Committee met 12/7/23 and approved the presentation of the budget to the board.
- iv. MMN motioned to approve, seconded by SL
- c. Membership Committee:** GVA reported
 - i. First time we've had over 700 members from 300 members in 2019
 - ii. FOTR held the first Stonefly Society appreciation event in October 2023. Gave people a chance to up their memberships.
 - iii. Nicole Wilson is on leave due to serious health problems.
- d. Fund Development Committee:** AB reported
 - i. Thanks for your participation in the triple match offer, there was almost 100% board participation - great job everyone!
 - ii. \$26,000 raised over giving Tuesday and \$73,000, so far, for year end giving.
- e. Board Development Committee:** MMN reported
 - i. Elections - Up for re-election next year: Dave Norwood, Brandy Siedlaczek, Paul Draus, Erma Leaphart, and Samraa Luqman - Mike will contact them next year to discuss their plans to continue on the board.
 - ii. The board is continuing with IDI self-assessment and process.
 - iii. Each board member has a seat for non-profit focused DEI training. Use the coupon Marie sent you with the passcode. There are only 15 seats available, please do not share or someone will lose their seat. This is a 90-minute DEIJ training session including topics like unconscious bias, microaggressions, and gatekeeping. This is alternative to having the board meeting for training. Everyone can go at their own pace.
- f. Advocacy Committee:**
 - i. See board materials.
- g. Restoration Committee:**
 - i. See board materials.
- h. Monitoring Committee**
 - i. See board materials.
- i. Education Committee**
 - i. See board materials.
- j. Water Trail Leadership Committee**
 - i. See board materials.

8. Staff Program Reports

- a. Executive Directors Report:** MM reported
 - i. Finalized brand guidelines - rollout & implementation will take time - slow process
 - ii. New website is on hold
 - iii. Cara left to work for Sierra Club - position is open

- iv. Strategic planning RFP - interviews conducted and once selected, Marie will let you know - beginning in January
 - v. Strategic plan - you will be called upon to participate in the plan. Strategic visioning is a very important part of being a board member. Watch for emails from Marie.
 - vi. Continuing full court press finding trails funding for built environment. Herman and Marie are meeting with many representatives at the state level and building those relationships.
 - vii. The investment in Plunkett Cooney as lobbyists has been fruitful in good relationship building and has opened many doors.
 - viii. Advocacy/Policy Manager role is posted on our website. Please give Marie feedback. If you know anyone who is fit for the role, please let Marie know. If there is somewhere that this job should be posted, please let Marie know.
 - ix. Trademark for Rouge Rescue is finalized. Rouge Rescue is officially trademarked by FOTR, it is now our proprietary brand. Through strategic planning, we will work on what the roll out and resurgence of Rouge Rescue means.
- b. Fund Development:**
- i. See board materials.
- c. Grants and Funding**
- i. See board materials.
- d. Education Programs**
- i. Erin going on maternity leave 3 months parental leave - part-time for 3 months then resume full-time.
- e. Restoration Programs:**
- i. FOTR has been working on a GSI Collective (*full brand not yet rolled out called the Rain Catchers Collective*) with Huron River Watershed Council, Clinton River Watershed Council, and Friends of the Detroit River as a collaborating partner. The collective is a partnership offering suites of services around residential rain gardens, the mechanism for branding, and sharing messaging regionally around the value and applicability of rain gardens.
 - ii. The collective has been working together for years and submitted a \$21 million grant application and was selected to move on to the next phase. The grant would provide funding for/to:
 - 1. develop robust grant that includes scaling residential rain garden services Great synergy and structure, submitted proposal to NOAA large grant climate resiliency regional challenge scaling education rain garden implementation of services and were selected to move on to the next phase.
 - 2. grow SWST program regionally
 - 3. establish a resiliency fund - where we would have a large pool of money to offer rain gardens to entities in partnership with

watershed organizations. co-design, co-implementation - rain gardens for demonstration - ie. PARC set the example and created a desire.

4. establish a pot of money dedicated to preservation and conservation of land.

f. Monitoring Programs

- i. Creating culvert inventories - FOTR doing monitoring. Results are sent to municipalities so they can seek funding to remediate any issues.
- ii. See board materials.

g. Trails Programs:

- i. Herman has all of the paddling trips scheduled for 2024
- ii. See board materials.

h. PR/Marketing/Media

- i. See board materials.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. None

10. REMINDERS

- a. FOTR Holiday party this Friday
- b. Upcoming Board Meetings:
 - i. January 10, 2024, 5:00pm-6:30pm (Virtual)

11. ADJOURNMENT: MMN/CS motion to adjourn moved and approved. Meeting adjourned at 6:27pm.