



Rouge Assembly Meeting Summary

August 5, 2003
Dearborn, Michigan

MEETING PRIOR TO THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Allen Park
Auburn Hills
Beverly Hills
Bingham Farms
Birmingham
Bloomfield Hills
Bloomfield Twp.
Canton Twp.
Dearborn
Dearborn Heights
Farmington
Farmington Hills
Franklin
Garden City
Inkster
Lathrup Village
Melvindale
Northville
Northville Twp.
Novi
Oakland County
Plymouth
Plymouth Twp.
Pontiac
Redford Twp.
Rochester Hills
Romulus
Southfield
Superior Twp.
Troy
Van Buren Twp.
Walled Lake
Washtenaw County
Wayne
Wayne County
W. Bloomfield Twp.
Westland
Wixom

1. Welcome and Review of Events to Date

The Interim Chair, Kurt Heise, Director of the Wayne County Department of Environment welcomed community representatives and all attendees to the first meeting of the Rouge River Watershed Local Management Assembly (Rouge Assembly). He indicated that this first meeting was held in Dearborn because it was the first community to conditionally approve the Rouge Assembly.

He indicated that at the October 2001 retreat communities voted to decide their own destiny and form a watershed-wide organization to sustain the Rouge River restoration as the federal funding decreases. Members volunteered for the Drafting Committee to outline this organization and create the Memorandum of Agreement forming the Rouge River Watershed Local Management Assembly (Rouge Assembly). The members of the Drafting Committee included James Anulewicz, Tom Biasell, Aaron Machnik, Kurt Heise, Kelly Cave, Janis Bobrin, Phil Sanzica, assisted by Jack Bails (RPO).

Heise indicated that the seats around the table were reserved for the communities who had conditionally approved the Rouge Assembly. The three open seats at the front of the room were reserved for the officers of the Rouge Assembly who chaired the meeting following the election.

2. Additions or Changes to Draft Agenda

Copies of handouts were available at the meeting. Wayne County did not receive any suggestions for changes to the agenda prior to the meeting.

3. Status Report on Conditional Membership in Assembly

Mr. Heise reviewed the status of conditional membership in the Rouge Assembly. Prior to the meeting 31 communities and the three counties conditionally approved the Rouge Assembly. Lathrup Village and Pontiac brought confirmation of their conditional support of the Rouge Assembly to the meeting. The only eligible communities who have not yet conditionally approved the Rouge Assembly are Commerce Township, Livonia, Lyon Township, and Ypsilanti Township. Salem Township is the only community who indicated they would not participate in the Rouge Assembly. Rochester Hills and Bloomfield Hills have applied for coverage under the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) watershed based general storm water permit and their inclusion in the Rouge Assembly was voted on later in the meeting.

4. Role Call and Introduction of Assembly Members and Alternates Present

Mr. Heise conducted a role call of the Rouge Assembly members present and asked them to offer any corrections to the list of designated representatives and alternates provided. Communities/counties with representatives in attendance include:

- Allen Park
- Bingham Farms
- Canton Township
- Farmington
- Lathrup Village
- Northville Township
- City of Plymouth
- Redford Township
- Superior Township
- Walled Lake
- Wayne County
- Auburn Hills
- Birmingham*
- Dearborn*
- Farmington Hills
- Melvindale
- City of Novi
- Plymouth Township
- Romulus
- Troy
- Washtenaw County
- West Bloomfield Township
- Village of Beverly Hills
- Bloomfield Township
- Dearborn Heights
- Garden City
- City of Northville
- Oakland County
- Pontiac
- City of Southfield
- Van Buren Township
- Wayne
- Westland

* Representatives from these communities were not present during the role call but did attend later in the meeting.

5. Vote to Determine if Adequate Participation to Continue with Rouge Assembly

Mr. Heise indicated the Rouge Assembly will cost effectively address Rouge River restoration issues on a watershed basis. He explained that members of the Rouge Assembly will vote to determine if there was adequate participation to continue the Rouge River Assembly and that each community who has conditionally approved the Rouge Assembly has one vote.

Bobrin made a motion that there is adequate participation to continue with the Rouge Assembly. Sanzica seconded the motion. Assembly members voted to continue with the Rouge Assembly.

6. Nominations and Election of Officers

Officers must be designated representative or alternate of community that has conditionally approved the Rouge River Assembly. County representatives or alternates are not eligible to serve as an officer of the Rouge River Assembly. Wayne County received nominations for officers of the Rouge River Assembly prior to the meeting. Members could also nominate members at the meeting. Each community/county present that has indicated conditional approval of the Rouge Assembly has one vote. The officers will be elected by a majority of those voting.

Chair

Mr. Tom Biasell of Farmington Hills was nominated for Chair prior to the meeting. Mr. Biasell indicated he would serve if elected. There were no other nominations for Chair. Mr. Bonus made a motion to elect Mr. Tom Biasell as Chair of the Rouge Assembly. Mr. Spallasso seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to elect Mr. Tom Biasell as Chair of the Rouge River Assembly

Co-Chair

Mr. Heise indicated Wayne County received five nominations for Co-Chair prior to the meeting: James Anulewicz, Kurt Giberson, Shawn Keenan, Gary Mekjian, and Dan Swallow. The questions were asked if alternates could be elected as officers and how communities who have elected officers would be represented on the Assembly. Mr. Jack Bails and Mr. Heise indicated alternates could serve as officers to the Assembly. It would be up to the Assembly if the officers would vote for their community or abstain from voting to allow another community representative to vote. Mr. James Anulewicz of Plymouth Township was elected to serve as co-chair of the Rouge Assembly.

Treasurer

Mr. Heise indicated Wayne County received five nominations for Treasurer prior to the meeting: James Anulewicz, Kurt Giberson, Shawn Keenan, and Gary Mekjian. Mr. Anulewicz was elected Co-Chair so cannot serve as Treasurer. Mr. Shawn Keenan withdrew. Mr. Heise indicated the Mr. Giberson was willing to serve as an officer, although he could not attend today's meeting. Mr. Gary Mekjian of West Bloomfield Township was elected to serve as Treasurer of the Rouge Assembly.

7. Welcome New Officers

Mr. Heise stated that the Rouge Assembly is headed in the right direction and thanked everyone for their support on behalf of Wayne County. He passed the chair of the meeting to Tom Biasell and the two other newly elected officers.

Mr. Biasell thanked Wayne County, particularly Kurt Heise and his staff, for organizing the meeting and their efforts to establish the Rouge River Assembly. He recognized the advantage to working together and the contributions of Wayne, Oakland, and Washtenaw Counties.

Following a brief recess the new officers of the Rouge Assembly resumed the meeting.

MEETING FOLLOWING THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. Discussion and Action on 2003 Assembly Budget

The budget for 2003 is included as Appendix B to the Memorandum of Agreement. Kelly Cave reviewed the two options available for the budget. Option 1 was mailed in the meeting announcement packet. The original budget of \$600,000 (\$300,000 local match) cannot be spent in 2003 due to the shortened timeframe. Any funds collected from communities and not spent in 2003 will be rolled over to support the 2004 Assembly budget. Option 1 proposes a 2003 budget of \$341,000. It authorizes \$227,000 for monitoring, \$89,000 for Subwatershed Advisory Group (SWAG) facilitation, and \$25,000 for staff support to the Rouge Assembly. Option 2 is the same but with an additional \$4,000 for support to the Rouge Assembly Public Education Committee. Ms. Cave explained that some work was completed to date on behalf of the Rouge Assembly, including SWAG facilitation and support for United States Geological Service (USGS) continuous monitoring Rouge River stations. She also outlined what expenditures are planned for the remainder of the year in each budget category.

Mr. Biasell indicated that some communities have already paid their assessment and some communities have to take it back to City Councils/Township Boards for final approval. The amount of each community's annual assessment will not be greater than that established for 2003.

Mayor Canfield made a motion to accept Budget Option 2 for 2003. Mr. Heise seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Wayne County is planning to send invoices in approximately two weeks. The invoice amount will be the same as indicated in Appendix A of the Memorandum of Agreement.

2. Discussion and Adoption of Revised Rouge River Watershed Local Management Assembly Memorandum of Agreement

Mr. Jack Bails and Mr. Biasell briefly reviewed the history of the memorandum of agreement (MOA).

- Most of the revisions related to the fact that the previous version of the MOA assumed the Rouge Assembly would begin sooner than it actually has.
- The timeframe of the Rouge Assembly will be extended through December 2004. At that time it may be continued.
- Any community with a storm water permit can join.
- The meetings will follow the open meetings act provisions to encourage openness and public access. Notice to the public will be provided through a website and all meetings will be held at publicly accessible facilities.

- Community shares were determined based on equal weight for land area and population. The three counties will not be charged initially.
- Voting can be conducted by shares at the request of any member.
- There will be several standing committees including public involvement, technical, finance, and organization committee.
- The Resolution of city council or township board support is attached as Appendix D to the MOA.

Mr. Biasell reminded the members that voice votes would be first the first option and if that was close there would be a call for a raising of hands. He reminded everyone that any member could ask that the votes be determine on the basis of voting shares indicated in the MOA. The Officers will not be voting - Mr. Gary Zorza will vote for Farmington Hills, Mr. Steve Mann will vote for Plymouth Township, and Ms. Anne Vaara will vote for West Bloomfield Township.

Mr. Heise made a motion to adopt the revised memorandum of agreement with Option 2 for the budget. Mr. Bonus seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Discussion and Action on Adding Member Communities

Rochester Hills and Bloomfield Hills have applied for coverage under the MDEQ Quality Watershed Based General Storm Water Permit and are waiting for Certificates of Coverage. Mr. Roger Moore from Rochester Hills was present at the meeting and indicated approval of the Rouge River Assembly is tentatively scheduled for City Council meeting in late August.

The assessment and voting shares for Rochester Hills and Bloomfield Hills were calculated in the same manner as the other communities. Rochester Hills' assessment is \$1,860 for 2 shares. Bloomfield Hills' assessment is \$2,487 for 3 shares.

The question was asked if a consultant could be designated as a representative or alternate. Mr. Bails indicated a community can appoint whomever they want as long as they are designated on the form.

Mr. Bonus made a motion to add Rochester Hills and Bloomfield Hills to the Rouge River Assembly with the stipulation that they fulfill the same obligation as other communities in regards to paying their assessment and submitting Appendix D. Mayor Canfield seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Discussion and Adoption of Fiduciary Agreement

The fiduciary agreement was mailed to communities prior to the meeting. It is an agreement between Wayne County and the Rouge Assembly. The fiduciary agreement provides for a governmental entity to handle the collection and distribution of funds on behalf of the Rouge Assembly which is not a legal entity.

Wayne County will serve as the fiduciary for the Rouge Assembly. Wayne County will not charge the Assembly for its fiduciary services.

There was discussion regarding communities' approval of the agreement without review of their legal counsel. The MOA calls for a fiduciary agreement to allow Wayne County to collect funds. The Chair will sign the Fiduciary Agreement on behalf of the Assembly. The Rouge Assembly is a voluntary organization, if communities do not wish to participate because of legal concerns about the fiduciary agreement they can choose to not pay their assessment and they will no longer be part of the Rouge Assembly. When communities approved the Rouge Assembly many City Councils assumed an element of trust to their staff people and expected them to move forward with some flexibility. Fine-tuning of the language of the fiduciary agreement should not stand in the way of the Rouge Assembly. Any questions or objections regarding the fiduciary agreement can be brought up at the finance committee meetings.

Phil Sanzica motioned that if there were no objections the Chair would sign the fiduciary agreement on behalf of the Rouge Assembly. Mr. Biasell indicated he intends to proceed if there were no objections in accordance with the fiduciary agreement.

5. Review/Endorse Round V Projects for Rouge Subgrants

A list of the Round V subgrant projects recommended for funding was distributed in the meeting packet. Wayne County received 29 proposals by the due date requesting \$5,000,000 in federal funds. The original target amount of federal funding for this round of funding was \$4,250,000. Due to the quality of the projects Wayne County was able to make additional funds available. All the projects recommended for funding were from communities who have conditionally approved the Rouge Assembly or non-profit agencies. In the future the Rouge Assembly may have a greater level of participation in the subgrant process. The recommendation from the Chair was to endorse proceeding with the Round V subgrant project as in the past.

Ms. Janis Bobrin made a motion to endorse the round V subgrant projects. Mr. Spallasso seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Establishing and Calling First Meeting of the Assembly Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Rouge River Assembly will be made up of thirteen members: the three elected officers, the three counties, and a representative of each of the seven SWAGs. The representative of the SWAGs cannot be from the counties or the same community as the elected officers, so Farmington Hills, Plymouth Township, and West Bloomfield Township are not

eligible. All Executive Committee members with the exception of the elected officers can designate alternates.

The Executive Committee of the Rouge River Assembly will do much of the work of the Rouge River Assembly. All SWAGs are asked to meet between now and September 15 to elect their representative and alternate.

The first meeting of the Executive Committee will be Wednesday, October 8. [Note: following the meeting the location was chosen as Farmington Hills, Main library at 1:30 p.m.]

7. Establish Standing Committees

The MOA outlines four standing committees: Technical, Public Involvement, Finance, and Organizational. Any member can be involved in the committees. All committees must meet before the end of the year. Signup Sheets for the four committees were distributed and were available on the back table for volunteers. The chair of the Finance Committee will be Mr. Mekjian, Treasurer. The chairs of the technical and public involvement committees will be either the Chair or Co-Chair of the Rouge Assembly. Committee size will be discussed at the October 8 Executive Committee Meeting.

There are several organizations in the watershed that have an interest in the Public Involvement committee. Mr. Anulewicz suggested getting political people involved in the committees. Having a political action subcommittee in the future was discussed that would include elected officials representing those agencies that are members of the Rouge Assembly.

8. Discussion Issues Offered by Members

Communities discussed the advocacy services that could be provided through the Rouge River Assembly with a variety of organizations. The Rouge Assembly represents a large group of communities and there is strength in numbers. Advocacy with MDEQ was discussed. The Rouge Project has a quarterly meeting with MDEQ Southeast Michigan District staff. The Rouge Assembly has been invited to participate in these meetings. The Federal Court is fully aware of what is going on with the Rouge Assembly and is supportive.

9. Public Comment

Mr. Greg Weeks asked about expanding the membership and makeup of the Rouge Assembly to include other permit holders. Mr. Biasell replied that the Drafting Committee did discuss this topic and thought it should be handled as part of the Rouge Assembly. He suggested this as a topic for the Organizational Committee.

Mr. Seth Phillips of Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) indicated that MDOT intended to stay involved in the Rouge River Assembly.

Ms.Carolyn McCaughey of Friends of the Rouge (FOTR) indicated FOTR appreciated being part of the meeting and planned to participate through the committees.

10.Next Meeting of the Rouge River Assembly

The next meeting of the Rouge River Assembly will be December 10 at 1:30pm in the Southfield Library.

11.Adjourn

Mr. Heise reminded attendees to sign up their best people for the committees, as participation is not limited to the representative or alternate of member communities.

Mr. Biasell indicated that Wayne County would send out invoices in the next few weeks for communities' 2003 assessment. Communities are asked to return Appendix D of the Memorandum of Agreement to Mr. Biasell. Meeting Schedules will be published as dates are set. Email is the preferred method for communicating with Assembly members.

Mr. Biasell closed the meeting again by thanking everyone for their participation in the first meeting of the Rouge Assembly.