



Working together, restoring the river

ASSEMBLY OF ROUGE COMMUNITIES

Meeting Summary

General Assembly Meeting

Wednesday, September 8, 2004 at 1:30 p.m.

Southfield Public Library

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

1. WELCOME

Mr. Tom Biasell of Farmington Hills, Assembly of Rouge Communities Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Southfield for hosting the meeting.

1A. Roll Call/Introduction and Status of Membership

Mr. Biasell took roll call at the meeting. He asked all attendees to identify themselves and the organization they represented.

The following communities were in attendance at the meeting:

Auburn Hills	Beverly Hills	Bingham Farms	Birmingham
Bloomfield Hills	Bloomfield Township	Canton Township	Commerce Township
Dearborn	Farmington Hills	Garden City	Lathrup Village
Livonia	Melvindale	Northville Township	Oakland County
Redford Township	Rochester Hills	Southfield	Troy
Van Buren Township	Washtenaw County	Wayne	Wayne County
West Bloomfield Twp.	Westland	Wixom	

The following communities were absent from the meeting.

Allen Park	Dearborn Heights	Farmington	Franklin
Inkster	Northville	Novi	Plymouth
Plymouth Township	Pontiac	Romulus	Superior Township
Walled Lake	Ypsilanti Township		

Only Lyon Township has not indicated whether or not they will participate in the Assembly of Rouge Communities.

1B. Review and Approval of December 10, 2003, Assembly Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the March 18, 2004 Assembly of Rouge Communities meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. The table on page 5 of 8 should indicate the correct PIE total budget modification is +\$11,500.

Wixom made a motion to approve the March 18, 2004 meeting minutes.

Melvindale supported the motion.

The March 18, 2004 minutes were unanimously approved.

1C. Additions or Changes to Draft Meeting Agenda

Mr. Biasell indicated that according to the Memorandum of Agreement a quorum of members must be present to approve items. A vote may be taken at agenda item 3A instead of at item 4.

Mr. Biasell also indicated that a presentation on Water Quality Trends in the Rouge River Watershed by Dr. Colleen Hughes, CDM, would be added to the agenda as item 8 if time allows.

Beverly Hills made a motion to approve the agenda.
Birmingham supported the motion.
The amended agenda was unanimously approved.

1D. Chair Update of Assembly Activities

1D1. Response Meeting with MDEQ on July 7, 2004

Mr. Biasell reported the most recent Rouge Project and MDEQ quarterly meeting was held on July 7, 2004. At this meeting the group provided comments to MDEQ on the IDEP guidance prepared by the MDEQ. They group also discussed alternative approaches to streamwalks. The ARC Technical Committee has been tasked with responding to MDEQ's IDEP guidance and developing an alternative approach to streamwalks.

1D2. Round VI Rouge Grants

Ms. Kelly Cave, Wayne County, provided a list of projects recommended for funding for Round VI Parts A and B. The Technical Committee reviewed the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project (Rouge Project) Round VI Notice of Grant Availability (NOG). The Technical Committee recommended some changes, which were incorporated. The Subwatershed Advisory Groups (SWAGs) ranked the proposals. The NOG was approved by the Executive Committee and distributed by Wayne County. In Round VI \$5.5 million was available for CSO/SSO control projects at 40% Federal/60% local and \$2.0 million was available for storm water general permit activities at 50% Federal/50% local. Wayne County received requests greater than the total amount available and consequently not all projects could be funded. Communities are asked to contact Wayne County to begin developing inter-agency agreements for the projects. The schedule for projects is very important at the end-dates for the Federal Grants from U.S. EPA will not be extended.

1D3. Seminar for Elected Officials

Mr. Shawn Keenan, Auburn Hills, reported on the seminar for elected officials. The results of a survey of attendees at the workshop were 87% excellent and 13% good. Another full day workshop will be offered with more local case studies on November 16. Assembly members are asked to encourage others to attend.

1D3. Executive Committee Meeting – August 11

Mr. Biasell reported a summary of the August 11 Executive Committee meeting is included in the packet. The date of the next full ARC meeting was incorrectly reported in the

summary, the correct date of the next General Assembly meeting is November 17, 2004. A location has not been set at this time. Please contact Mr. Biasell to volunteer to host the meeting.

1D3. Letter to Airport Authority re: Membership in Assembly

The Wayne County Airport Authority requested becoming a member of the ARC. A written response was sent from the Chair explaining that the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) would have to be amended for the Airport Authority to join. Once the enabling legislation to authorize the formation of an intergovernmental watershed alliance is passed membership in the ARC can be expanded. The Airport Authority is asked to continue to participate in subwatershed and ARC meetings. A copy of the letter is included in the meeting packet.

Mr. Bryan Wagner of the WC Airport Authority was in attendance at the meeting and indicated the Airport Authority was interested in becoming a member of the ARC once the legislation is passed.

2. TREASURER'S REPORT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

2A. Review of 2003 Income and Expenses

Mr. Gary Mekjian, Treasurer of the Rouge Assembly, reviewed the final report for 2003 income and expenses. All community dues for 2003 have been paid to date. Mr. Mekjian reviewed the 2003 Assembly of Rouge Communities budget status. Over 85% of community dues for 2004 have been paid to date. Only 4 communities' dues have not been paid. Mr. Mekjian reviewed the 2004 Assembly of Rouge Communities budget status. The summary is available in the meeting packet. All items are progressing as expected.

2B. 2005 Budget Schedule and Assumptions

The Finance Committee developed a procedure for requesting budget recommendations from the Standing Committees. The procedure was distributed in an August 6 memo to all Committee Chairs and members of the Executive Committee. 2005 budget recommendations are due to the Treasurer by September 10, 2004. The next meeting of the Finance Committee is September 30, 2004. The Finance Committee will review the requests received in order to make a recommendation to the Executive Committee Meeting in October. The budget can then be approved by the General Assembly at their November 17 meeting.

Wayne County Department of Environment (WCDOE) indicated that there are matching funds available from the Rouge Project Grants for community assessments collected in 2005.

2C. Questions of the Treasurer/Finance Committee

There were no questions at this time.

3. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

3A. Organization Committee

The Organization Committee is co-chaired by Kurt Heise, WCDOE, and Dave Payne, Bloomfield Township. Mr. Heise gave the Organization Committee report.

3A1. Draft Watershed Alliance Legislation

A copy of the draft watershed alliance legislation was distributed. The legislation will be sponsored in the Michigan Senate by Bruce Patterson of Canton. The legislation has been endorsed by SEMCOG. Support is also expected from the Michigan Township Association. There has been a false rumor circulating that the legislation is an attempt to take over the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department. Please inform anyone who asks that the legislation is not an attempt to take over DWSD.

The legislation is very similar to what the ARC suggested. Jack Bails worked with the legislative services bureau. It is still a draft bill at this time, so it does not have a number. With this year being an election year it is likely that hearings will be held this year and action will happen early next year. Bi-partisan support is needed for the bill so please contact any potential co-sponsors.

Heise indicated that a resolution of support for the legislation would be a great help in taking the legislation to hearings.

Heise offered the following as a resolution in support of the Watershed Alliance Legislation.

“The Assembly of Rouge Communities urges the Michigan legislature to introduce and hold hearings on a bill that would authorize local units of governments to form voluntary watershed alliances based upon the principles and concepts contained in the attached draft bill.”

Washtenaw County made a motion to approve the resolution.
Melvindale supported the motion.
The motion was unanimously approved.

3A2. Merger of Organization and Membership Committee

Mr. Kurt Giberson, Dearborn, was nominated to chair the Membership Committee. Unfortunately, there were no volunteers to serve on the Committee. Mr. Heise proposed merging the Organization and Membership Committees.

Wixom made a motion to approve merging the organization and Membership Committees.
Auburn Hills supported the motion.
The motion was unanimously approved.

3A3. New Member Kurt Giberson (Dearborn)

According to the terms of the MOA new members of the Organization Committee must be approved by the General Assembly. Mr. Kurt Giberson, Dearborn, was nominated as a new member to the Organization Committee. There were no other volunteers for the Organization Committee. Mr. Heise reported that Councilman Wicek of Garden City, a member of the Organization Committee, had passed away.

Redford made a motion to approve Mr. Kurt Giberson to the Organization Committee.

Melvindale supported the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

3A4. Vision and Goals for Assembly

Mr. Heise reported the vision and goals of the ARC have been written with input from the Public Involvement and Education Committee. These visions and goals will be the base for our programs.

Tracy Slintak, Farmington Hills, suggested that the goals needed to be framed in a more easily understood form for dissemination to the public. Biasell and Heise indicated that was acceptable.

Redford Township made a motion to approve the Vision and Goals for the Assembly.
Westland supported the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

3A5. Policy on Resolutions

The Organization Committee developed the Assembly's draft policy on considerations of resolutions offered by members to the Assembly of Rouge Communities. The policy details the procedures to be followed and the criteria for resolutions not directly related to the operation of the Assembly.

Wayne Bonus, Southfield, indicated that Southfield's request for a resolution of support for modifications to a bridge project in the Oakland County Rouge River corridor started this discussion. Mr. Bonus indicated Southfield was disappointed the ARC did not pass a resolution in support of their position. Southfield withdrew their request due to the time required to have the request reviewed at different committees. He indicated the policy appeared to have flexibility and that Southfield would support the policy.

Washtenaw County made a motion to approve the Vision and Goals of the Assembly.
Wixom seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Heise indicated that there had not been a request for a Federal Court hearing in quite some time. Judge Feikens is aware of the activities of the Assembly of Rouge Communities.

Biasell thanked the members of the Organization Committee for their efforts in completing their many tasks.

3B. Technical Committee

The Vice Chair of the Technical Committee, Gary Zorza of Farmington Hills, gave the Technical Committee report.

3B1. Monitoring Program

The Technical Committee met on August 18, 2004 in Livonia. The minutes of the meeting were included in the meeting packet. CD's containing Adobe Acrobat files of the 2002 Baseline Data Summary Report and Rouge Data CD Volume 10 were distributed to all attendees. Both products are available on the Rouge Project website, www.rougeriver.com. The Technical Committee is preparing their budget requests for 2005. Expected items include continuation of the sampling program and a poster/report targeted at elected officials and the general public. The Committee is also reviewing different methods for disseminating the sampling data. Preliminary event summaries for the sampling events completed to date were distributed at the Technical Committee meeting. Please contact Colleen Hughes for copies of the summaries. MDEQ was contacted prior to the meeting and asked to present any guidance they had for the monitoring program. MDEQ indicated there was no additional guidance available at this time. The Technical Committee plans to continue the intermittent sampling program in the Middle 1 and Middle 3 sub-watersheds. The Technical Committee will submit their budget recommendations to the Finance Committee by September 10.

3B2. Alternative SWPPI Outfall Sampling

MDEQ has issued guidance for communities in preparing their Illicit Discharge Elimination plans (IDEP). There are several concerns with the guidance regarding the language on IDEP recommendations versus requirements, responsibility for activities, and acceptable alternatives. The guidance also emphasizes streamwalks, while the experiences of Rouge River Watershed communities have shown alternate methods to be more cost-effective. The Executive Committee assigned reviewing and responding to the guidance and developing an alternative program to the Technical Committee. A sub-committee of the Technical Committee is planning to meet on September 1 to develop an alternative plan. The alternative plan will utilize monitoring data to prioritize efforts with the limited resources available. MDEQ indicated they were willing to accept an alternative.

3B3. Other Information Items/Questions

There were no questions at this time.

3C. Public Involvement and Education

The Chair of the Public Involvement and Education (PIE) Committee, Mr. James Anulewicz, could not attend the meeting. Ms. Jennifer Lawson, Troy, will serve as the Vice-Chair of the Public Involvement and Education Committee. Ms. Lawson gave the PIE Committee Report.

Ms. Lawson distributed a summary of the May 18 PIE meeting and a summary of PIE activities.

3C1. Status of Joint Public Survey

The Watershed Awareness survey has been completed and results should be available soon.

3C2. Status of Catalog of Public Information Materials

The PIE Committee has been compiling a catalog of public information materials. Communities are asked to return their completed public education support materials survey to SEMCOG as soon as possible.

3C3. Round VI Grant Proposal for I&E

Oakland County was awarded a Round VI Rouge Project subgrant on behalf of the Assembly of Rouge Communities. The PIE Committee will be working with Oakland County and Wayne County for facilitation of the grant.

3C4. Other Information Items/Questions

The PIE sub-committees continue to be very active with several efforts underway. The second municipal newsletter will be available in October. Work has begun on a poster/banner to be used at events. A comparison document for the public education portion of the SWPPIs is being prepared. The PIE Committee is gathering information for a BMP database.

The Vision and Goals document will be a great help to the efforts of the PIE committee.

Shawn Keenan, Auburn Hills, indicated that at least one member of each subwatershed should attend the PIE meetings and report back to the SWAGs.

The next PIE Committee meeting will be September 15, 2004 at 1:30pm at the Redford Township DPS. The PIE committee offered to move their November 17 meeting as it conflicts with the General Assembly meeting set for that date.

4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

4A. Recommendations for Action by Executive Committee

4A1. Merger of Organization and Membership Committee

This item was approved earlier in the meeting.

4A2. New Member of Organization Committee Kurt Giberson (Dearborn)

This item was approved earlier in the meeting.

4A3. Vision and Goals of Assembly

This item was approved earlier in the meeting.

4A4. Policy on Resolutions

This item was approved earlier in the meeting.

4A5. Formation/Composition of Nominating Committee

According to terms of the Memorandum of Agreement the terms of the officers will expire at the end of the year. Mr. Biasell suggested forming a nominating committee to prepare a slate of candidates for the officer positions at the November 17 General Assembly meeting. Mr.

Biasell and Mr. Anulewicz will not be running for officer positions next year. Mr. Mekjian indicated he would be willing to serve as an officer in 2005. Members of the Nominating Committee will be from a cross-section of the watershed and will not be running for offices. Volunteers for the committee include: Tom Biasell - Chair, Jim Anulewicz - Vice Chair, Phil Sanzica - Oakland County, Michelle Bononi - Washtenaw County, and Kurt Heise - Wayne County. Bloomfield Township asked if only representatives and alternates were eligible to serve as officers and if the officers could continue to represent their communities. Biasell indicated it is not a requirement to be a member or alternate and officers have the option of representing their community or passing it to another person. Redford Township asked if the past chair would continue to be involved. Biasell indicated he would assist with the transition to provide continuity. Bails suggested the Executive Committee could be expanded to include past officers.

If anyone would like to be considered for an officer position or knows of a good candidate please let any member of the nominating committee know.

There was consensus to move forward with the nominating committee.

4A6. Representative to RRAC

The Rouge River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Advisory Council (RRAC) has invited the ARC to designate a representative to RRAC. Ms. Meghan Bonfiglio, Bloomfield Township, volunteered to serve as the representative to RRAC.

There was consensus for Meghan Bonfiglio to serve as the ARC Representative to RRAC.

4A7. Transition of Assembly During 2004-2005

The memorandum of agreement currently expires on December 31, 2004. According to the MOA, members may agree to continue the ARC. The plan is to continue with the ARC until the enabling legislation is passed. Each community would then need to adopt the new organization under the terms of bylaws of the legislation. The legislation is a permissive legislation so it is expected to be approved. Invoices for 2005 will not be sent until after the enabling legislation has been approved or there is a clear indication that it will not pass.

4A7a. Assignment: Presentation on Reasons for Joining the Assembly

A presentation for use at board and council meetings will be prepared detailing the reasons communities should participate in the ARC. Jack Bails, Amy Ploof, and Zachare Ball will prepare the presentation. Reviewers of the presentation will include Kelly Cave from a county perspective, Robert Beckley from a city perspective and Gary Mekjian from a township perspective.

5. OTHER ISSUES/ITEMS OF NEW BUSINESS FROM MEMBERS

Tim Faas, Canton Township, indicated they have developed a detention pond maintenance video geared towards subdivision owned/operated ponds. The video is fairly generic so it could be used by any communities. Mr. Faas indicated he could demonstrate the video at the November meeting.

Kurt Heise, Wayne County, indicated the Rouge Project has distributed copies of the Year in Review - 2003 report. Normally once the report is prepared and distributed a Federal Court hearing is held, but this year there has been no hearing set. Heise also distributed a copy of the Final Summary Report for Rouge Project Grant 4. Final Summary reports for Rouge Project Grant 3 and Grant 5 will also be available soon.

6. OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

Jennifer Lawson, Troy, indicated they have completed a one-hour video on septic maintenance and is available. Jack Bails suggested distributing the video to realtors to give to new owners of homes with septic systems.

7. MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2004

7A. Full Rouge Assembly

The next meeting of the Full Assembly of Rouge Communities will be November 17, 2004. Anyone interested in hosting the meeting should contact Mr. Biasell. Canton Township volunteered to check on meeting room availability. Mr. Biasell thanked Southfield again for hosting the meeting. He thanked Karen Mondora, Brandy Bakita, and Tracy Slintak for their efforts for today's meeting.

7B. Executive Committee

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be October 13, 2004.

8. Water Quality Trends Presentation

Dr. Colleen Hughes, Facilitator for the Technical Committee, gave a presentation on water quality trends in the Rouge River Watershed. The paper was originally presented at Watershed 2004 earlier this year. Dissolved oxygen (DO) and bacteria counts for the past 10 years were reviewed for the presentation. A steady increase in dissolved oxygen was observed in the watershed over the life of the Rouge Project. The average DO improvement was 0.3mg/L per year. The bacteria results were more varied. There were some areas, particularly downstream of CSO control facilities that have shown an improvement in bacteria. While in other areas of the watershed, particularly some headwaters areas, the bacteria counts have increased. The reasons for these increases will be further examined. The presentation summarizes the success of the control measures that have been implemented in the Rouge River Watershed over the past decade.