

Alliance of Downriver Watersheds
Meeting Notes
May 21, 2024 10:00 am
Wade-Trim, 25251 Northline Road, Taylor, Michigan



- 1) Welcome: John Danci from Sumpter Township opened the meeting. In attendance were:

Designated or Alternate Community Representatives from:

Allen Park
Belleville
Dearborn Heights
Ecorse
Flat Rock
Gibraltar
Grosse Ile Township
Inkster
Lincoln Park
Melvindale
Riverview
Rockwood
Romulus
Southgate
Sumpter Township
Taylor
Trenton
Van Buren Township
Wayne County
Westland
Woodhaven-Brownstown
School District
Wyandotte

- Allen Park – Brent Florek
- Dearborn Heights – Robert Conrad, Nancy Bryer
- Ecorse – Brent Kraft (Giffels Webster)
- Flat Rock – Brent Florek
- Gibraltar – Brent Florek, Marsha Kozmor
- Grosse Ile – Brent Florek
- Lincoln Park – John Kozuh
- Riverview – Jeff Webb, Ron Tabor
- Rockwood – Brent Florek
- Sumpter Township – John Danci
- Taylor – Kelly McRobb- Ackland
- Trenton – Kevin Sargent, Brent Florek
- Wayne County – Patrick Cullen
- Wyandotte – Greg Mayhew

Other Interested Parties:

- Leah Groya, L Groya Consulting
- Jennifer Kangas, HRWC
- Pam Labadie, HRWC
- Ric Lawson, HRWC
- Kelly McCabe, HRWC
- Valerie Novaes, OHM Advisors
- Andrea Paine, HRWC
- Bailee Pasienza, SEMCOG
- Jennifer Robinson – Burns + McDonnell/EWB Detroit
- Kathleen Sexton, EGLE WRD
- Elizabeth Thacker, OHM Advisors
- Mary Trzeciak – OHM Advisors
- Lishba Varughese, EGLE WRD
- McKenzi Waliczek - Friends of the Detroit River
- Maaikie Wielenga, HRWC

OFFICIAL ACTIONS of the ADW taken at the meeting are shown in bold capitalized letters.
Action items for the future are shown in bold italics.

1) Welcome and Introductions

- a. Roll call of Alliance Members and Alternates present – roll call was performed and there was a quorum present.
- b. Introductions of meeting attendees
- c. Addition or changes to draft agenda – there were no changes
- d. Approval of February 13, 2024 meeting notes – **ACTION: There was a motion by Lincoln Park to approve the February 13, 2024 meeting notes. Seconded by Wyandotte. Passed unanimously.**

2) Finance Committee Report

- a. Financial Status Report
 - Jennifer Kangas provided the financial status report, which was included in the packet.
 - Inkster has 2 years of outstanding dues. This may be written off.
 - There is currently a bank balance of \$214k.
 - 2024 dues will be billed to members soon. Dues can be paid in two payments or all at once. Incoming dues should total \$276k.
 - The second page of the financial report shows the 2024 budget that was approved last year. There is \$264k remaining to be spent. Bills have just started coming in.
- b. ADW Officers
 - **ACTION: There was a motion by Grosse Ile to approve Ron Akers as ADW Chair and John Danci as ADW Treasurer. Seconded by Gibraltar. Passed unanimously.**
 - There is still a vacant position for the Vice-Chair position.

3) Status Reports per ADW Budget Framework

- a. Planning and Reporting
 - Members should have received the collaborative plans to submit with their permit reapplications. ADW put together 4 collaborative plans for submittal: IDEP, PEP, TMDL, PPP. Communities are still waiting to hear back from EGLE.
 - Ric Lawson commented that subsequent to submitting plans, the facilitation team has learned of other MS4 groups unhappy about the latest EGLE requirements. SEMCOG hosted a couple meetings to discuss concerns. As a reminder, the ADW has submitted a plan that is collaborative and tied to our ongoing long-term monitoring. We are learning that these types of plans are being rejected by EGLE. We will see what EGLE comments on our plan, which is a middle approach (combined approach with monitoring and sample investigation in wet weather).
 - Ric Lawson asked EGLE if there were any updates on the review of the ADW's collaborative plans. EGLE indicated that there are no updates and that they have been short-staffed. They just hired a new staff member and expect movement this summer.
 - Valerie Novaes reminded the membership that their next biennial report will be due April 2025 and covers March 2023 – February 2025 – note correction below from EGLE regarding reporting dates. Please stay on top of tracking your activities to make it easier to report on next year. In addition, members are required to report on the post-construction on a yearly basis. This is because it's an alternative approved plan (site plan approvals/bmps). Wayne County communities will get a report

that they need to submit on their own. EGLE stated that if you haven't had any development over an acre, you just need to submit a memo stating that. EGLE noted that the reports are calendar years so it will actually cover through December 2024.

b. IDEP Activities

- Dry weather screening of priority outfalls will take place this summer. Updates will be provided at the next meeting. Map updates are ongoing

c. Progress Evaluation

- Kelly McCabe - A more detailed report of the 2023 monitoring is on the HRWC website. There is a summary and individual tabs with more details. The link is in the meeting packet. This expands on the presentation that was given at the February meeting. We will be linking this to the ADW website this week for easy access. Includes all the historical data. Contact info is also on the web page if you have any questions.
- Green box on bottom of the webpage – GIS tool that allows you to click on sites to view data. Both long-term and investigative sites. Ric encouraged members to look at their area of the watershed.
- Our 2024 monitoring season has started. On March 23 an orientation was held. Tues April 16 was the kickoff. There are 9 long-term sites. A couple sites were shifted for sensibility. TP, TSS, and *E. coli* will be measured. Temp, DO, pH, etc.

b. Public Education Tasks

- The ADW educational displays have been making the rounds at ADW libraries. Currently at Southgate.
- Need help getting the word out for Schools for Clean Water. There is an early bird signup. 11 schools signed up so far.
- E-newsletter - Next one will go out on June 1. If you haven't gotten the newsletter or if you want to add anyone in your community, please let Maaiké know. If there are any projects or activities going on in your community related to storm water that can be highlighted, please let us know.
- Photo Contest – June 1 – Aug 31. The contest will run in the summer this year. We have 3 categories and 12 winners with prizes. Winning photos will be featured in the next ADW community calendar. Please help get the word out.
- The ADW was represented at the spring Detroit River Water Festival. Talked to students about storm water pollution prevention. ADW provided financial support for transportation etc to get students within the ADW to the festival. FODR really appreciated the support. A complete summary report is included in the packet.
- Stream Crossing and Watershed Signs- working to replace ADW signs. As part of the process, new panels were designed (5 designs). Targeted signs that were poor condition or missing. 28 signs were replaced. Signs were ordered online and we will see how they hold up. All signs have already been installed. There may be a desire/need to do another round of sign replacement in the future. There is GIS of sign locations but signs were missing so not completely accurate (prob about 75% accurate). We will avoid MDOT ROW in the future. We can share out the map and see if any communities have any input. Communities can also order on their own and we can help you and share the information with you. Signs are about \$70 for the panels (no posts).

4 Other Items and Announcements

- a. SEMCOG One Water Campaign
 - Bailee Pasienza (SEMCOG) presented. SEMCOG has created the One Water Campaign that ties together how all of our water is the same. They are hosting a webinar tomorrow.
 - Bailee indicated they are shifting focus this year to target the younger generation and doing more social media posts. The webinar tomorrow will show how to utilize the One Water Campaign including the media toolkit. There will be one key message per day (June 1-9). They will have a matrix on their website soon that will show how you can utilize the campaign for your permit.
 - If you can't make the webinar, there will be a link on their website as well as a followup email.
- b. Regional Water Quality Report Card
 - The Regional Water Quality Report Card is new and being discussed because you may get questioned about it within your community. This is not done by the ADW, but by the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. This is the first ever effort to do this in southeast Michigan. There is a report card for southeast Michigan and then separate reports for the major watersheds. The reports go well beyond environmental indicators (also social etc) to create the grades. They hope to repeat sometime in the future to see how the region is changing and progressing. The report cards can also be used for public awareness and as a tool for communicating. Overall, the region got a C grade 49%.
 - 6 categories – water, recreation, economy, ecosystem, human health, infrastructure
 - Detroit River – moderate in economy, ecosystem, human health. good condition for recreation and water. Divided further into Detroit River and Detroit tributaries. Overall tributaries were in worse condition due to shallow waters and urbanization. Poor in water temp and phosphorous.
 - What's next? Results will be mostly used as a communication tool in order to talk to people about the state of the watershed. Promote collaboration, investments, and policies.
 - Packet has the webpage where you can find more information.
 - Brent Florek asked about the *E. coli* data. The report card doesn't differentiate between human and animal. Our ADW data has some information to differentiate.
 - McKenzi Waliczek from Friends of Detroit River/Ecorse Creek Committee discussed the upcoming Ecorse Creek cleanup day on April 27. Contact McKenzi if anyone is interested in attending.
- c. Friends of Detroit River/Ecorse Creek Committee Updates
 - FODR works with Ecorse creek committee (open to all 12 communities in the EC watershed). The committee does 1 hour virtual meetings once per month and has ongoing projects and community events. Trying to identify cleanup sites.
 - FODR drone survey project – They Ecorse Creek Committee utilized drone pilots that needed hours so it was a good opportunity to work together. Drones were flown from Allen Park downstream through Allen Park, Melvindale and Ecorse. A drone was already flown in Dearborn Heights. A huge pile of garbage was removed behind Melvindale High School. The goal is to coordinate two more cleanups this summer. If any communities are interested in viewing the videos, please contact McKenzi Waliczek. McKenzi thanked the ADW for supporting the Detroit Water Festival.
- d. 2024 Meeting Schedule – October 8, December 3 (if needed)

e. Opportunity for Member Sharing

- Dearborn Heights – Have a rain garden project with two high schools helping out at the Richard Young Center. They also have one other rain garden in their community. Both have been very successful in the long-term.
- Sumpter Twp – Destination Downriver podcast - John Danci did an interview and promoted the ADW. Talked about how government and business are trying to work together.
- FODR - McKenzi – May 28-29 Canoemobile. Still have space left for youth groups. Takes place at Lake Erie Metropark
- Lishba Varughese – having data gaps with a lot of turnover in communities. Update your facility contact in MiEnviro database.
- Patrick Cullen – Wayne County project on Ecorse Creek. The goal is to create access for maintenance purposes. Hoping to touch all communities in the watershed. Working on communication and outreach. Some concerns from residents about the construction site. Lincoln Park expressed concerns about clear cutting at Council Point Park. Patrick indicated that they need to have a clear easement in order to access to the drain. The long-term goal is to improve habitat restoration and ecological opportunities. Hoping to use as a catalyst for more grant funding to do that. Want to create a green corridor for flood control and habitat. Looks ugly right now. Website you can visit is www.nbecd.com. Contact information on the website.

5) **Summary of Action Items and Other Announcements**

- The action items, as identified above in bold/italics, were reviewed.

6) **Adjourn**

- **ACTION: There was a motion by Sumpter Township to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Wayne County. Passed unanimously.**