

FREP Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, November 11, 2020, ZOOM Platform

Call to Order at 11:10 AM

Present: Jeff Mengler, Nancy Williamson, Carolyn Campbell, Becky Hoag, Maggie Sloiz, Alyse Olsen, and Jennifer Mino. Holly Hudson (proxy).

Discussed Dick Durbin's reinstatement of the Citizen's Conservation Corp Act which provides opportunities for funding to address much needed maintenance and restoration of conservation areas.

Approval of Minutes: from 9.9.2020: Motion to approve by Soliz, second by Williamson. Approved.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Hagen-Moeller was absent. The Treasurer's Report was accepted.

FREP Annual Membership Drive

Currently, renewals are at 74% of last year's totals. Jeff following up with prior members. CMAP continues to provide needed funding for fox watershed planning support. Still waiting on Kane County, Geosyntec, City of Aurora, Fox Valley Park District, Sleepy Hollow, and Fox River Grove. Port Barrington renewed, but Lake Barrington will pass this year. Dundee Township renewed, but missing Geneva Park District. Batavia and Batavia Park District both renewed. Crystal Lake Park District has traditionally been a member, but not the City. Crystal Lake is finishing up its Crystal Creek Watershed Plan and seeking IEPA approval which could provide an incentive to join. Sandwich is also seeking approval of their plan. Montgomery no longer a member, though some still receive Downstream. Reach out to North Aurora and Oswego. Becky will review list of members who have left. Maggie recommends comparing membership with Greenest Cities Compact.

Fox Water Trail Update: Karen Miller absent. No new activity to report, but webpage continues to be updated.

Fox River Summit: Will be virtual on March 11 as part of Wisconsin's Lake and Rivers Convention. Tom Slawski was invited to participate, and he will establish a program. It may include same slate of speakers planned for 2020 as topics are still relevant. Need to emphasize summit is beneficial to people in Illinois. Technical support provided by the convention. Looking at Scott Johnson, Dick Young's grandson, to present on the 100 Year Trips on the Fox and John Rogner to discuss IDNR and news out of Springfield. Joel Sheesley may be interested in presenting Art of the Fox. Summit will likely include a fee.

One Earth Film Festival: Will still be virtual in March of 2021. Film and date yet to be determined. Jeff viewed screening of "2040 Regeneration" and saw how the event was handled on ZOOM. The Australian filmmaker was available for questions prior to the film. A moderator handled the event, including pre- and post- film discussions. Some funds still available with the Conservation Foundation for this purpose. Becky will check on additional screening opportunities. Last two films included regenerative farming elements as does "2040 Regeneration." This theme is still appropriate. Maggie noted the film "Kiss the Ground" with Woody Harrelson, featuring Gabe Brown, which included a compelling call to action.

2021 Meetings/ Noon Networks:

January: WOTUS rule changes and the local impact on wetlands in our watershed. Jeff will provide overview of federal rule changes followed by a discussion with Rob Linke (Kane CO) and either Joanna Colletti or Spring Duffy (McHenry Co) to offer perspective on impact to local county ordinances.

February: Rusty patch bumblebees/ bees as pollinators. Waiting to hear from the Natural History Survey or perhaps a local colleague.

March: One Earth Film Festival and the Fox River Summit.

April: Jack Darin with Sierra Club to update membership on happenings in Springfield (invited)

May: Ed Collins and his discussion on the Fourth Wave of Conservation (invited)

June: Mill Creek Watershed Plan Presentation by Holly Hudson (invited)

Nancy will follow up with McHenry Township regarding road-side tour. Should be able to hold the event safely as it is outdoors. Book-signing event with Aida Frey to be put on hold until we can meet in person.

Other possible topics include the Crystal Creek Watershed plan which is expected to be completed the first quarter of 2021. Steve Zimmerman could present. More than one plan could be highlighted. One idea gaining traction is to identify and prioritize watersheds on a regional level to target efforts more efficiently and economically. Most watershed plans in the Fox River basin are done. Next step is implementation. Steve Zimmerman is effective at getting funding and could speak to this also. Discussed timing of programs based on application deadlines. IEPA provides a list of priorities which helps to target efforts. Programs can help encourage and even facilitate taking advantage of grant opportunities. Emphasize the importance of assessing local projects in relation to regional efforts and needs. Partnerships are more impactful. Soil and Water Districts are actively working with CW to maintain a regional focus. Discussed STAR program (Saving Tomorrows Agricultural Resources) which rates farmers on BMPs.

Fox River Study Group Update: Currently working with the Corps on re-starting the Fox River Connectivity & Habitat Study project. The Corps has approved the re-start and will develop a work plan once FY21 budget is passed. FRSG and some municipalities within the watershed are preparing resolutions in support and sending them to Congress. The Carpentersville Dam pre-removal studies for water quality, fish, and macro-invertebrates are completed. Mussel sampling will take place next year. Annual Meeting was held virtually on Oct.29th. Mark Phipps addressed website updates as well as survey results that asked for public feedback on the Fox. He discussed the mutually beneficial relationship between FRSG and MS4s. Art Malm presented on the benefits of dam removal. A recording of the Annual Meeting is on the FRSG website. It was suggested that Art Malm could present at a FREP meeting.

Sub Watershed News:

Indian Creek Watershed-based Plan: First draft of watershed resource inventory was submitted by CMAP to Illinois EPA end of August (posted on project webpage on FREP website). Currently working on 2nd draft, which will include pollutant load modeling results by CMAP's consultant, Geosyntec. Field work for stream physical conditions inventory and detention basin assessment will be completed in spring to round out the resource inventory. Virtual public engagement is planned for over the winter.

Tyler Creek Watershed Coalition: Annual membership meeting held Oct. 21 (ZOOM). Gary Swick is newly elected President. Excellent presentations on Basics of Wetland Soils, Kane Co. Fens, and ADID Wetlands, by Mark Bramstedt with Kane-DuPage SWCD; Stormwater Infrastructure and Detention in the Tyler Creek Watershed by Rob Linke with Kane Co. Div. of Environmental and Water Resources; and Permitting and Mitigation in the Tyler Creek Watershed by Mike Machalek with the USACE.

*Note: Webpages for both watersheds are on FREP website. Presentations not uploaded at this time.

Fox River Corridor: Open House and Input Session, facilitated by CMAP, will be held Thursday, November 12 at 7 pm on ZOOM. Nancy serves as FREP's official representative. Meeting will cover economic development, environmental quality, parks and recreation, and transportation with breakout groups. There is a group that tends to be rather contentious representing McHenry Dam to Algonquin Dam who believe their rights to the river are being hindered. ZOOM format may impact that.

Holiday Gathering: Last four years, event was held at local restaurants using farm-to-table and sustainable practices. Usually included discussions with the chef/owners. As we continue to stay separated, Jeff suggested a virtual gathering where individuals participating share pictures and stories of what they are doing to make their own backyards more sustainable and environmentally friendly. Jessica suggested ordering dinner from a local restaurant to enjoy while we share stories. Perhaps share a list of local, sustainable restaurants with membership prior to gathering. Event date: December 9 at 6:30 pm.

Adjournment 12:42 PM

Minutes submitted by Carolyn Campbell, Secretary