



Two Rivers Coalition

November 12, 2008 minutes – Submitted by Amy Lockhart

Call to order: 7:00 p.m.

Bangor City Hall

Attendance: Erin Fuller, Chris Bauer, Matt Meersman, Amy Lockhart, Brian Gunderman, Nina Consolatti, Jan Petersen, Richard Curtis, Sam Ewbank, Bob Becker, Nancy Edwards, Al Baerron, Dave Foerster.

Agenda Additions:

- o New Grant Opportunity

Minutes: Motion was made by Erin Fuller, 2nd by Bob Becker to accept the October, 08 minutes as presented.

Discussion – Freshwater Future Update: Erin Fuller mentioned that we have not heard back yet from Freshwater Future regarding the grant proposal but that she has been in touch with Jill Ryan and will pass along a grant decision as soon as she hears about it.

Discussion – Phosphorous Committee: Amy Lockhart provided an update of the phosphorous committee meeting on October 29 and presented an educational brochure that was created to help residents and business owners better understand the intent of the ordinance. Dave Foerster shared comments about the Huron River report stating reductions in phosphorous as a result of the phosphorous ban, comparing levels to areas of the river without a ban in place. Lockhart will add these reports to the website. Van Buren County held the public hearing for the phosphorous ban and will be scheduling an agenda item for approval after the 50 day waiting period.

Discussion – 319 grant proposal: Erin Fuller reported that the grant proposal for the latest round of DEQ 319 funding did get in on time and will keep the group updated on progress. Grant announcements are not expected before early 2009. A summary of the project will be attached to the minutes.

Section G Project Summary (taken from 319 grant proposal submitted 10/29/08 by Van Buren Conservation District)
This project focuses on the Paw Paw and Black Rivers and their major tributaries. Together the BRW and PPRW encompass over 468,680 acres in Allegan, Van Buren, Kalamazoo and Berrien Counties. According to the Integrated Report, both of these watersheds include several impaired waters and the PPRW is an NPS Priority Watershed. The PPRW includes a portion of a Phase 2 stormwater area in Benton Harbor. The pollutants threatening and impairing water bodies include sediment, nutrients and bacteria from sources including agricultural and urban stormwater runoff, streambank and channel erosion, septage waste and livestock.

The primary goals of the project are to

- 1) *Restore and protect wetlands in high priority areas as demonstration projects.*
- 2) *Implement a replicable wetland restoration/protection education strategy for landowners and municipalities building on demonstration projects and GIS resources such as wetland functional assessment.*

The minimum expected pollutant load reductions from this project will be 100 pounds of total phosphorus/year, 75,490 pounds of total suspended solids/year and 630 pounds of total nitrogen/year.

Bylaws – Draft document review: Dave Foerster asked for comments about the bylaws from the audience.

-Nina Consolatti commented that the bylaws should indicate where the watersheds are “Southwest Michigan”

-Nancy commented that the mission statement might phrase “healthy” better to include more meanings

After discussion, it was suggested that we not change the mission statement and that we add “in southwest Michigan” to Article III of the bylaws.

-Article III : Al Baerron suggested changing to “submit a membership form”

The Two Rivers Coalition is a citizen-based group working to protect the health of the Black River and Paw Paw River watersheds through conservation education, and advocacy.

-Article IV D: Matt Meersman discussed some suggestions presented to him by Marcy Colclough: suggested not including term limits. Matt commented that the bylaws committee felt two terms (6 years) was a long time and the bylaws allow for one year off before returning to a board member position. The general consensus was to leave the term limits in the bylaws.

-Article IV F: Matt pointed out that the phrase reads as filling a vacancy being required and suggested it read “can” rather than “will”

-Article VI: Marcy questioned whether December was a good time for the annual meeting. Discussion was held and members felt that December was a good enough time to have the annual business meeting, then have another larger member meeting in the summer with an event/speaker.

-Article VI C: add email as a method of communication for announcements, etc.

Summary of changes to draft bylaws: 3 changes to be made:

Article II, second paragraph to read “The TRC will remain a non-profit organization in southwest Michigan as long as it is in existence”

Article III A: to read “Submitted a membership application

Article IX to read “These bylaws may be amended by the membership at any regular or special meeting of the TRC by a two-thirds vote, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing, to the board of directors and published on the TRC website 14 days prior to the meeting.

Motion was made by Sam Ewbank, 2nd by Al Baerron to accept the bylaws with changes. Motion carried.

Discussion – Board of Directors: The first Annual Meeting of TRC will be in December. A membership form will be created and available by December 1. Formal nominations for board members will be accepted at the meeting. Al Baerron, Dave Foerster, Matt Meersman, Nancy Edwards, Bob Becker, Sam Ewbank have already expressed interest in being a TRC board member.

Meeting venue: Amy Lockhart has been in contact with the Geneva township hall about meeting space. The board was to decide at the October meeting and let us know. Location will be announced with the December meeting announcement.

Other discussion, suggestions, etc: Matt Meersman suggested formally adding introductions to the agenda. Amy Lockhart announced upcoming Farming for the Future conference and the 2009 Van Buren County Local Food & Farm Guide that the Conservation District is working on.

Next meeting: Annual Meeting, December 10 2008 @ 7:00 pm

Meeting adjourned 9:07 pm