

DRAFT Meeting Record

DRCC Public Advisory Council & EPI Work Group

January 28, 2020 – 4:30-6:30pm

Riverside Public Library - 6305 Wyandotte Street East, Windsor, ON

Welcome, introductions, approval of agenda

Tom Henderson began the meeting at 4:30pm with round table introductions. The meeting attendance is listed in Appendix I and the agenda was approved by consensus.

Review of October 8, 2019 Meeting Record and Action Items

Action items from the October 8, 2019 meeting are addressed during today's meeting. This list of action items from last meeting is included as Appendix II. The October 2019 meeting record was approved by consensus.

PAC Update since October 2019

a) Thank you letter to Doug Ford

Tom prepared and sent a hand written letter to Premier Doug Ford to share the importance of the DRCC, the research, and outreach programs and to thank him for providing the COA funding. He has not received a response yet, but is pleased to have the COA funds released to DRCC.

b) GLIER meeting and subsequent news articles

Staff from Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) came to Great Lakes Institute of Environmental Research (GLIER) to share an update on American sediment priority sites within the Detroit River at the last PAC meeting. The media was also invited. After the presentation, the Windsor Star reported a negative article that did not include the great work that is taking place to protect and restore the Detroit River on the U.S. side. Melanie Foose (MI EGLE) provided some hopeful messages in her interview, but these were left out of the article. Following the Windsor Star reporting, Melanie sent in a letter to the editor in response to highlight the key messages and steps moving forward to address sediment issues. This letter is included as Appendix III of this meeting record.

c) Revere Copper Site

Dave Batagello from the Windsor Star conducted some investigative reporting about the Detroit River shoreline collapse from Windsor as it was unfolding. Tom wrote a letter to the editor thanking him, and the next day he received an environmental consulting report and photos of the site prepared by PM Environmental of Berkley, Michigan.

Jackie presented this report and the photos to the PAC (presentation is included as Appendix IV). She explained the series of events unfolding since the aggregate was found to be stored illegally at the dock in July 2019. For context, Detroit Bulk Storage rented from the owners of the property and were

charged with coming up with a remediation plan to address the shoreline collapse, sedimentation and sinkhole. MI EGLE identified that all actions taken to date to stop any contamination/pollution/impacts to the Detroit River are insufficient. They had until January 24 2020 to come up with a new plan. We are not sure at this time if they met this deadline.

A discussion took place where some of the PAC members expressed concern with the flow of the river and contamination. Derek explained that the channel flows keep sediment to the side. However, re-suspending the sediment after the collapse could be a factor in distributing contaminated sediment down river. Jackie mentioned that one of the solutions for stabilizing the shoreline was creating a gravel berm and surface cover. A turbidity curtain was installed to prevent eroding materials entering the river. EGLE deemed these insufficient.

Elaine Price was concerned with contaminants leaching from the sinkhole into the Detroit River. Jackie explained that three samples were taken up, next to and downstream of the site and all samples were below thresholds of concern. They also tested for radioactivity, and the results showed radiation levels were not above background levels. Sonar investigations have taken place to assess the sediment and bottom river levels to see how the bottom of the river has changed. There are concerns with stirring up legacy contaminants throughout this process.

Derek Coronado said that this situation is a good example of why an accelerated schedule for cleanup and a rapid response spill plan needs to be implemented by agencies responsible for protecting the Detroit River. To date, both Canadians and Americans are not pleased with the regulatory response so far. He suggested the Public Advisory Council (PAC) should send a letter to the Four Agency Managers Committee (FAMC). Tom reminded the PAC of some of the various letters he sent out to American contacts over the past few years. The PAC agreed.

Andy Paling asked how this situation would unfold if it happened on the Canadian side of the Detroit River. Derek said that there are a few examples of shoreline aggregate docks, but do not exist as much of a concern because of the lack of excess contamination or pollutants in sediment on the Canadian side of the river. The group agreed to add a paragraph about the importance of having a specific, implementable plan on the Canadian side of the river should a similar situation occur.

ACTION ITEM: Tom and Derek to work on sending a letter to the Four Agency Managers Committee regarding an implementation plan to prevent a situation like Revere Copper from happening on the Canadian side of the river.

d) Update on Ecopassage

Tom reminded everyone that Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA) provided 1.5 million to the City of Windsor as part of their community benefits, seed money for an animal only ecopassage stretching from Black Oaks Heritage forest through the Ojibway Parkway into the prairie. Yesterday, the capital budget meeting was held and Tom attended on behalf of the PAC. An administration report was prepared to explore the feasibility of the project. They hired a firm to research designs costing \$250,000 out of the seed money to conduct a Municipal Class EA, which will likely be completed by September. The battle for the funds may come next year when the costs are in for the final design. While this is encouraging, if it weren't for WDBA, there would not be an opportunity to do this.

Some additional comments were shared. Tom mentioned that the City of Windsor and Ric Coronado received Conservation Awards at the 2019 Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) Annual

General Meeting. Tom would also like to meet with MPP Irek Kusmierczyk to remind him of the importance of the DRCC and the renewal of the Canada Ontario Agreement for another four years. Jackie will put together an information package for him on behalf of the DRCC.

DRCC Updates

e) Status of DRCC funding for 2020

Jackie Serran explained that in spring 2018, the provincial government placed a hold COA funds until late fall 2019. There was an announcement that they would be released, and a proposal was submitted in November for the 2020 year including governance, supplies, operating funds and outreach.

f) Update on BUI re-designation process for Benthos and Fish Tumour BUIs

Since the last time the PAC and Education and Public Involvement (EPI) met, comments were received by US EPA and MI EGLE on the Fish Tumours and Other Deformities and Degradation of Benthos Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) reports. A few comments are being addressed and the edited reports will be submitted to the COA Annex leads over the coming months.

g) Preliminary fish consumption survey results

Jackie provided some of the preliminary fish consumption survey results to date. She reminded the group the purpose is to determine what people are eating, how much and how often from the river. We are currently working on a spring work plan to capture different fishery runs through the river. Andy asked if there are additional resources available to contribute to the survey work plan. Jackie said funds are available to hire two students and also translating the survey to reach a broader audience. Jackie's presentation can be found in Appendix III of this meeting record.

EPI Project Update since October 2019

h) Spring projects and proposed dates for events in 2020

Gina Pannunzio shared some of the upcoming spring outreach activities the DRCC is participating in. these include the film screening of A Plastic Ocean, the Earth Day community planting as well as the Great Global Cleanup. As the COA funds are available, the DRCC has plans to host other events including Family Fishing Day, the Detroit River Evening as well as Peche Island Day. This information is included in Appendix III of the meeting record.

Appendix I. Meeting Attendance

Tom Henderson	Chair, Public Advisory Council (PAC)
Andy Paling	Co-Chair, Public Advisory Council
Pearl Bradd	Co-Chair, Education and Public Involvement Work Group, PAC
Mark Shafer	Little River Enhancement Group
Jackie Serran	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Gina Pannunzio	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Derek Coronado	Citizen Environment Alliance
Dave Munro	Public Advisory Council
Elaine Price	Public Advisory Council
Joan Affleck	Friends of Cedar, Mill, Wagle Creek
Karen Walton	Member of the public
Hilary Payne	Public Advisory Council
Phil Roberts	Essex County Field Naturalists Club
Andy Paul	Public Advisory Council

Appendix II. Action Items and their Updates from October 8 2019

ACTION ITEM: Jackie to provide an update on the Fish Consumption survey at the next PAC meeting.
Done.