

Minutes for February 22, 2022 Meeting

RSC Representatives present: Anne Slugg, Chair (Sudbury), Emma Lord (NPS), Ron Chick (Framingham), Christine Dugan (Lincoln-Alt), Bill Fadden (Framingham-Alt), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Tom Sciacca (Wayland), Eric Simms (Wayland-Alt)

RSC Representatives absent: Amber Carr (SVT), Linh Phu (USFWS), Trek Reef (Billerica-Alt)

7:04 Ms. Slugg opened the meeting and asked for edits to the January Minutes. Minor corrections were offered by Ms. Field-Juma and Ms. Lord. A motion to accept the January Minutes with these corrections passed unanimously.

7:08 pm **RSC Internal Projects 2022**

Ms. Lord said the job descriptions for a Lead River Ambassador and Assistant River Ambassador had been posted on the SuAsCo website. The Ambassadors will promote stewardship and understanding of local riverine resources, provide outreach and education along trails and may participate in work on the water. These job descriptions were shared with our partner organizations, on Handshake, and with 10 local colleges. Applications will be accepted until March 14th. That deadline will be extended if necessary.

7:17 pm **Community Grant Updates**

Ms. Lord said the Framingham Centre Common Cultural District wanted to know how involved Council members would like to be in the planning process for the art project being funded by a Community Grant. After a short discussion it was agreed that the Council would only be interested in consulting on the final location of the statue and would leave the creative process to the artist.

7:25 **Riverfest**

Riverfest will be held on June 18-19. There will be no kick-off party on Friday night. Ms. Slugg said it is uncertain if any Riverfest events can be held at Great Meadows NWR because the Visitor Center is currently under construction. The Manse in Concord will be available. Ms. Henderson has arranged for a work party to clean up the trail used for her Thoreau walk. She will also lead a paddle on Saturday. Mr. Chick will lead two paddles on the Sudbury River and a demonstration on water chestnut removal. Ms. Field-Juma noted that Riverfest will coincide with Juneteenth and wondered if we could somehow create a linkage. She said that it will be a great loss if there are no events at Great Meadows this year as those events are particularly family oriented and the fishing at the kettle hole is always a popular event.

7:32 pm

Ms. Field-Juma said that the DER Priority Project for Talbot Mills Dam Removal/Concord River Restoration in Billerica is still undergoing internal review. She spoke about the importance of building public outreach for dam removal and ecological restoration of migratory fish and would like the RSC to send a letter of support for this project. Outreach is focused on Billerica for now. Ms. Henderson has reached out to the Dean of STEM education in Billerica. Mr. Chick said that Rob Vincent of the MIT Sea Grant Program has agreed to help design interpretive panels for Framingham and that a staff member from NOAA is also interested in collaborating on that project. The Council agreed to send a letter of support to Rob Vincent for the Framingham interpretive panels.

7:38 pm **Budget**

Ms. Slugg spoke about the 2022-2023 budget. She said that while Congress has not yet passed this year's Appropriations bill we are assuming for now that we will have flat funding of \$165,000. Our Administration, River Alliance contribution, and Storage needs will remain unchanged. Grants and internal project categories have some flexibility. Ms. Slugg said that we would be \$20,000 short of fully funding our Partner Grants if we keep \$30,000 in Community Grant money. She asked if there were other projects we should consider funding. Mr. Sciacca said he had explored whether a USGS researcher who had found intersex fish in the SuAsCo in 2008 would be willing to repeat the study this year. The researcher was not interested and therefore we did not have to set aside money for that or any other scientific study this year.

7:49 pm

Mr. Chick said that the National Park Service works in collaboration with local communities to plan and implement conservation and outdoor recreation projects. Framingham is creating a NPS proposal to define Framingham as a regional trail hub. The product would be a blueprint to prioritize trail development. If the plan is approved, connections will be made from underrepresented neighborhoods to the watershed. Framingham needs letters of recommendation. Ms. Field-Juma said that she would write one from OARS. Ms. Slugg said that she or Ms. Lord would write one from the RSC.

7:58 pm

Ms. Lord and Ms. Slugg said they had worked together to make recommendations on targeted cuts to the 2022-2023 Partner Grants because the Council does not have the money to fully fund them all. They explained their reasoning for each cut. They then suggested funding OARS for \$26,945.00; SVT for \$16,420.00; CISMA for \$7,560.00; Mass Audubon for \$25,000.00; Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust for \$11,140.00.

8:57 pm

Mr. Sciacca motioned to approve funding the Partner Grants at the amounts recommended by Ms. Lord and Ms. Slugg, Ms. Henderson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

8:58 pm

Ms. Slugg adjourned the meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Christine Dugan