

Ottawa River Coalition Meeting Minutes
3/22/18 8:00 AM Johnny Appleseed Metro Park District

In attendance:

Anne Fruth, National Lime and Stone
Kevin Haver, Johnny Appleseed Metro Parks
Matt Elling, Allen County Health Dept
Albert Suniga, Allen SWCD
Pat Beam, Beam Designs
Beth Seibert, Ottawa River Coalition
Sophie Finlayson-Schueler, LACRPC
Carol Bertrand, Tri-Moraine Audubon Society

Brian Riedmaier, National Lime and Stone
Kevin Cox, Perry Township
Tyler Black, Johnny Appleseed Metro Parks
Denny Wilkins, Bath Township
Mike Elwood, Hardin SWCD
Henry Rodriguez, City of Lima Public Works
Roy Baldrige, LACNIP
Becky Core, Allen SWCD
Joe Gearing, City of Lima Public Works

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, Treasurer Mike Elwood presided over the meeting. He called the meeting to order at 8:05 am and welcomed the group. Self-introductions were made around the room.

Our host, Kevin Haver, Director of the Johnny Appleseed Metro Park District (JAMPD) welcomed the group to their McElroy Environmental Education Center. JAMPD features 14 parks across Allen County and have seen steady growth over their 45 year history. 240 volunteers support the parks programming. Projects for this year feature the addition of 4 miles of canal tow path north of Spencerville, a trail project in the Ottawa Metro Park, interpretative signage at Motter Metro Park, and trail and access work at Kendrick Woods. On August 12th they are opening the Lauer Historical Farm. It is a 1940's restored farmstead and home. This will be a rental venue featuring outdoor event spaces. On October 19, 2019 they are preparing to host a WWII reenactment at this site. Their programming efforts at the Lauer Farm will emphasize effects on the family farm in that era from industrialization and other issues. Learn more at www.jampd.com

The Chair asked for additions to the agenda and Pat Beam asked to speak about an upcoming meeting of MRBLPG. The Chairman presented two sets of minutes for approval: January 13, 2018 Annual Meeting, and November 16, 2017 regular meeting. *Motion to approve the November 2017 and January 2018 minutes from Kevin Cox, and seconded by Joe Gearing. Motion carried.*

Treasurer's Report The Treasurer presented the March Financial Report, outlining receipts, expenses and account balances since the November report. *Carol Bertrand moved to approve the March Financial Report. Kevin Cox seconded this motion that carried.*

Committee Reports

Beth Seibert reported on the February 22nd Executive Committee Meeting. This meeting's agenda was prepared, the annual meeting was evaluated, and plans were made for the Good Friday Fish Fry. The consensus was that the Annual Meeting was a very nice event and not easily to be topped in 2019. Beth thanked the group for volunteering, promoting the event, and contributing to the silent auction for the March 30th Good Friday Fish Fry.

Community Relations Committee – Beth Seibert reported that the annual Ottawa River Cleanup will be conducted on Saturday, April 28th. This is the 25th year for this event.

Stream Monitoring Committee – Pat Beam provided an update on the riparian corridor enhancement project on the Ottawa River in Lima. The project is now in the maintenance phase. They are anxiously awaiting the Spring regrowth of the plant community. Trees are beginning to bud out. Maintenance in the future includes burning and plans are still under development for that practice. Joe Gearing offered a regulatory update by noting that Ohio EPA is still discussing the renewal of the Construction General Permit, so there may be a delay in authorizing the new permit in relation to the expiration date of the current permit. He also noted how OEPA Division of Surface Water is losing a number of key staff to retirements, including Harry Kalipolitis. Joe believes that the agency will have much to overcome in these long term staff losses.

Lowhead Dam Committee – Beth Seibert reported that the December 4th meeting about the Allentown Lowhead Dam was well attended and they had a great discussion. We now know who installed the dam – the US Topographical Agency, an agency within the Dept. of the interior. It was constructed in 1933 for the purpose of supporting a stream measurement or gaging station. The gaging station was discontinued in 1984 and the structure and instrumentation removed. Ohio EPA representatives in attendance were not concerned with the liberation of solids above the dam, noting that the flows in the channel will move and lower the stream bed naturally. No one in attendance voiced support for leaving the structure in place. But a community information campaign to flush out such concerns will have to be conducted. One of the challenges remaining before a plan to remove the dam can be executed is identification of the rightful owner of the east side of the dam. The land was platted as a street and therefore ownership has been in question since about 1904. The Allen County Tax Map Office has requested a decision on the matter from the Allen County Prosecutor's Office. Ownership needs established in order to define who can give permission for the work to be done on that legal parcel.

Stormwater Committee

- Joe Gearing, City of Lima Stormwater Manager gave an update on their stormwater program. They are currently addressing drainage outlet issues on the LCC Wetland Project. Their 2018 stormwater infrastructure improvements include removal of a residential alley and replacing it with a swale and French (under) drain for capture and controlled rate release. The City has awarded the contract for the roundabout and grade separation on Bellefontaine Avenue with construction to begin next month. Joe noted that it will be a two-year inconvenience for the public but the end result will be worth it. The Schoonover Dam replacement is waiting on a US Army Corps permit. The project will require the Lake to be drained first, the path moved and the slope reduced. The dam structure replacement will be challenged by trees, roots, and rodent issues. Joe also spoke about the upcoming construction of equalization basin as that bid was also awarded and work expected to begin in April. The big news on that project is that 40-50 annual combined sewer overflows (CSO) will be reduced to four. There is a High Street sewer improvement planned for this year. The Grand Avenue sewer collapse moved that project up on the replacement timeline. Stormwater improvements are to begin this year in the 50 acre Melrose subdivision, with property being acquired. Phase one of the project will involve construction of a basin, and phase two and three being the surface and subsurface drainage connections.
- Beth Seibert, Allen County Stormwater Coordinator gave an update on some of their programs and initiatives. Annual contracts with the political subdivisions they serve have been updated for 2018. She is working on submitting the 2017 MS4 (municipal separate storm sewer system) annual report to Ohio EPA. Allen SWCD and the City of Lima will recognize seven businesses/organizations as Stormwater Superstars at the Chamber of

Commerce's Wake Rattle and Roll event this Friday. Lima is conducting their tree planting rebate (cost-share) again this year with the goal of about 100 trees planted. Rain barrel rebates are also being offered again this year to residents in Lima, Elida, American Township, Bath Township, Perry Township and Shawnee Township. Various presentations are being made in the schools in this season. Erosion and sediment control inspections of construction sites are ongoing in Allen County, served by Albert Suniga and in the City of Lima, served by Alaina Morman. Two college interns are being hired for a heavy summer workload in the illicit discharge detection and elimination program.

Watershed Committee – Beth Seibert reported that the City of Lima and its partners continue to meet with Ohio EPA in updating their Source Water Protection plan. Several communities in the region are updating their plans at the same time in a cooperative process. Beth also spoke of how Guardian Lima is working with the Allen County Engineer's Office to secure the easements they need to close their stream and wetland mitigation permit obligations. The report is that the process of satisfying the Ohio EPA and US Army Corps of Engineers is moving ahead. Pat Beam attended a Tuesday meeting of the Maumee River Basin Local Partnership of Governments (MRBLPG). The City of Lima is one of the few remaining active and paying members of this organization. Source water protection plans for the communities emphasize the water resource connections. Ft. Wayne University has been sampling in the Maumee and has a lot of data points. Pat has been invited to present Ottawa River Watershed projects in that forum in July 2018. Beth reported that a bus tour of the Blanchard Demonstration Farms has been scheduled for June 22nd. The three farm tour stops in Hardin and Hancock Counties will showcase innovative production agriculture best management practices in the Western Lake Erie Basin. Cost per attendee is \$30 and she is collecting reservations. Beth also reported that Allen SWCD did submit a grant application to Ohio Dept of Ag to promote phosphorus reduction best management practices with the farm community in Allen County.

New Business

Beth Seibert presented the following for annual membership in the Coalition: Tri-Moraine Audubon Society, Beam Designs, Kohli & Kaliher, Anne Decker Marketing, Lima Allen County Regional Planning Commission, Allen Soil and Water Conservation District, Village of Elida, Alloway, Allen County Emergency Management Agency, National Lime and Stone, Allied Environmental Services, Stolly Insurance, Allen County Commissioners, Allen County Health Dept, Husky Lima Refinery, Johnny Appleseed Metro Park District, Sugar Creek Township (Allen Co), Bath Township, Shawnee Township, City of Lima Public Works Dept, City of Lima Utilities Dept, Village of Ada, Allen County Engineer, Nutrien, American Township, Lima Allen County Neighborhoods in Partnership, Hardin Soil and Water Conservation District, Allen County Sanitary Engineering Dept, Guardian Lima, Village of Kalida, Allen County Farm Bureau, and Ford Motor Company Lima Engine Plant (nonvoting). *Motion by Carol Bertrand to approve the 31 voting members and one nonvoting member presented into membership for 2018. Motion seconded by Henry Rodriguez and carried.*

Member and Partner Reports

- Joe Gearing asked the Coalition to help promote the tree rebate program. He also noted that people outside the City can benefit Lima locations with tree plantings and capture the rebate in doing so. Trees are a great green solution.
- Carol Bertrand passed out the Audubon Society's recent newsletter. They have a field trip to Kildeer Plains this Saturday. They are conducting many cooperative events with JAMPD and emphasizing family programming. The upcoming Environmental Education Weekend is in its 39th year at Myeerah. Recent bird counts included their very first snowy owl.

- Henry Rodriguez reflected on the morning's discussions about best practices. He noted how once installed these stormwater and water quality practices need annual maintenance to keep them functioning well.
- Becky Core reported that Allen SWCD continues to facilitate the Adopt-A-Roadway program and she invited anyone interested to contact their office.
- Kevin Cox reported on Perry Township's annual fire dept pancake breakfast fundraiser – April 7 from 6am to Noon. The pothole repair process is underway. They use a durapatcher unit and a crack sealer. Perry High School has purchased township property west of the school – likely to be used for a parking plateau. Kevin also gave kudos to Perry Township resident Jerry Hunt who covers a considerable Adopt-A-Roadway area.
- Matt Elling reported that their septic system operation and maintenance program is going well. They have now scanned over 6,000 files and hope to have that all available to the public through the Auditor's website online by the end of May – permits, designs, complaints w/in the last five years, well depth, and negative/positive test results. 2031 is the end goal of capturing the other 4,000 systems in the County. Allen County is on a statewide committee as one of ten counties modeling/testing county septic system operation and maintenance programs. And they have been happy to be one of these “up front” counties. Eventually the local goal would be 10% of systems inspected per township per year. Matt says there are not enough registered contractors to serve the maintenance and repairs of all the systems and this is a serious concern for their office.
- Albert Suniga gave an update on erosion and sediment control inspections on construction sites permitted by the County. He is visiting nine sites weekly and has recently reviewed plans on three new developments – Aldi at Eastgate, Casey Gas Station in Shawnee Township, and AEP Transmission at Hanthorn and McClain (east of Freed Ditch).
- Tyler Black reported that JAMPD is still looking to fill five seasonal maintenance staff positions.

Motion by Pat Beam to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Kevin Cox and carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:32 am. The next regular meeting of the Ottawa River Coalition is scheduled for Thursday, May 24, 2018 at 8:00 am at Husky Lima Refinery.

Minutes transcribed by Coalition Coordinator, Beth Seibert.