

Cuyahoga AOC Advisory Committee
December 4, 2014 – 4:30pm
West Creek Watershed Stewardship Center

Meeting Minutes

Present

Members: Joe Hadley, NEFCO; Patrick Gsellman, City of Akron; Frank Greenland, NEORS; Bryan Stubbs, Clean Water Alliance; Claire Posius, Euclid Creek/CuySWCD; Elaine Price, Cuyahoga County Planning; Victoria Mills, Doan Brook; Bob Gardin, Big Creek; Kathleen Bradley, Public; Ellen Brown Armstrong, Public; Brian Prunty, Summit SWCD;; Bob Hasenyager, Summit Public Health; Jen Greiser, Cleveland Metroparks; Laura DeYoung, Spicy Lamb Farm; Elaine Marsh, Friends of the Crooked River
Ex-Officio: Ed Wilk, OhioEPA; Phil Hillman, ODNR; JoAnn Banda, USFWS
CRCPO Staff: Jane Goodman, Peter Bode, Lynn Garrity
Public / CRCPO: Amy Brennan, TNC; Tom Kubera, SIFCO/CRCPO

Meeting called to order, J. Goodman leading in the absence of Joe Koncelik and pending election of CAAC officers/steering committee. She explained that this would be the last meeting led by CRCPO, that Joe Koncelik, as Chair of CRCPO, may no longer also serve as Chair of the Advisory Committee, and that going forward the CAAC would lead its own meetings, hence the urgency of developing a leadership structure from within the committee.

Attendees introduced themselves. New members included B. Stubbs/Cleveland Water Alliance; K. Bradley/Public Member; E. Brown-Armstrong/Public Member.

J. Goodman provided an overview of the new AOC Advisory Committee structure and roles and responsibilities that were issued from Ohio EPA in the Framework for Lake Erie AOC's. She provided an overview of the current member structure and stated that member dues will no longer be required. She explained the new requirements to balance various member representative categories (business, public, government, nonprofit, etc.) and asked for all of the members to review the committee membership roster, and for current members to send to her any recommendations for additional new members or changes in members or their classifications. E. Wilk provided a summary of how the Ohio EPA Framework was developed.

Goodman stated that CRCPO, the Facilitating Organization, is no longer to lead the CAAC's work but to provide secretarial, support, and facilitation services to the CAAC. CAAC's work will be to review the BUIs and the delisting targets, and advise as to what needs to be done, and where, in order to reach the targets, and what the committee wants to see included in the CRCPO work plan under the delisting subgrant.

F. Greenland asked about how this revised framework fits into the CRCPO's Strategic Plan and the status of that plan. J. Goodman stated that the CRCPO strategic plan was solely a matter for the CRCPO nonprofit organization, and not the AOC program, which is one program area of the nonprofit. She explained that, under the new rules, the Facilitating Organization (CRCPO) and the Advisory Committee (CAAC) are separate bodies; that there are restrictions on who can sit on which Board/Committee; and that the CAAC has no role in directing the activities of the FO beyond what is called for in the Ohio EPA delisting subgrant work plan.

The primary roles of the AOC Advisory Committee (CAAC) are to

- a.) review the status of the BUI's for delisting, to confirm or suggest revisions to the delisting targets;
- b.) to establish additional local BUIs and their targets if it wishes to do so;
- c.) to establish a management plan to reach those goals, and
- d.) to request removal of BUIs upon attainment of targets throughout the AOC and/or removal of HUC12 subwatersheds upon attainment of all BUIs in that subwatershed, and delisting of the AOC.

The primary roles of the Facilitating Organization (CRCPO) with regard to the CAAC are to

- a.) support the CAAC in organizing the committee, its structure, governance, and operations;
- b.) support the CAAC and its subcommittees or work groups in implementing its work in general;
- c.) provide secretariat services and facilitate the CAAC's meetings; and
- d.) post minutes of the CAAC meetings, conduct public information activities such as public meetings, website, etc. to engage the public in and inform the public of the CAAC's activities.

F. Greenland related his concern about establishing a work plan when we don't know where we are, what needs to be done, what data needs to be collected and where the Committee should spend its time. J. Goodman responded that the data that has been collected and distributed to the Committee throughout its development provides that information for habitat, fish, benthos, beach closings and other BUIs; that it includes all the available data; that it has been presented in a variety of ways to enable the trib groups to pinpoint where work needs to happen; that it shows precisely where we are and what additional data needs to be collected.

She also reported that Peter has been pulling all this information into a status/progress report that will be available in draft form before the end of 2014, and will be posted on the new website that will also go live before the end of the year.

J. Goodman provided an overview and status of completion of the current 2014-2015 AOC subgrant work plan that was developed by Ohio EPA. Primary tasks include the development of an AOC specific website, outreach and media, public meetings scheduled for February 25 and 26, project tours in the Spring of 2015, Stage 2 Update Report.

There was confusion expressed about OhioEPA's guidance on the Committee's role vs CRCPO's role in developing the work plan that is the list of deliverables for the subgrant. E. Wilk recommended it be clarified with the OhioEPA Central office, Lake Erie program on whether the work plan only consists of the BUI removal activities, or the full work plan (including the tasks identified within the OhioEPA Framework Document as grant deliverables.) It was determined to hold a meeting in January with OhioEPA Central Office staff to clarify this issue and answer other questions the committee may have. CRCPO will send out a Doodle Poll to identify a date.

Committee items that need to be implemented before the next meeting include; the selection of a Chair, the establishment of a Governance Committee to develop policies, procedures and bylaws, and the establishment of a Committee to develop the Work Plan for 2015-2016. J. Goodman wanted to hold off on the Chair selection, because some Committee members who were not able to attend the meeting may be interested in participating. She asked that Committee members who are interested in serving as Chair contact her.

E. Wilk said he has examples of the bylaws used by Maumee to utilize current templates for guidance. Goodman will forward their updated documents for review.

CRCPO staff stated they are working on the Stage 2 (implementation) Plan and status reports that will provide the information to begin to prioritize the delisting work plan, and that they plan to have a Draft Report completed by early January 2015.

CRCPO staff provided completed and proposed implementation project lists in the Advisory Committee meeting packet. Staff asked for verification of projects completed and proposed so that staff can provide this information to the AOC Work Plan Committee to assist in prioritizing delisting of BUI's. JGreiser asked why the projects only went back to 2012. LGarrity stated that previous projects were included in the last Stage 2 Update. JGreiser asked if a compilation of all of the projects since the inception of the AOC could also be created. CRCPO will work on this.

There were additional questions regarding how the recent AOC Habitat Restoration RFP, that is due to Ohio EPA on December 19, aligns with the Work Plan being developed. JGreiser stated there is confusion among the Watershed Groups of what is expected under this RFP and how areas not addressed as part of the RFP but needed, will be covered? EWilk asked for Watershed Groups to contact him directly and he will get clarification from the Central Office of OhioEPA on the RFP deliverables.

Work Plan Committee Volunteers: Frank Greenland, Jen Greiser, Elaine Price, Kathleen Bradley

Governance Committee Volunteers: Brian Stubbs, Bob Gardin

CRCPO will coordinate meetings for the sub-committees and the meeting to clarify Committee work plan activities before the end of December. Additionally, CRCPO will resend the Delisting Guidance to the Advisory Committee members.

Additional AOC Updates:

LGarrity provided an update on the Public Access 10B Work Group progress and included a summary in the Committee's meeting packet. The Work Group has met twice and has identified criteria for restoration targets and preliminary recommendations on progress. These include the recommendation to propose for delisting based upon the progress of new public access along the river since 1995, but with conditions to continue to enhance public access with broad elements including safety, outreach and education, and enhancement and further expansion of public access where feasible. EMarsh identified the issue of River Water Quality re human contact as an element. LGarrity reported that that subject falls under BUI 10a (Beach Closings and Recreational Contact) for which OhioEPA has established target criteria. The CAAC should address river water quality for recreation access under BUI 10a.

Elaine Price provided an update on the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission's Navigation Channel habitat structure project. The project will be going out to bid on December 5 for an RFP to fabricate and install the structures. The current timeline is for installation prior to March 15.

Goodman reported that the Sustain Our Great Lakes grant for ship channel habitat structures will be underway soon, that it will supplement the CCPC's work, that the SOGL structures will extend habitat the remaining 1.5-2 miles through the upper channel, and that installation of the first structures will also take place in spring of 2015, working around the moratorium period for work in the channel.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.