



## District 17 Natural Resources Assistance Council

### METHODOLOGY MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

**A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THE FULL MEETING IS AVAILABLE IN THE OFFICE OF THE LIAISON**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Jonathan Ferbrache  
Tony DiNovo  
Susan Kuba

David Heithaus  
Amy Dutt

Steve Goodwin  
Jenna Wood

Thomas Davis  
Mary Van Haaften

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Vince Utterback

Brian Ball

#### **STAFF PRESENT**

Angela Farley, Liaison

Kim Landis

Adrienne Eskins

#### **PUBLIC ATTENDEE**

Steve Fleegal

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The District 17 Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC) meeting was opened by Chair Tom Davis. Roll call was taken and all members were seated.

#### **Minutes from Thursday, January 19, 2023**

*Tom Davis asked that two corrections be made to the Minutes. The first correction was a spelling error on page 2 of Mr. Fleegal's name and the second was a clarification of his statement of a match contribution going up that was meant only for Geno Township.*

**Steve Goodwin moved to approve the January 19, 2023, Meeting Minutes with corrections. David Heithaus seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.**

#### **Organization – Election of Chair and Vice Chair for FY 24**

*Tom Davis stated that FY 24 was the new nomenclature for Round 18. Mr. Davis opened the floor up for nominations, adding that he will be transitioning out at the end of the year.*



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Tom Davis made a motion to nominate Jonathan Ferbrache as Chair. David Heithaus seconded the motion. No other nominations were put forward.

Tom Davis called for a motion to close the nominations. Amy Dutt made a motion to close the nominations for Chair. Mary Van Haaften seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Amy Dutt made a motion to nominate David Heithaus as Vice Chair. Mary Van Haaften seconded the motion. No other nominations were put forward.

Tom Davis called for a motion to close the nominations. Mary Van Haaften made a motion to close the nominations for Vice Chair. Susan Kuba seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

### Announcements of the Chair

*Outgoing Chair Tom Davis announced Jonathan Ferbrache as the new Chair and David Heithaus as the new Vice Chair. Mr. Davis thanked everyone for the group effort put forth by all. Tom stated, as mentioned in the last meeting, OPWC is trying to standardize when applications are due.*

*Jonathan Ferbrache thanked Tom for his service over the last year and a half. He stated it's always good to keep the seat moving and have fresh perspectives. Ultimately, it's all about Robert's Rules of Order. Mr. Ferbrache thanked Angela Farley, NRAC Liaison, for her management over the past five years as Adrienne Eskins will be stepping into that role. Jonathan voiced his concern over the large volume of terms expiring in 2023.*

### Old Business

None.

### New Business

- **Expiring Terms (2023):**
  - David Heithaus (11/9/2023) – Will be renewing
  - Jenna Wood (11/9/2023) – Will be renewing
  - Thomas Davis (11/9/2023) – Will **not** be renewing
  - Amy Dutt (11/9/2023) – Will **not** be renewing
  - Mary Van Haaften (11/9/2023) – Will **not** be renewing



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*Amy Dutt asked when the deadline to apply was because she knows of a planner, trained in conservation development, who may be interested in serving. Jonathan Ferbrache asked Amy to send the application information out to him. Jonathan asked to revisit the submittal date and when the Integrating Committee will meet next. Angela Farley stated Rob Platt would have the exact deadline for submittal but it's typically been in November, which is why she's had the deadline set in September – to allow enough time to get everything to him. Jonathan stated until we hear otherwise, we'll aim for September 1, 2023. The Board discussed reaching out to others who may be interested in serving and the requirements of representation.*

- **Designating the Licking County Commissioners**

*Jonathan Ferbrache stated the next item of new business is designating the Licking County Commissioners, via the Planning and Development Department as the entity to serve as District 17 NRAC Liaison and provide administrative services to the NRAC for FY23 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023) and FY24 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024). There is a budget limit of \$15K, per OPWC, to pay for these county services. Angela Farley stated any of these funds not used at the end of the year go back into the pot.*

**Tom Davis made a motion to approve the Licking County Planning and Development Department (LCPDD) to continue to be our liaison with the work plan and budget for the remainder of FY23 and for FY24 as provided. Steve Goodwin seconded the motion.**

*Jonathan Ferbrache stated, if it felt appropriate to our Licking County Staff, he would be happy to co-pen a thank-you with Tom to the Commissioners so they know what the Staff does for the region. Angela Farley stated that would be nice, but that it was unnecessary.*

**A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.**

*Jonathan Ferbrache stated if there were no objections, he'd like to move the public comment up since it would most likely connect with what we are about to discuss on Methodology. Tom Davis suggested, since the only public present is Steve Fleegal, when we start going through the Policy Manual, he be allowed to interject comments due to the complexity of this material. Jonathan stated they would do their best to engage conversation with Mr. Fleegal as they made their way through the Methodology process.*

### **Public Comments**

*Steve Fleegal stated the rating system was really critical to making sure the Board pick the best conservation projects to be funded. Mr. Fleegal stated there was a lot of confusion in the policies that the*



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*NRAC had adopted that really caused some problems for them at the last moment. He would like to see some inconsistencies corrected to make it easier for applicants.*

- **FY24 Policy Manual Review and Update and Scoring Methodology**

#### **Policy Manual Review and Update**

*Jonathan Ferbrache stated he appreciated the input that has cycled in from the group and acknowledged that this process can become challenging. He asked for those who participate in the OPWC's online submittal process to offer what we can do here at the NRAC to streamline the process and get it as close to the OPWC's expectation as possible.*

*The Board discussed the required appraisals and raising the allowable purchase price from 5% to 10% above the appraised value to recognize market conditions. Tom stated if we approve something that is over the appraised value, OPWC is going to kick it back to us, according to their policies. Steve Goodwin stated we have to stay competitive in this market or we could be self-limiting and unable to compete. The Board agreed that the language should say that if projects come in at greater than 10%, they are not eligible. Modifications to the Policy Manual were made in real time.*

**Steve Goodwin made a motion to go to 10%, with anything above that unaccepted and not reviewed. Tom Davis seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.**

*Angela Farley stated she added this to the top of the Methodology as well.*

*It was noted that the old "paper" application has been replaced by the WorksWise program. The Board discussed what goes into the OPWC portal and then what comes to the NRAC. Angela Farley stated that there is a list of required items that we can select from to be required with the application. Steve Fleegal stated NRAC's protocol does not match OPWC's at all. Tom Davis stated he believed the ultimate objective would be to make sure, if possible, that we would not require anything other than what goes into WorksWise. The Board agreed it would be helpful if all the applicants had to do was upload the full application, a single pdf file, to WorksWise for our use and have the Liaison download the application from WorksWise and email to all the Board Members. The applicant would still have to upload individual files as required by OPWC, unless we could persuade them to accept a single file. The only way the applicant can upload the single pdf, for our use, is to select the Other NRAC Requirement. Modifications to the Policy Manual continued in real time throughout the meeting as the discussion unfolded. Jonathan Ferbrache stated his frustration that Nick Rose was not at the meeting to answer questions.*



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**Steve Goodwin made a motion to remove the County Auditor's supplemental document and allow the appraisal speak for itself. Amy Dutt seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.**

*The Board had discussion on the ethics statement language and agreed upon adding "Unless otherwise specified by OPWC" at the end of that section.*

**David Heithaus made a motion to include the Ethics Statement as presented with the caveat of "Unless otherwise specified by OPWC". Jenna Wood seconded the motion.**

*No additional discussion.*

**A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.**

*The Board discussed, at length, whether to keep the WorksWise hard-and-fast deadline or grant a 14-day grace period for clerical error corrections only, incidental errors or omissions or clerical errors and omissions, thereby allowing for a team review opportunity and response time. There was discussion on what an incomplete application is because there had been 3 or more ways that applications had been submitted to NRAC, from the OPWC, that were incomplete. Steve Goodwin shared how NRAC-18 has a cure process that allows for corrections or additions to be made following submittal and then a final deadline is given. Steve Fleegal added that NRAC-18 doesn't just meet for the error and omissions, they meet to allow the applicant to present their project before they're rated. Mr. Fleegal stated his issue is really having the Works Wise situation fixed because people shouldn't be penalized because WorksWise is so difficult to work with, which will cause a loss in applicants. There was much back-and-forth discussion on how to define what would qualify for that grace period, and ultimately the consensus was to stay with the hard and fast deadline for submittal; incomplete or late applications will not be evaluated by the NRAC.*

**David Heithaus made a motion to leave the hard deadline "AS-IS" for this year, without a 14-day grace period. Susan Kuba seconded the motion.**

*The Board agreed to revisit this issue annually.*

**A voice vote was called and the motion passed 8 – 1 (Steve Goodwin opposing).**

Jonathan Ferbrache called a 5-minute recess.

David Heithaus and Jenna Wood left the meeting at 12:20.

Jonathan Ferbrache called the meeting back in session at 12:27.



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*The Board continued the discussion on process and discussed plagiarism. Jonathan Ferbrache stated that applicants need to do their own work or at least cite where their information is coming from. The text was added that a copy of successful applications can be obtained from the Liaison upon a public records request, 30 days in advance of our deadline.*

*The Board discussed setting an alternative scoring meeting date as a backup.*

**Tom Davis made a motion to have Thursday, November 9, 2023, as the backup scoring date. Mary VanHaaften seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.**

#### **Scoring Methodology**

*Tony DiNovo discussed concern that the terms restore and preserve seem to be used as an equivalency and preserve should score higher. Amy Dutt stated that they were put together because no one liked the way it read before and so it's up to the scorer to know that preservation scores higher than restoration. Jonathan Ferbrache stated these are things that have gone back and forth for 20-years and the restore and preserve components were a scoring stack potential. He stated it really comes down to the scoring, there's 1 point for restoring and 3 points for preserving. The Board discussed the scoring and the specific language in the ORC, requiring that a preference be given to 4-5 of other issues brought up by Mr. DiNovo. Tony stated he didn't believe they should be scored higher than what they say their primary purpose is. The Board continued discussion on scoring. Steve Goodwin stated there was nothing wrong with increasing the first 6 categories by a couple of points. There were no objections.*

Amy Dutt left the meeting at 12:52

**Steve Goodwin made a motion to increase the first 6 items from 3 points to 5 points, incrementally. Tony DiNovo seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.**

*Steve Fleegal explained how the AOA were discriminated against specifically because of a change that was made in the language that penalized him 10 points since it only applied to AOA. The Board had discussion on this issue.*

**Steve Goodwin made a motion to change the language to in "this NRAC", from "any NRAC", (applicant having any projects that are past due). Tony DiNovo seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.**

*The Board was in agreement on changing the points for the first question.*



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Steve Goodwin made a motion to change the points on the first question from -10 points to -5 points. Tony DiNovo seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

*Jonathan Ferbrache asked for a motion to approve the policy manual and methodology as proposed today.*

Susan Kuba made a motion to approve the policy manual and methodology as proposed today. Steve Goodwin seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Board Comments**

None.

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#### **Other Business**

None.

#### **Public Comments**

None.

#### **Next Meeting:**

*Scoring Meeting, Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 10:00 am. At Licking County Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA), 65 E. Main Street.*

#### **Adjournment**

Susan Kuba moved to adjourn. Steve Goodwin seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 1:13.