

**Meeting:** NKUCFC (the Council) Steering Committee

**Date:** July 14, 2016 (6pm)

**Location:** Mellow Mushroom, 1014 Town Drive, Wilder, KY @ 6PM

**Chairperson:** Crystal Courtney

**Secretary:** Tara Sturgill

**In Attendance:** Tara Sturgill, Chris Kaeff, Lorna Harrell, Kris Stone, Mathew Frantz, Rachel Comte, Jenny Gulick, Jessica Spencer, Rosemarie Santos  
Absent: Crystal Courtney, Sara Gracey, Mark Leopold, Scott Beuerlien, Michele Stanton, Peter Stutts

### 1. Introductions

Kris conducted the Steering Committee (Committee) meeting in Crystal's stead due to her having strep throat. Kris passed out the agenda Crystal drafted, copies of the May minutes, and called the meeting to order. Kris dispensed with introductions due to everyone knowing one another. Rachel suggested finding a new place to meet due to the music being too loud and it being hard to hear everyone. Tara committed to discuss a new venue with Crystal and advise the Committee of any venue change prior to the August meeting. Rachel stated that she will not be attending the August meeting due to being out of town.

### 2. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 19, 2016

Kris requested edits to the meeting minutes from the May meeting. Mathew submitted that his name was spelled incorrectly (Matt instead of Mat) and requested that Mathew be used. Rachel motioned to approve minutes, Chris seconded, all in favor of May meeting minute approval.

### 3. Program Reporting

Tara presented updates on *Reforest Northern Kentucky (Reforest NKY)* pertaining to happenings since the recap meeting held in April. Tara reported that the next meeting is officially scheduled for August 2 at 6 PM at the Midway Café, 1017 South Fort Thomas Avenue, Fort Thomas, KY. Tara asserted that all meetings for the 2017 event will be held in Campbell County since the event will be held there this year; the most important and pressing task is finding a site in Campbell County for the 2017 event. Tara reported that a new Reforest NKY Committee member has been confirmed, Tanner Yess who coordinates trail management, field work, and youth programs at Groundwork Cincinnati – Mill Creek.

Kris stated that Scott was not able to attend the meeting and there will be no update on *Trees in our Community (TIOC)* until the next meeting. Jenny requested a review of the TIOC date, she had it recorded in her calendar as October 13, 2016. Discussion amongst Committee about the planned date. Kris inquired with Scott via text about the date for TIOC – the date is October 20. Lorna suggested that the TIOC subcommittee approach Green Umbrella about an appropriate keynote speaker for the event. Discussion amongst the committee about possible professions to find a keynote speaker.

Lorna reported that *Northern Kentucky Taking Root (NKY Taking Root)* will be supporting the Make a Difference Day (MADD) tree planting events on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Lorna presented with the help of Tara,

Jessica, and Crystal there will be a MADD tree planting occurring in Tower Park in Fort Thomas, KY to honor Mary Kathryn Dickerson and educate the public about forest threats and the importance of forest structure. NKY Taking Root drafted verbiage for signage to be erected at the MADD site after planting and will be sending to a graphic designer for signage graphic creation; one sign will dedicate the planted area to Mary Kathryn and the other sign will focus on forest threats and forest structure to educate the public. Lorna reported that information regarding the Trees in Trouble documentary was sent to all the local trees boards that were compiled recently by NKY Taking Root in an effort to increase the interest in the documentary and facilitate viewings. Lorna also stated that the NKY Chamber of Commerce (NKY Chamber) rejected NKY Taking Root's request to be on a NKY Chamber meeting agenda to discuss the documentary and its content in terms of the NKY Chamber's overall mission – they said it was not appropriate for their meeting. Discussion amongst the Committee on how to possibly engage the NKY Chamber. Lorna reminded the Committee that NKY Taking Root has a copy of the documentary for any viewing the Council may want to plan or use at existing events. Chris asked if the Sierra Club has been contacted regarding the documentary. Rachel attested that the Sierra Club has been at a community showing of the documentary recently.

Kris conveyed that he has not been able to do a lot regarding the *Arborist Certification Program*. Kris committed to following up with the previously discussed applicant – Matt Wessel. Kris also relayed that he will be working on getting some promotion done for the program as soon as possible.

Mathew and Chris reported that the *GIS Committee* used the recently created local tree board list to find holes in terms of trees boards in the local community. Mathew explained that the City of Independence currently does not have a tree board and they are a rapidly growing area of NKY. Mathew suggested that the Urban Tree Canopy Assessment (UTC) data could be used to create a presentation that in turn could be presented to the appropriate person in the City of Independence, like the City Administrator. Lorna suggested that she has a connection with the City Administrator, Chris Moriconi, and could get the ball rolling by contacting him and see about interest in a meeting to view the UTC data presentation that Mathew and Chris will be creating. Lorna affirmed at she would contact Chris Moriconi and get him in touch with Mathew or Chris and plan on trying to set-up a meeting for the fall 2016 to present what they collectively come up with in hopes to convince Independence to form a tree board.

Chris informed the Committee that he had recently attended a South Bank Partners meeting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in attendance that discussed ecosystem restoration plans for the Licking and Ohio Rivers; according to the meeting the current timeline for the possible implementation of these restoration plans is 2018. Chris reported that the USACE is presently looking for local stakeholders to bring in-kind matches for this program which could include cultural or natural resource inventories. Chris suggested that the UTC assessment could be offered as an in-kind match for the USACE program. Rachel submitted the Council paid \$125,000 for the UTC assessment for all three NKY counties and an in-kind letter could be drafted stating that for the match. Rachel advocated for the Council being named as a sponsor for the match and that would definitely increase the Council's reach in the community. Rachel proclaimed an interest in the South Bank project and committed to being involved if a Council representative is needed.

Jenny submitted that the *Kentucky Roots (KY Roots)* program was still in possession of many “Tree Tips” yard signs that are available to anyone interested; though, a lot of signs have already been claimed and placed in yards all throughout the NKY community. Mathew notified the Committee that he recently saw a Tank bus boasting a KY Roots sign and it made him feel really proud of the Council for that accomplishment; Jenny said that the signs are viewed a lot because of the Tank bus program. Jenny presented that the next KY Roots event would be held at the Florence Speedway, 12234 US-42, Florence, KY on July 30<sup>th</sup> beginning around 4 or 5 pm; an email went out to the Council regarding volunteering for the event recently. Jenny informed the Committee that she had received 4 responses thus far for volunteers but would really like to have 10 volunteers total – Jenny asked to be contacted if any of the Committee members wish to volunteer. Volunteering would include engaging the Speedway crowd to play games to win KY Taking Root prizes (t-shirts, cozies, etc.), also the Speedway announcer will periodically be reading KY Roots messages. Jenny notified the Committee that KY Roots recently ordered new materials to hand out to people including new shirts with a different color, yard signs, cozies, etc.; the Council has also bought tables and a banner to display at the event to increase visibility and interest at the public events. Rosie suggested that any materials that KY Roots wants distributed could also be handed out at the City of Covington Parks events. Kris also suggested distributing yard signs or other materials at the Boone County Arboretum, if needed.

#### **4. Housekeeping**

Kris advised the Committee that Vice President (VP) nominations had been received by Crystal and include Rachel, Jenny, Jessica, and Lorna. Kris also nominated Chris Kaeff for VP but Chris advised the group that he is not sure that he could commit to the position. Committee discussion on other possibilities for VP nomination and the likelihood of those currently nominated to realistically take on the duties. Jenny informed the Committee of the prior succession of offices in order to become VP - there formerly was a general progression from one office to the next higher with Executive Council approval via a vote. Chris asked for a detailing of VP duties and Kris explained general duties of the VP to the Committee. The Committee decided to request that more nominees be sent to Crystal and that a vote be completed at the August meeting.

Tara explained the issues with the Council’s Dropbox account and the research she had conducted considering viable storage alternatives. Tara informed the Committee that she looked into four options (Dropbox Pro, Dropbox Business, IDEals, and Box.org), and the best option thus far is Dropbox Business – a paid for service though, there is a discount for 501c3 organizations (30%). Tara said the final cost for Dropbox Business would be \$525 per year and includes all the premier services (unlimited storage, deletion recovery, versioning, history, live support, etc.). Dropbox Business will include 5 licenses that have 1Terabyte of memory associated with each license to start. Tara also stated that there is a free Dropbox Business trial that includes one month to test it out and make a decision about purchase. Chris suggested to the Committee that he has a connection to a local storage start-up company that he could look into called Liquid Data Management. Mathew suggested that Tara look into Google Drive as an option as well. The Committee agrees for Chris to look into storage options at Liquid and Tara to research options with Google Drive, findings will be presented at the August meeting and put to a vote.

Tara requested that any discrepancies with meeting dates and times be brought to her attention in terms of Google Calendar invites. Tara explained the time zone issue with Google Calendar for others that might

be experiencing a similar issue – if Committee meeting times are displayed as anything other than 6pm – 8pm on the Google Calendar then the time zone might need to be investigated in the Settings tab and switched to Eastern Standard Time. Tara explained the issue with the confusing multiple email invites due to a time zone setting issue and confirmed that everything regarding the Google Calendar invites should be copasetic now. Lorna inquired about Committee meeting dates, Tara requested that everyone review the May minutes for the decision on meeting dates and please double check their calendars for accuracy.

## **5. Strategic Planning**

### *Membership Update – Rosie Santos*

Kris invited Rosie to take the floor and present her draft membership model that the Committee voted for her to produce and present during the May meeting. Rosie explained the basis of the Council’s Volunteer and Membership Model (included at end of these minutes) that she produced handed out to the Committee earlier. Rosie detailed the contributions that an individual can make to an organization: time, talent, and/or treasurer; when a person gives both time and talent they are a volunteer, when they treasure they are a donor. Rosie explained the difference between the two different options: a “friends of - or - supporter of” option vs. a membership (dues) option.

Rosie continued by explaining the levels of the pyramid which include: Executive Committee, Board of Directors, Committees, Event Volunteers, and Participants and/or Members. Rosie informed the Committee that the pyramid in essence requires a prestigious climb from lower tiers to the top for those interested rather than forcing an office on someone due to lack of involved/engaged members/officers – the model, when done correctly, encourages the climb to be part of the Executive Council. Rosie described examples of people within the different tiers of the pyramid: Officers (President, VP, Secretary, and Treasurer) would be the Executive Council, the Board of Directors would include the Executive Council and the Steering Committee for example. Rosie suggested that those members acting on the Executive Council and the Board of Directors give all three t’s (time, talent, and treasure). Event Committees would be a potential area to identify future Board Members, Rosie reminded that is where those of us on the Steering Committee were chosen from. Rosie recommended that roles for Event Volunteers within Committees be defined so they have a sense of what is required from them, and also that applications and/or skills surveys be utilized on the Committee level for identifying interest and talent. Rosie implied that participants and/or Members are the most underutilized resource of the Council and this tier needs to be reached out to for filling other tiers of the pyramid and for funding (“supporters or friends of the Council”).

Rosie proposed that the next logical step and her recommendation is to set up a Board of Directors who will decide what the structure of the Council will look like into the future which requires an evaluation and decision regarding “friend/supporter” vs. membership model. Discussion amongst the Committee about pros and cons of both options. Rosie reported that she does not believe that the Council will be able to move forward without having a complete Board buy-in (in terms of commitment) and have set duties for those people and an added possible staff person for Council program support – she suggests that having staff should be a goal of the Council – in-kind matching could be an option to secure a grant for a staff person. Rosie detailed that for other organizations she is required to fill out a spreadsheet specifying her time spent, money spent, mileage accrued for matching purposes. Jenny advocated that regardless of

the structure we should have an incentive for being a “friend/supporter of” and Rachel submitted the Council should try to make it fun as well.

Rachel asked for the Committee to vote on the two structure options – “friend/supporter” vs. membership dues. Tara opposed voting on the structure until the President, Crystal, is able to attend. Rachel proposed that the issue be put to a vote at the August meeting, Committee agreed to vote on the Council structure at next meeting. Jessica advocated that it be stated in the minutes that the majority of the Committee expressed that the “supporter/friend of” structure is preferred after Rosie’s presentation and discussion amongst the Committee.

#### *Financial Planning – Rachel Comte*

Rachel segued into her Strategic Planning topic of Financial Planning after Rosie closed her update of Membership. Rachel began by explaining that in the past each program committee has generally been responsible for fundraising for their specific event that was then held in the Council’s treasury account with line item accounting for each program. Rachel posed that sponsorship should be approached holistically for the entire Council and programs. Rachel offered the Duke grant as an example which had originally been secured specifically for the KY Roots program, instead Rachel proposed that the Duke grant ask would be for all programs. Rachel indicated that she has brainstormed and come up with the idea of including a mini-grant program for community tree planting/outreach as well as a Council staff member as part of the possible financial planning for the future; these could be included as part of the ask from Duke. Rachel posed another possible large funding option could be St. Elizabeth’s Healthcare since trees have a provable correlation to positive public health.

Rachel suggested that the Council should apply for the Duke grant (deadline in August) and include funding to acquire a Council staff person. As part of Duke’s grant funding mission they want to reach out into the community and the mini-grant program would satisfy that funding mission and allow Duke to have their name on many more programs within the community. The Committee discussed the possibilities for the mini-grant program. Rachel outlined her vision of the mini-grant program including multiple small community grants to plant trees which would ultimately be coordinated by the Council staff person. Rachel detailed her accounting approximation and the Council staff person generally would work 10 hours a week, at \$15 per hour, at 50 weeks per year – roughly \$150/week, \$400 - \$600/ month. The Council staff person would work on the mini-grant program, community outreach, assist the program chairs to help out with event legwork, etc. Rachel indicated that she thought was that the mini-grant program would require \$5,000 and the Council staff person would require approximately \$8,000 for the year. Rachel suggested asking Duke for that amount that would inevitably increase outreach to the community. Jenny voiced her concern that the \$13,000 is only including the mini-grant program and the Council staff person and we should ask for enough to cover all the Council’s programming as well, on top of the \$13,000. Rosie reminded that we need to get measurable for each program which should include in-kind matching from program chairs, subcommittee members, etc. Rachel informed the Committee that Sarah had volunteered to help her with assimilating all of the information into a document for review. Rachel put forward that the Council staff person could be called a Programs Coordinator – Committee agreed unanimously to pursue the idea of procuring funding for the mini-grant program, a Programs Coordinator, and funding for existing Council programs from Duke as facilitated by Rachel, Sarah, and Jenny. Committee members agreed that having a Programs Coordinator would help Council tasks to

become less taxing on the program committees/chairs. Rachel stated that she would return with an update on the financial plan for presentation with the help of Jenny and Sarah.

Lorna informed the Committee that she was a contracted coordinator for the TIOC program in the past. Lorna committed to checking into her files to see if she can find documentation of that position to help with administrative/on-boarding portion of the Programs Coordinator position. Lorna indicated that a downside would be losing the Programs Coordinator from year to year based on funding not being available or the person just moving on. Rachel and Rosie both implied that turnover is inevitable and honestly kind of an expectation given the nature of the work. Jenny stated that if the Committee drafts standard operating procedures (SOP) for on-boarding this Programs Coordinator and their duties then the turnover should not be taxing.

#### **6. Next Committee Meeting**

Tara reminded that the next Committee meeting will be August 18<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm at the Mellow Mushroom in Wilder, KY unless a more appropriate meeting place can be suggested.

Kris asked for any other business to be discussed. No Committee members interjected any further business. Kris called the meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm.