

Avon Hills Initiative Executive Committee and Staff Meeting
July 27th 4:00 PM
Room 150 “New Science Natural History Museum” Saint John’s University

Avon Hills Executive Committee Members Present: Steve Plantenberg, Ernie Diedrich

Avon Hills Staff Members Present: Tom Kroll, Emily Franklin

Avon Hills Observers Present: John Maile-Nature Conservancy, Sharon Kutter

Old Business:

1.3 Conference Community Feedback: Members concurred feed back was positive with suggestions for next year conference to include a longer welcome, longer sessions, more political representation at the round table, hold the conference earlier in February (Note: February Landowner Conference potential scheduling conflicts), Tighten up the morning schedule and hold a social hour/entertainment after the round table.

2.1.3 A financial update was provided for review by the committee

3.1.3 There was much discussion regarding the AHI Conference for next year including goals and focus. Possible topics include conservation overlay districts and the fostering of dialogue between stakeholders. Tom Kroll will check the schedule for tentative dates in March. The discussion focused on the need to either hold a conference, or a specific workout session on the development of a conservation overlay district. Executive committee members will take the next month to brainstorm ideas. The focus of conference or workshop event will be determined at next month’s meeting.

4.1.3 It was agreed upon to concentrate on a smaller workshop with a focus on environmental/conservation overlay districts in place of a larger conference in March. This provides us with an opportunity to involve local government leaders and community members prior to workshop sessions at the individual township level.

1.5 Members discussed the importance in becoming active in exploring creative ways to secure sponsors/in kind/donations/grants and 501 (c) 3 possibilities for AHI.

2.1.5 Steve Plantenberg to explore Avon Townships 501 (c) Account Status and if this currently inactive program is transferable.

3.1.5 Steve noted that the account in Avon Township is active. However he has not approached the Township to date regarding future plans for its use. It was suggested that legal counsel be consulted regarding the development of 501(c) 3 status, either through a voluntary transfer by Avon Township, or by starting a new 501(c) 3 account.

4.1.5 Original 501(c) 3 account was for the town hall and exploring this option is held off for the time being. AHI is still searching for legal expertise for guidance in attaining non-profit status. Tom to explore individuals who might be interested in providing help.

1.6 The Committee concurred within the next 30-45 Days we will need to identify co chairs for next year's conference and establish task force assignments for its planning.

2.1.6 No progress to report

3.1.6 Co-chairs will be designated at next months meeting. Ernie Diedrich volunteered to be one of the co-chairs, or at least help with planning? Melissa Holm (new AHI intern), Sarah Gainey, and Emily Franklin can also be relied on to help organize and plan the event.

4.1.6 Sarah Gainey is volunteered to co-chair for workshop planning by Tom.

1.9 Committee Report Education/PR (Mark Conway chair): Plans are to formulate a conference wrap-up press release and work with the Government Committee to draft a position paper on Cluster Developments.

2.1.9 No progress to report

3.1.9 Mark Conway has resigned from his position as Education/PR chair. A new chair is needed.

4.1.9 Sharon Kutter and Mary Eisenschenk could possibly co-chair the Education/PR Committee as they work to educate the local community on air pollutants and emissions in the area, which has become a concern. This will be decided at a future meeting and the chair position is still considered open.

1.10 Committee Report Government (Alan Davisson chair): Plans are to draft of position paper on the merits of Cluster Developments.

2.1.10 No progress to report

3.1.10 It was suggested that Alan may wish to postpone work on the position paper and focus on the merits of an environmental overlay districts.

4.1.10 No progress to report

1.11 Committee Report Administration (Cliff Borgerding chair-replaces Mike Brown): Cliff will draft a preliminary planning outline for the organization and formulate a structure so we may focus our future efforts.

2.1.11 No progress to report

3.1.11 No progress to report at this time.

4.1.11 No progress to report at this time.

1.12 Committee Report Cultural/Sense of Place (Chris Schellinger chair): Fall social event planning is a priority. Chris will determine scope of Bouja and possible coordination with Collegeville Colors on Sunday, October 2, 2005. Mark Conway mentioned Scott Russell Sanders-writer will be here 1st week in October also North Dakota singer/song writer Chuck Suchy may be available.

2.1.12 It was discussed to give greater identity to the AHI event may be to hold the Bouja off Campus. Suggestions include the Pelican Lake Ballroom, the Leroy Ritter farm inclusive of kitchen and indoor meeting facilities and possibly the county park on Upper Spunk Lake.

3.1.12 Discussion relative to location of the Bouja continued. Chris Schellinger will be making contacts to firm up possible sites.

4.1.12 After more discussion of possible locations for the Fall Social, the Ritter farm seems like the best option. A motion was made and seconded to hold the Bouja/Fall Social at the Ritter Farm. Date and other details are still unspecified.

1.13 Committee Report Fundraising (Ernie Diedrich chair): No tasks identified.

2.1.3 No progress to report

3.1.13 Ernie will be meeting with Catherine Stoch in Institutional Advancement to discuss funding possibilities for AHI. Grant applications will most likely be pursued through Saint John's Arboretum or the University until AHI achieves 501(c) 3 status.

4.1.13. Ernie unable to meet with Catherine last month. He is scheduled to meet with her on Monday, August 1 at the Meeting Ground to discuss funding options. Tom mentioned mailings to the AHI observers, which are valuable. However, funding needs to be secured for these mass mailings, which may be obtained through a grant for operating needs.

1.14 Committee Report Non Governmental (We need a Chair!) No Tasks identified

2.1.14 Phyllis Plantenberg has volunteered to fill the position

3.1.14 No activity to report at this time

4.1.14 No activity to report at this time

2.0 Phyllis Plantenberg reported on the City of St. Joseph's plan to develop road systems south of the College of Saint Benedict and across Monastery property. The road would connect Collage Avenue to County Road 2 to facilitate access to the interstate. Phyllis, Tom, Ernie and Steve attended an informational meeting earlier in the month held at St. Joseph City Hall. In addition, a fine article appeared in the St. Cloud paper submitted by Fred and Rosemary Petters.

3.2.0 Phyllis provided a brief update on the St. Ben's road issue. Letter writing to editors is being conducted by concerned citizens. An ice cream social is planned for July 14th in honor of Sister Nancy, as well as to get community members to participate in a walk through the St. Ben's woods.

4.2.0 Ice cream social in St. Ben's woods was well attended. Steve Plantenberg has drafted a letter to the Mayor of St. Joseph supporting the Sisters and encouraging a broader vision in terms of the potential road to be developed.

2.3 Minnesota Rural Summit to be held at St. Johns July, 2005. We have been contacted by Denise Pfeifer Rural Summit Planning Coordinator and asked to participate as a connection station presenter. Check out

<http://www.minnesotaruralpartners.org/2005> If you have interest in attending the workshop or being a presenter please contact Steve.

3.2.3 Steve, Phyllis, and Tom are planning on participating in the Connection Stations portion of the conference.

Old Business June 29th, 2005

3.0 DNR Land Acquisition-Avon Township: DNR has entered into an agreement with property owners to acquire 250 acres of oak/maple/basswood forest in Avon

Township. The parcel is adjacent to property owned by St. Cloud State University. The land would be kept by the State in its natural state as a nature reserve.

4.3.0 Township supervisors wrote letters to Stearns County and copied MN DNR. MN DNR would like to make a joint announcement of the acquisition in cooperation with AHI to present the parcel.

3.1 Avon Township and City of Avon Orderly Growth Agreement update. It is understood the two governing bodies have come to an agreement regarding growth in areas adjacent to the City of Avon. A final copy of the agreement is expected to be signed shortly.

4.3.1 The City of Avon Orderly Growth Agreement has been agreed to by both parties (City of Avon, and Avon Township). The agreement is tentatively scheduled to be signed next week on Wednesday, August 3rd.

3.2 Meeting with Margie Evans (Mayor of Avon) to discuss programming events with AHI and Saint John's Arboretum. Tom Kroll will plan to meet with the Mayor in the coming weeks.

4.3.2 Tom met with Margie and discussed entrepreneurial ideas for the hills. Margie stressed the importance of the environment in Avon and suggested it may be a good place for a natural resources college or technical school. With a newly established Environmental Studies Program, Tom suggested utilizing students from CSB/SJU as opposed to trying to recruit a new college. Ernie Diedrich and Terri Barreiro have recently been discussing opportunities for students in the entrepreneurial program at the McNeely Center. The environmental aspects of the City of Avon and the Avon Hills will more than likely be highlighted through entrepreneurial student projects in the future.

New Business July 27th, 2005

4.0 AHI needs to consider developing a logo, establishing a mailing location, and creating stationary/letterhead for letters to be sent to public officials. For letters to be sent in the near future a basic letterhead will be created with the address:

**Avon Hills Initiative
Collegeville, MN 56321-3000**

Cliff and the Administrative Committee may take the lead on this project.

Next Meeting 4:00 PM August 31st, 2005 in Room 150 "New Science and Natural History Museum SJU"