

**Avon Hills Initiative Executive Committee and Staff Meeting  
February 22, 2006, 4:00 PM,  
Room 150 New Science Center, Saint John's University**

Present: Tom Kroll, Emily Franklin, John Maile, Todd Holman, Sherry Kutter, Melissa Holm, Steve Plantenberg, Ernie Diedrich

1.0 Final Report for the 2006 Workshop (Emily)

1.1 Including speakers, volunteers, and participants there was a total of 77 people at the workshop on February 4<sup>th</sup>.

1.2 Unfortunately, we lost money on the workshop, but have funds designated for Avon Hills through the Laird Norton grant to cover the costs of the workshop.

1.3 Comments on evaluation forms.

1.4 What's next for PR/Education Committee?

1.4 Note: This will serve as the committee report for Education/PR committee (Sherry Kutter, chair)

**It was discussed to have the Avon Hills Initiative present at the 2006 Minnesota Forestry Association's Woodlands as Resources conference in September. This two day conference would be another opportunity for local landowners to discuss land use issues and community growth pressures, as well as the advantages to conserving large tracts of contiguous forest.**

2.0 Pursuit of 501(c) 3 status

2.1 Previous executive board meetings had explored this option. During the September meeting it was suggested to table this discussion until early 2006.

2.2 Notes from previous meetings indicate the Avon Township account is active, although exploring this original 501(c) 3 account was held off in fall 2005. It was suggested legal counsel be consulted regarding the development of a new account or exploring a voluntary transfer of the Avon Township account

2.3 Cliff volunteered to do some research on the pros and cons of attaining non-profit status.

**Steve agreed to look into transferring the 501(c) 3 account from the township to Avon Hills. There was a lot of discussion relative to the pros and cons of starting a non-profit organization. Tabled for future discussion.**

3.0 Committee Report: Government (Allan Davisson, chair)

3.1 As of September 28, 2005 there was no progress to report

3.2 What's next for Government? Discussion of post-workshop action for the government committee including drafting of position papers, meetings with township government, or meetings with Stearns County

3.3 Discussion of public comment period for Stearns County Comprehensive Plan Update and ways to publicize this to citizens to increase involvement and input

**It was agreed to draft a letter of support for SNA funding to the MN DNR commissioner relative to the bonding bill to be debated in the Minnesota legislature. Avon Hills Initiative advocates future land acquisitions for SNA's in the area.**

4.0 Committee Report: Fundraising (Ernie Diedrich, chair)

4.1 Ernie met with Catherin Stoch in Institutional Advancement at the College of Saint Benedict during the fall of 2005 to discuss funding possibilities for AHI. These funds included: \$3,000 to support spring workshop (not pursued but could be pursued in the future); \$1,000 to support AHI social (also not pursued but could be in the future).

4.2 Saint John's Arboretum Office Coordinator Fellow may also be utilized for grant writing purposes. Emily has done preliminary research for funds to support the work of AHI.

4.3 Identification of funding needs for AHI in the future

5.0 Committee Report: Administration (Cliff Borgerding, chair)

5.1 During meetings in spring 2005 Cliff agreed to draft a preliminary outline for the organization in order to focus future efforts. Explore this option once again, and discuss future efforts

5.2 Avon Hills Initiative Logo: An SJU student agreed to create a logo for us. However, we cannot legally compensate him because he does not have a work visa in the U.S. Discuss alternatives for logo generation

5.3 Election of Officers for 2006-2007 Term

**Another alternative needs to be pursued for the generation of a logo for the Avon Hills Initiative. There was also discussion about ways to elect the next offices for AHI. It was suggested to send a mailing in order for individuals to vote for officers since we did not have a vote at the February workshop.**

6.0 Committee Report: Non-governmental (Phyllis Plantenberg, chair)

6.1 No progress to report during the summer and fall of 2005

6.2 Sister Phyllis has agreed to chair, but needs direction in terms of responsibilities or goals of this committee

6.3 Discussion of the purpose of this committee and its goals

**Nothing to report**

7.0 Committee Report: Cultural/Sense of Place (Chris Schellinger, chair)

7.1 Fall social event did not take place after much discussion. It was suggested to possibly hold a spring social to replace this event.

7.2 Discussion of feasibility or desire to host a spring AHI social event

7.3 What's next for the Cultural/Sense of Place committee?

**Discussion of other social opportunities for AHI. Steve Plantenberg suggested the farmer's market as a possible place for individuals to discuss ideas and engage in conversation. It was also suggested to have the farmers market at the Town Hall in Collegeville Township, which is at the physical center of the Avon Hills.**

8.0 Discussion of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) workbook and Efroymsen workshop (Tom and Emily)

8.1 Tool to map out targets for protection (biologically unique areas, species, etc)

8.2 Possibly put together a committee to work on this project?

**Emily, John, and Todd discussed the Efroymsen workshop and the conservation action plan which needs to be completed in order for the Nature Conservancy to become more active in the Avon Hills. John suggested forming a committee of three to four individuals to work specifically on the CAP workbook in the coming months. Tom mentioned that the Audubon society has designated the Avon Hills as an area of interest for birding. This designation is an advantage to doing conservation work in the area.**

**Next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 29<sup>th</sup> at 4:45p.m. in New Science 150 at Saint John's University**