

**Avon Hills Initiative Executive Committee and Staff Meeting
September 27, 2006 4:45p.m.
Room 150 New Science Center, Saint John's University**

Present: Jane Bennett, Allan Davisson, Melissa Holm, Tom Kroll, Lowell Rushmeyer

1. Update on Stearns County Comprehensive Plan –Steve S.
 - 1.1. A new OS (other/special) zoning designation has been proposed. This designation would benefit land with historical and biological value among other things.
A phone survey of approximately 500 local people suggests that the community is generally in favor of increased recreational opportunities and that they are willing to pay for it. Allan summarized this sentiment as preservation with access.
2. Elections: one chairman candidate
 - 2.1. Bill Fahrney as agreed to run for the AHI chair alongside Peter Dwyer. Ballots have been placed in the newsletter.
Ballots are currently coming in to the Arboretum office as well as at the Schuman Lake Road celebration.
3. Newsletter—Melissa H.
 - 3.1. The newsletter has been printed and is in the process of being distributed. Jackie Leedah's daughter Kenzie wrote an article on "What it means to grow up in the Avon Hills" which is featured in the newsletter. An event note for the 'Raised in the Hills Teen Art Exhibit' was also included in the newsletter as well as placed on the website.
The newsletter has been distributed and offered at the Schuman Lake Road events.
4. Schuman Lake Road project
 - 4.1. The Schuman lake project is on the Avon Hills Website and was advertised in the newsletter. The project would like \$300 from the Initiative to cover part of the cost including horse rental for wagon rides the final day.
It was suggested that directions to Schuman Lake Road be posted somewhere for visitors. Allan moved to support the project with \$350 of initiative funds and Lowell seconded the motion.
5. Potential candidate for AHI project—Tom K.
 - 5.1. The job description is in the newsletter. Several people have expressed verbal interest in the position. Once the funding has been secured, the Avon Hills Initiative Executive Committee will determine the selection process.
Allan proposed that 2-4 committee members should lead the selection process to provide continuity and perspective in the process.
6. Initiative Foundation funding update
 - 6.1. The project is currently waiting for written approval from Cold Spring in order to proceed. Cold Spring wants us to meet them and give a presentation. We need to determine who will do this.
Allan and Tom have volunteered to give a presentation to the Cold Spring group.
7. Gift from Saint John's University
 - 7.1. Br. Dietrich Reinhart has allotted the Avon Hills Initiative with \$5,000. The money is not an outright gift, but is available to be used to support Initiative projects when other funding is not available. Steve will write them a thank you when he receives their contact information.
Steve has received Br. Dietrich and Abbot John's contact information.
8. The Nature Conservancy "Conservation Action Plan"
 - 8.1. The Nature Conservancy is instituting a Conservation Action Plan for the Avon Hills. Once completed, this will direct the activities of TNC in this area. John Maile of TNC, Hannah

Texler of DNR, Jane Bennett of the Natural Parks and Trails Coalition, and Tom Kroll of Saint John's are currently on the committee. Others with conservation / Avon Hills expertise should contact John Maile to participate. This plan is only for the benefit of TNC and is not a public land plan.

Jane Bennett will be helping to fill out the Efroymsen database, hopefully for a small allowance from [The Nature Conservancy](#) that has yet to be confirmed. She is initially thinking of sending out a mini-questionnaire to gather biological knowledge from local citizens.

9. Additional items

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for October 25th from 4:45 to 5:45 pm. The meetings are open to the public.