

Avon Hills Initiative Executive Board Meeting
September 24, 2008
Room 150, New Science Center, Saint John's University

Board members present: Jackie Leedah, Will Huston, Mike Leedah, Peter Dwyer, Lowell Rushmeyer

Staff members present: Tom Kroll, Jenny Kutter, Bill Fahrney, Jim DeGiovanni

Tom introduced Jim DeGiovanni as a new AHI employee who will be helping out with the conference and other AHI projects and events.

Annual Meeting/Conference:

Conference committee members reviewed the tentative schedule and confirmed speakers for the benefit of the executive board. Since it's been difficult to find speakers for the water strand, the board recommended looking into an "alternative energy" strand. Jim is going to talk to Karen Bobeldyk to clarify whether she needs help finding water speakers or if she thinks an alternative energy strand should replace the water strand.

Jim gave a brief report on the possibilities the committee discussed for PR/Marketing. Jim will have a more definite work plan/schedule for the rest of the conference planning in the next couple of weeks and will work with Jenny and Sarah to start putting publications together. Lowell recommended looking at KASM radio for future advertising.

Annual meeting: Peter will work on the agenda for the meeting at the end of the conference in January. Agenda will likely include an annual report on AHI activities and more information on conservation easements through LCCMR, the election for chair, and the Initiative Awards presentation.

Initiative Awards:

Jenny presented the draft Initiative Award Nomination Form. The forms will be available both as an on-line submission as well as a downloadable .pdf document. Jenny will collect nominations and distribute them to the board after the Nov. 29 deadline for nominations. The board will decide on award recipients at the Dec. 10 board meeting. Peter will get in touch with the SJU woodshop about the possibility of donating wooden plaques for the award winners.

AHI Logo:

Peter reported that John Biasi, SJU graphic designer, has agreed to work on the design for an AHI logo pro-bono. Peter will meet with John to give him background on the AHI. John will likely have 3 logo designs to present to the board at the October 29 meeting.

Newsletter:

Articles are due to Jenny by Sept. 30 and the newsletter should be mailed the week of Oct. 27.

The board decided that it would be prudent to include an article about the changes in the Green Acres law in the next newsletter since the changes will have a major affect on landowners in the Avon Hills. Will agreed to chair a sub-committee that will research more information about the law change, will get in touch with Rep. Hosch and Rep. Haws to help advocate for landowners affected by the changes. Will agreed to submit an article to the newsletter within 2 weeks in order to meet the publication deadline.

Review of articles to be included in the newsletter: Annual Conference/Initiative Awards; 2c Forestland Tax classification; Green Acres law changes; Clean Water, Land, Legacy Amendment; Review of the Year from the Chair; a short sidebar about conservation easements.

Landowner visits:

Tom and Bill reported a visit with one local landowner and several others who are interested in more information about options for their land. The board discussed the need to establish a priority system for grant-based easements by the 1st of the year in case the local interest in setting up easements goes beyond the grant funding. Tom and Bill will head a sub-committee to discuss the priorities.

Next meeting will be Wednesday, October 29 at 4:45 p.m.