

**VILLAGE OF HARTLAND
ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDOR AND OPEN SPACE
TASK FORCE MINUTES
THURSDAY, MAY 4, 2017
7:00 PM
BOARD ROOM
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 210 COTTONWOOD AVE**

Present: Michelle Bonness, David deCourcy-Bower, Mike Einweck, Tim Hallquist, Courtney Marschalek and David Pride. Excused: Carol Zahorik.

Roll Call

1. Motion (Hallquist/Pride) to approve the Minutes of the April 6, 2017 Meeting. Carried (6-0).
2. Review of ECOS Duties, Goals and Objectives
 - Identify the properties (Village-owned, publicly owned, non-profit)
 - Assess the conditions of these areas
 - Develop and recommend to the Park Board and Village Board a written plan of improvements and enhancements including proposed budgets for the environmental areas

Last meeting Mr. deCourcy-Bower asked the task force to bring three to five recommendations to move forward. Ideas mentioned:

- Present any improvements/enhancements, including the budgets for these.
- If authorized by the Village, develop and implement work days and activities

The task force adopted an over-all purpose statement and came up with three objectives: natural resource protection, recreational/educational use and community benefit.

- Michelle Bonness suggested an additional objective. She felt that a more permanent entity should be created to follow up and implement these ideas (notify the neighbors, address the brochures, update the website, etc.) The task force determined that this is an action item as well as a recommendation item.

- Mike Einweck added an objective that would talk about engagement of citizens, volunteers and businesses. It's important to get people involved in some type of engagement.

Mike Einweck has been contacted by two volunteer groups over the past week. One group is from Lake Country Lutheran High School. The teacher called to say he has 10 to 15 students that would like to do some work in the parks. On May 17, they will work in Nixon Park and Centennial Park cleaning and fixing some areas, putting wood chips around the trees and beautifying the parks.

Another group, on May 8, with a rain date of May 10, will work in Hartbrook West eliminating the garlic mustard between the river and the houses. The Village is receiving volunteer group requests and when they call, Mr. Einweck uses the information from this task force to distribute jobs to them, even though there isn't a final document put together yet.

Mr. Pride asked if some of the simple things could be worked on by staff. Mr. Einweck answered that once there is the final package and certain recommendations are approved by the Village Board, we will then have an action plan. The Village Board would decide what the best course of action is.

3. Review of ECOS Summaries and Prioritization of Action Items

Three to five things that should be in our recommendations and actions:

- Figure out where we want to allocate the budget, time and effort (for example investing the time to put information together for the Village website, which could list opportunities to volunteer and to sign up for).
- Michelle Bonness described her idea for an on-going task force for environmental corridors and open space. Duties for the proposed group would be to have one area that would be marketing, writing letters, education, talking to neighbors and the creating/updating the website. A second area would be coordinating work parties with volunteer groups, Waukesha Land Conservancy and the Ice Age Trail Alliance. A third area would be for someone to prioritize the projects and monitor what is going on and come up with a plan and schedule of properties.

Mr. Pride wanted to discuss the Village's current water and waste water handling, as well as future plans. The task force thought that water is very important, but decided that the discussion was for another entity and not under the Environmental Corridor and Open Space Task Force purview.

Waukesha County Land Conservancy does very similar things, but for their own properties. Mike Einweck has met with them and they have scheduled a work

day on June 10th on their land in Hartland. Perhaps we can use their expertise for our use.

Lowlands and marshland are generally zoned C-1 – Conservancy. The upland portions are an overlay on the underlying zoning of a piece of property. Parkland is zoned I-1 Institutional. The Building Inspector or Village Administrator would have more detail on zoning. The Plan Commission reviews developments near conservancy areas. The Waukesha County Code is not more stringent in terms of development rights compared to the Village of Hartland Code. However, it does have a lot more detail in terms of management. Perhaps we could recommend that the Village Zoning Code could be reviewed and updated to be more specific for ways to manage environmental corridors.

It was recommended that sub-committees of residents that live around the environmental corridors become active in maintaining their own environmental lands near them.

It was suggested that the task force reach out to Tall Pines Conservancy for possible ideas in management of lands.

Main focus:

The consensus was that if a little bit of work is done in each environmental area, no one will be able to see any difference. Penbrook Park path with a connection to the Ice Age Trail Maple Wayside should be a priority.

Action items for Penbrook – focused on:

- Improve trails, provide a scenic overlook
- Clear out the buckthorn and select clearing around the large oaks
- The area where there is the existing informal trail should be cleared and wood chips installed
- Make out a more specific detailed plan for Penbrook Park, including surveying of the trees (large oaks, similar to the Cottonwood Management Plan) for Penbrook Park.

Tim Hallquist mentioned that there is a long-range plan to construct a restroom at Penbrook Park.

- Put together an educational pamphlet to be given to the residents in the area, as well as pamphlets at the parks/corridors. Mike Einweck suggested that all active homeowners associations could perhaps help get the word out electronically to their members. Direct mailing would be cost prohibitive. David deCourcy-Bower agreed but he thought it would be more personalized if just the residents who

border the corridors got the information. There appears to be 24 adjacent properties to Penbrook Park. We could just hand the pamphlets out.

- It was also suggested to put information in the Village Newsletter and the local public access television station.

The task force liked Courtney Marschalek's draft letter for notifying residents of environmental corridors near their properties and upcoming gatherings for information. A contact person needs to be found for each of these neighborhoods.

David deCourcy-Bower summarized the action items:

Penbrook is the main focus.
Educational materials will be pamphlets.
An introductory letter to kick things off.
Work groups managed by volunteers

Other ideas:

The task force was in favor of adding similar signage at each location. Mike Einweck mentioned that the Eagle Scout candidate that went before the Park Board last week is interested in informational pamphlets and a sign at Cottonwood Wayside. Mr. Einweck directed him to the existing informational signs at the library for an example of what he might want to do.

The budget may now allow for signage in all areas. That may need to be done a little at a time, starting with Penbrook.

It would be useful to have a consistent theme/sign describing the area where people are at the present, but also directing people to other environmental areas. It was suggested using a character such as "Brenda Buckthorn" or something similar as an icon on all the signs. Perhaps an Arrowhead student would be willing to draw the character.

Michelle Bonness suggested putting out things like the knotweed by Centennial Park. It would involve cutting and spraying areas once a year. It would spread if left alone. It is simple, but you need persistence. This kind of project would be suitable for a one day project for a small volunteer group. There are larger on-going projects and there are smaller projects like this.

Prioritization of these action items:

- Do a study for the Penbrook Park Focus project. Once we get a plan done, we can start after that. Village staff would contact any contractor that might be involved. We need a basic scope of what we want to do. Do we want someone to identify high-value trees? Identify invasive species that groups could work on eradicating?
- Sight lines to the ponds
- Clearing out around the established oak trees
- A few more trails

David deCourcy-Bower reviewed what the task force had said during their earlier discussions:

- Improve the current trail network, remove the trash, and create woodchip trails (none of which a restoration contractor would do). These things would be done by volunteer efforts.
- Provide a scenic overlook of wetland areas accessible to the formal park. A restoration company could look at doing this.
- Identify areas of invasive removals to open up accessibility of conservation areas
- Removing invasives around the large Oaks to maintain the health of those trees

When we get a proposal from a contractor, they are going to want to know what is needed as an end product.

It was suggested that the area around the pond be cleared out. Another suggestion was to clear and make visible a vista from the top of the park. Mike Einweck cautioned that the homeowners association of the Oak Ridge Condos might not agree to some of that. Their land is very close to one side of the pond.

This is very similar to the Cottonwood Wayside plan which addresses the oak savannah/oak woodlands, similar to Penbrook Park. We would be doing a lot of clear cutting. Because this has the marsh, it talks about a burn plan. An environmentalist looks at things and then comes up with a plan of action. The Cottonwood Wayside plan probably cost about \$3,000, but it is a good step by step for people to follow. If you want to pick out aspects of this plan for Penbrook, it could save money.

Allocating resources:

The engagement piece is big -- spending time, effort and money on reaching out. Creating an information page for the website and pamphlet. Having an informational sign in the park that says "You are in

Penbrook Park Environmental Corridor – here are the other similar areas in the Village.”

Recap:

- Create a more permanent route
- Oversee and implement marketing and education
- Organize work parties
- Review Zoning Code to protect the corridors with more specific information (The Village Administrator is talking about updating the Comprehensive Plan, so perhaps this could be a part of that.)
- Educational pamphlets and signage
- Management plan

Which of these do we want to prioritize? There is \$10,000 in the budget.

Michelle Bonness stated that she doesn't think anything can be done until you get the group together that is going to do the coordinating. Out of all the action items, this would be the first and most important.

Specific budgetary items that we need to address first:

Tim Hallquist mentioned education – making signs and pamphlets.

If the task force puts together the documents, the Village can easily add them to the website and can add a special section on environmental corridors. But if you are asking staff to create the document, you would be relying on staff to look over the notes of this task force to try to piece things together.

It will cost money to create a pamphlet -- it will cost to get a graphic designer to make it, print it, and mail it. We need to get quote for these things to figure out how much it costs.

It's up to the task force to come up with the verbiage of the pamphlet and have a graphic design company work on the rest. Courtney Marschalek volunteered to work on the draft pamphlet. It might be helpful to contact Avalon Graphics and see if they have anything similar. There must be something similar that has been done. The cost can be brought to the next task force meeting or sent out in an email to the members.

David deCourcy-Bower volunteered to investigate signage costs. Mike Einweck stated that the DPW would probably be able to install the signs.

He suggested that they be made of marine-grade plywood with a Lexan cover over the top. Ms. Marschalek stated that sounds similar to what was done for her sign project at the library. It is durable for outdoor use. In the past, the Village had some at the Bark River Greenway and they were defaced by vandals very quickly. And the plastic covering was affected by UV rays. Those types of materials should not be used.

Ms. Bonness will get costs on herbicides. She is familiar with how many hours per acre it takes for the work. The cost of restoring an oak savannah is about \$12,000 an acre, from clearing to seeding to maintenance. We would need volunteers to do the work.

Once you clear an area, you can use annual rye grass to prevent further growth and erosion. Prairie wild flowers are about \$300 a pound. Once you get going, you can do seed collecting. They have done that at Cottonwood Wayside. Ms. Bonness is currently working on restoring an acre of land, and that cost is about \$1,500. With the grass you can stabilize the bank, but you can still kill the buckhorn. Penbrook Park is 16 acres of upland woodlands.

The task force should proof through what David deCourcy-Bower included in the task force packet and they should make sure there are no further suggestions. This is a great starting point.

4. Adjourn

Motion (Marschalek/Bonness) to adjourn. Carried (6-0). Meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted by
Recording Secretary,

Lynn Meyer
Deputy Clerk