

**ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDOR AND OPEN SPACE
TASK FORCE MINUTES
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2016
7:00 PM
BOARD ROOM
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 210 COTTONWOOD AVE.**

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

Roll Call at 7:03 PM

1. Consideration of approval of Minutes of the September 1, 2016 Meeting

Motion (Hallquist/Bonness) to approve the Minutes of the September 1, 2016 ECOS Task Force. Carried (4-0-1). deCourcy-Bower abstained.

2. Review Preliminary Report Sections

Chairperson deCourcy-Bower thought about how to structure the up-front document. It should start by describing the background of why the task force was started.

The second part should be defining the purpose of the task force, whether it be a purpose or mission statement so we can have clarity of what we are trying to achieve during these meetings.

The next section should list what the objectives and goals are for the task force.

Between now and the next meeting we should think about the objectives for the task force.

The Resolution has a fairly detailed section of what the duties of the task force are. Specific objectives to think about for the next meeting are:

Education
Recreation
Preservation of natural resources
Community awareness of resources

3. Adoption of Purpose/Mission Statement

Purpose:

The purpose of the ECOS Task Force is to identify, evaluate and plan for the protection of environmental corridors and other natural areas within the Village of Hartland.

Mike Einweck asked if something should be added to protection. Protection is good, but then protection is basically maintenance, enhancement or utilization. What we want to do is identify the corridors, figure out a way that they can be enhanced for the community and preserve those so that use by the community continues. Village land is protected because it's under Village ownership. If the corridors are in other government agencies or other public agencies like the Ice Age Trail, that's protected. There is an Environmental Corridor Ordinance that says what you can and cannot do. Municipal boundaries would be the first enforcement agency.

Tim Hallquist stated that the items Mike Einweck just mentioned would be objectives. The purpose is fine and underneath the purpose would be the objectives. The mission statement should be a catch-all and then when you break it down to the objectives, you keep breaking it down from there and come up with a work plan for each objective. The execution would be the objectives.

Mike Einweck asked if this discussion is for only the Village of Hartland's environmental corridors or the environmental corridors within the Village of Hartland. The Task Force was in agreement that Environmental Corridors and other private and natural areas within the Village of Hartland should be included in discussions.

Motion (Hallquist/Zahorik) to approve the Purpose Statement as discussed.
Carried (5-0).

4. Focused Discussion on Penbrook Park

David deCourcy-Bower distributed some maps of Penbrook Park. There was discussion on environmental corridors – what are they and what are they used for.

Key attributes of Penbrook Park:

- It is 28.8 acres, with 24.74 acres being environmental corridor -- 16 acres of woodland and 9 acres of wetlands.

What are the current conditions:

- Degraded woodlands
- Lots of invasive species
- Informal trails

- Paved pathway to Maple and small paved pathway to Buckingham Way
- Cattail marshes/wetlands
- There are valuable native Oaks and Hickories that Michelle Bonness identified. About 80% are marked via GPS and it shows where they are concentrated. She stopped marking them because there were so many. There are hundreds of small hickory. Many of the Oaks did not look healthy.
- David deCourcy Bower noticed that the fence next to the parking area gives the impression of danger -- do not go in here -- and there are boulders at the opening. It could be an opportunity to put a sign and make it a formal path so people know that they can walk on it.
- Ms. Bonness mentioned that there was quite a bit of trash in that wooded area in Penbrook Park. The task force consensus was that if the trail is more formalized, there won't be as much trash because it's used more.
- There is a path going into the Oak Ridge Condos. Perhaps it could be blocked off because it goes into private properties. Or, maybe the private residents want access. It's a question to ask the association -- do they want a spur to their properties from the main trail?
- Outreach
- A safety fence behind the baseball field and the steep erosion on the other side were discussed.
- David deCourcy-Bower mentioned a storm water outfall that he noticed. Mike Einweck said it is from the Hartridge subdivision. At the time Hartridge was developed, the DNR didn't require a formal pond. These wetlands are serving a purpose from an engineering point of view. The 24-inch storm sewer is located just north of Erik Lane.

If we could change the area for the benefit of the environment, for the benefit of recreation, for the benefit of the wildlife:

Actions:

1. Reduce invasive species – open up the space, spray, re-seed and maintain
2. Formal woodchip trails
3. Trash clean-Up
4. Once the area is cleared of invasives should significant trees be surveyed?
5. Signage and trail markers

Opportunities/Actions:

1. View wildlife/scenic overlook.
2. Trail for the novice walker and a steeper trail for experienced walkers
3. Environmental education – perhaps volunteer classes
4. Improve the health of the woods/significant trees
5. It would be a great place for snow shoeing, but not cross country skiing.
6. It was noted that the standards for the width of a woodchip trail should be investigated.
7. Is it possible to partner/coordinate efforts with the Ice Age Trail Foundation
8. Volunteer efforts – check the park for vandalism, pick up trash, cut buckthorn
9. Engage surrounding private properties

It's close to Hartland South, so teachers could take students on field trips to the area. Arrowhead has an ecology club.

Many of the markers for the Ice Age trail have been destroyed. The markers can be put in, but they are often the subject of vandalism. The area is more isolated and vandalism is a concern.

There are a number of homeowners around the park. The way it is now, they have privacy. When you open it up by taking out the buckthorn, they lose their privacy. It was suggested that the buckthorn could be kept around the edge to give the homeowners more privacy. The non-berry producing buckthorn could be kept.

Once the trails are created, there may be more community interest in volunteering to maintain or continue to rehabilitate the area.

Mike Einweck stated that chipping the paths is a great idea, but because of the slopes and the size of chippers, the buckthorn will need to be cut, brought up to the top by the shelter, the wood chipped and then taken back down in wheelbarrows. It will be an expensive proposition. The Village Board is allocating \$10,000 to this task force for the next year.

There was discussion regarding who would do the work. Volunteer groups? The Village DPW employees already have a full schedule. You need a group of people from ages 16 – 30 to get in there with chainsaws and cut everything down, haul it up, grind it up and take it back down.

David deCourcy-Bower wants to do similar discussions for each park and at the end go through priorities, costs and recommendations.

If anyone from the task force would like to attend the October 24 Village budget hearing, you could express your ideas of continuing to fund the ECOS Task Force projects after next year or perhaps to request additional funds after the initial \$10,000 seed money.

A key piece of what we are doing is creating a plan – a document that maps out what we are going to do at some point. And, raise awareness that this is what should be done, noting that there is monetary value to the end product.

It was suggested that the task force prioritize the ideas just talked about. Ms. Bonness suggested starting in the southeast corner of the wooded area adjacent to the path to Buckingham Way and the park shelter. This section is flat and there are some great trees in the vicinity. The area isn't as dense as other places. The restoration could be done in phases. It is recommended to not remove more buckthorn than can be handled the next year. Otherwise, the area is opened up to other invasive species.

Rating the top four priorities:

1. Reduce invasives in selected area (perhaps 2 acres per year).
2. Develop trails in a phased approach (signage on the trails, however, would be the last step)
3. General clean up
4. Overlook

There was discussion on oak wilt and how to recognize it, notification of possible future work days in case people are interested in helping with the work, the Village posting pictures on website – before and after pictures can be posted. It was suggested that we could set up a home page for the ECOS Task Force. We could publish information in the Lake Country Reporter. It was suggested that we could invite the Reporter to an ECOS meeting. David deCourcy Bower would like to wait until the end to notify the newspaper at which time we have the document, and then make an announcement.

The next meeting will focus on Hartbrook Park/Hartbrook West.

Michelle Bonness will not be present at the November 3 Meeting.

5. Adjourn

Motion (Hallquist/Bonness) to adjourn. Carried (5-0). Meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by
Recording Secretary

Lynn Meyer
Deputy Clerk