

**VILLAGE OF HARTLAND
ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDOR AND OPEN SPACE
TASK FORCE MINUTES
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2016
7:00 PM
BOARD ROOM
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 210 COTTONWOOD AVE.**

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

Roll Call

1. Motion (Hallquist/Zahorik) to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2016 Meeting. Carried (4-0-2). Pride and Marschalek abstained.
2. Review and Consideration of Adoption of Objectives and Duties

David deCourcy-Bower reviewed the Purpose Statement that was adopted last meeting and also the list of Objectives and Duties of the Task Force. (A copy is in the electronic packet of the November 3, 2016 meeting, which is posted on the Village website at:

<http://www.villageofhartland.com/DocumentCenter/View/2291>)

The list of duties is verbatim from the resolution that the Village Trustees approved. It lists five aspects that they hope the task force accomplishes. The Village Board did approve a budget of \$10,000 for the next year.

The ECOS task force will need to deliver a document to the Village Board that lists the things they think should be prioritized and show the Village the things that should be paid attention to, along with a plan on how to do it. The plan may never be fully funded to accomplish what could be done, but by pulling together the plan and the document, it provides a template of direction for the Village and community members to understand what these assets are, what we can do to protect them and as a community, start to support it.

That leads into the discussion of the objectives: Natural resource protection, recreational and educational use and community benefit.

The task force has to have the structure in place so that it pulls together their collective thoughts to get together a document that can be presented.

Open space and environmental areas owned by the Village of Hartland have to be identified. Then the task force needs to assess the condition of these areas.

The difference between the Park Board and the ECOS task force is that the Park Board oversees the assets of the parks (i.e. playgrounds, ball fields, shelters, other amenities). The ECOS task force is involved in the more informal parts of the parks and the environmental corridors.

Most of the land that the task force is looking at is Village-owned land.

The task force has a one-year term. If they can get through more than one park per month, that would be better. There are 14 total parks, but only 8 or 9 need to be reviewed. Penbrook was done last month. Two parks will be scheduled for discussion each month from now on.

Mike Einweck stated that regarding the Community Benefit section, we all know that parks have a wonderful natural benefit to the community. He pointed out No. 3 on the list – in his opinion the objective means -- what do we have to do to make sure that those parks are a benefit to the community. How do we maintain that infrastructure?

To David deCourcy-Bower, it means engineering. Carol Zahorik stated that she thought the areas are scenic, and they improve the quality of life. Parks/open space enhance property values.

Mr. deCourcy-Bower will add a few things from the discussion to the Objectives and the task force can review them next meeting and possibly approve at that time.

Motion (Einweck/Hallquist) to *table* the adoption of Objectives and Duties until the December 1 meeting, with David deCourcy-Bower enhancing some of the items on the current list. Carried (6-0).

3. Focused Discussion on Hartbrook Park/Hartbrook West

Mike Einweck showed the task force a GIS printout of the Hartbrook Park area. The east section is a developed part of the park and the west section has a paved path and is undeveloped. The path from North Avenue used to be residential, but was torn down some years ago and turned into park land. It connects to the bridge over the Bark River in Hartbrook Park.

The Village hired Wachtel as a tree consultant. They identified the specific trees within the public right-of-way and in the parks. They also surveyed the undeveloped sections and identified the more valuable trees that are in those areas. Mike Einweck showed a map of the trees in the Hartbrook park area. Unfortunately, recently a 57" burr oak had to be cut down in Hartbrook West.

The task force can utilize this map as a starting point for some of the more valuable trees.

The Burkel Farm in the Town of Merton is a boundary to the Village on the northwest side of the Bark River. They have a barbed wire fence that is on private property. There are two benches in the park that look directly at that farm.

Things that the task force liked:

- The paved trail (Ice Age Trail)
- The bridge is in good condition
- The cleared area next to the Hartbrook West path is very nice
- The Village has been spraying for garlic mustard for three years
- The north end of Hartbrook Park has wonderful wild flowers that need to be preserved. However, thistle and other weeds nearby were not controlled. (it was noted that whenever you clear out a wooded area, the invasives are the first thing to grow in).
- The river walk trail gives a nice opportunity to get close to the river

Mike Einweck mentioned that the informal trail is hard to maintain because of all the peat. If woodchips are added and there is a heavy rain, they will wash into the river and cause a blockage. The area is a floodplain and it would require a Chapter 30 Army of Engineers permit to add the woodchips. It was suggested to put in some steps in that area, but staying outside of the floodplain.

The DPW checks the path area on a weekly basis to make sure there are no limbs ready to fall down on the path. Some pieces of Village tree maintenance are contracted out and some are done by the DPW.

David deCourcy-Bower said what struck him is the contrast between Penbrook Park (very over-grown, informal trail) and Hartbrook West (very nicely maintained) with formal path and openness. That area has been transformed from 15 years ago.

Regarding DPW availability for any further work that the task force identifies, the Village has a set amount of resources. The Village doesn't dedicate all of Public Works just to parks. There are roads, water, sewer and other things.

If a volunteer group contacts us and says they want to take this park on, they will follow the guidelines that are set forth by this task force, and these are the work efforts that they are going to do for the community's benefit. Part of the focus of this task force is to get the word out and have people realize that we have a lot of things in our own backyards where they can make a difference and improve this for the entire community.

There was a question regarding fallen trees in the Bark River. The adjacent property owners are responsible for their downed trees. The DNR does not take care of that.

Where the Village owns property on both sides of the river, they take care of that. North of the Village in the Town of Merton, most of the tree limbs in the river are from that side of the river, but the owners don't go out and clear it.

It was suggested that signs be installed in Penbrook on the informal trail in the woods delineating the Penbrook Park section from private property owners.

The cyclone fences in Hartbrook West on the neighbors back property lines were discussed. It wasn't clear if the Village installed those years ago or if the Village maintains them. Mike Einweck does know that the fences from the North Avenue path are maintained by the Village. Some of the neighbors' trees have limbs that break off and fall into park land or on the fence. One incident was that the limb damaged the fence and the owner did not want to fix the fence. Another property owner has trees that overhang Hartbrook West -- there are some broken limbs that are hazards. Mike Einweck contacted the owner, but she is elderly and doesn't want to remedy the situation. Then the Village has to use their funds and hire a contractor with a crawler to take that limbs down at Village expense.

Mr. deCourcy-Bower suggested that in a future meeting, the task force should discuss how to address the private property affected by bordering the environmental areas and help with their privacy. It was brought up that every owner has their own idea of what they would want. We can't force them to do a certain thing.

Current Conditions:

- It's a highly visible piece of land (with the paved Ice Age Trail). It's high priority because of that.
- It's been cleared and maintained. There are still some challenges and issues.
- It provides scenic views.
- Unique wild flowers are present (but there are still weeds).
- There is an informal trail and access to the Bark River (which is difficult to maintain and could potentially be improved with some steps).
- There are flood plains, which is a concern for maintenance.
- There are clearly defined formal and non-formal private lands.
- Fencing on the west side.
- Some of the property owners are not maintaining the edges of their lots (overgrowth\maintenance concerns.) If you notify the property owner to

remove a hazard at the property line and they don't comply, the Village has the right to go in and remove it.

Opportunities/Actions:

- Better ways to connect the formal park with the informal park. How can we encourage people to go over the bridge when they are using the more formal parts of the park?
- One of the main uses of that pathway are students going to and from Arrowhead.
- Educational opportunities for all of the schools
- It's a smaller size park to have one volunteer group take over maintenance (perhaps incorporate the residents who border the park, if they are interested)
- Perhaps the schools/local residents/local business owners would be interested in volunteering for some park maintaining
- Scavenger hunts via cell phone where you can go from park to park to find different things with awareness and an educational component. Geo-caching was also mentioned.
- More visible signage to connect people who are walking up and down North Avenue. What would make a person want to go into the path at Hartbrook West? There is a standard park sign there now. (Increasing visibility)
- Raise awareness of the amenities in the Village
- Put artwork in the park
- It was suggested to put an info sign at the beginning of the path (i.e. – Did you know that the Village has 14 parks and this park has “a certain kind of tree”. Can you find it?).

In order to develop interest in the park, residents have to realize it's there and realize its benefit.

1. Send a mailer out to the adjacent property owners entitled “What's In My Backyard?” The mailer could mention the different things a property owner could do to help out.
2. Expand on the current trail map by marking distances for jogging or walking
3. Engage local fitness establishments to use the parks (some already do that)
4. We could set up a “Run the Environmental Corridor” Event
5. How to learn about environmental corridors in the Village of Hartland educational material categorized by the different school age groups

Mike Einweck mentioned that the Ice Age Trail put of a sign by the Cottonwood Wayside saying it is completely maintained by volunteers. However, that is not true. Volunteer groups do some work occasionally, but the Village

maintains the wayside. The current Village-owned land is where the corn field is, the stormwater pond, by the pavilion and there is about three or four acres down from the wayside. When you get to the bench that marks Village property. There is private ownership on top of the ridge where the industrial park is, Ice Age land where the marsh is, and then Waukesha County Open Space. There is a group looking at this land to do a controlled burn, which includes the Village area. David deCourcy-Bower decided to defer the decision to concentrate on this area.

It was suggested to discuss the Northwest Park and Centennial Park at the December 1 ECOS meeting.

The task force requested to receive a map of the boundaries for the Northwest Park in advance of the next meeting.

Courtney Marschalek mentioned that she is reading the book "The New Wild" by Fred Pearce. It's about invasive species. It's a fascinating book and it is turning her ideas about invasive species on their head. She recommended that the task force read the book if they are interested. The basic idea is that these invasive species are coming to heal things that have been disturbed and we are jumping the gun trying to manage everything. We need to let nature figure it out. The buckthorn may be doing something useful and we will figure it out in 100 years.

4. Adjourn

Motion (Einweck/Zahorik) to adjourn. Carried (6-0). Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by
Recording Secretary

Lynn Meyer
Deputy Clerk