

Dec. 7 Arboretum Council Meeting

Present: Tom Kroll, Sarah Gainey, Cassie Herbst, Rachel Peterson, Bob Russell, Stephanie O'Keefe, Larry Schwietz, Kari, Bruce Dickau, Terri, Fr. Bruce

Tom welcomed everyone and noted that we had a record 260 RSVPs for the Open House.

Sarah mentioned that she met with the CSB/SJU representatives, who were not present but will be learning what they have to do with the Arboretum. This is the Arboretum's third year having student reps.

Tom discussed the office manager position. We are contemplating making it a full-time, permanent position, shared with the environmental studies department. The ES department is currently using the history department secretary as its office coordinator. The proposal is \$23,000 in office coordinator fellow fund would be matched by environmental studies. Considered a "very realistic proposal."

New Grants

Tom shared that the Arboretum has been awarded several new grants, with thanks to Mary Kroll:

- Supervalu Foundation has awarded \$3600, which will be used for a project with the Boys and Girls Club of St. Cloud.
- Gordon and Margaret Bailey Foundation has awarded \$10,000 for busing (later cut to \$5,000)
- LCCMR has awarded \$337,000. \$200,000 will pass through for Avon Hills conservation easements with MN Land Trust. \$20,000 will be for contracts to review county plans. The rest will be for "our labor" on "outcome-based bookkeeping," ex. for every conference we host we receive \$5,000, for every referral \$30/acre, for every newsletter \$1500. Once all the revenue is in and the office coordinator is full time, may be possible to hire a second Environmental Education fellow.
- The Initiative Foundation has funded the Avon Hills Land Heritage Coordinator position for 3 years

Bob Russell also had a LCCMR grant about MN breeding bird guide, will include Avon Hills.

Land Issues

Bob Russell: Bob and Tom made presentation to Audubon society and Avon Hills is now an important bird area. There will be an awards presentation, possibly around spring birding day (May 10).

The Nature Conservancy – Conservation Action Plan was presented to the Avon Hills Initiative in November. TNC can officially work with AHI, and were able to lobby for the AHI at the LCCMR grant hearing.

CAPx2020: St. Cloud is having "brown-outs," and changes must be made with power lines. There is a proposal for a big power line connecting to Fargo and stretching through the Avon Hills area. There will be an informational meeting December 11 in Clearwater, and all are welcome to attend.

Bridges

We must replace the floating boardwalk. The goal is to use pontoons instead of insulation (which warps and falls apart). This will require approximately \$20,000 funding, but will have a better idea once testing is completed this winter.

The other boardwalk needs repairs, and Life Safety wants some sort of railing. We may just use pontoons on that as well, or there is the (albeit unlikely and expensive) potential of a covered bridge.

The bridge by the chapel will most likely be made of rock.

Encouraging Membership

The idea of “encouraging membership” was raised. Is there a way to say visitors are welcome and it’s not a requirement to become a member, but since you’re here it would be nice of you to pay (following the Collegetown Colors rule of thumb)? Particularly with skiing, as we have no pass requirement?

Syrup Houses

Bill Mock poured concrete for the new floor: start of new education room. The materials were donated or made possible through Abbey funding. The syrup house is health department certified every year.

Burns

Burned the oak savanna and had a buckthorn burn. Also hired Jeff Evander to help control invasive species (\$1500 for the winter).

Deer

Gordon Brown studied the deer enclosure. We will likely do tree protection, \$5,000 from Br. Benedict for this purpose, as is cheaper to do individual fencing vs. enclosures.

Eagles

A pair of bald eagles are nesting in the Arboretum, possibly for the first time in 50 years. The nest is within walking distance. Tom proposes a camera on the nest to be featured on our website. Agree on a price range of \$5,000-7,750 and formed a subcommittee of Tom Kroll, Bob Russell, and Fr. Bruce Wollmering.

Update to Strategic Plan

Larry outlined the plan to hold a meeting to update the strategic plan Feb. 4-5 at the Minnesota Arboretum Offices.

Operational Plan Funding Ideas (separate sheets)

2008 Council Meeting Dates

Feb. 25, 2008

June 9, 2008

October 6, 2008

December 5, 2008