

Conservation Committee Minutes—January 5, 2016 - FINAL

Attendees: John Parker, Cherry Payne, Jim Daniel, Mary Clark, Mark Young, Tom Bredenberg, Jerry Gulseth, Tom Brimacombe, Greg Colello (Board liaison)

1. **Guests:** Eduardo Krasilovsky

2. **November minutes:** The minutes were reviewed. Tom Bredenberg moved to accept, Jerry Gulseth seconded. All approved the minutes.

3. **Best Landscaping Practices Publication:** Eduardo opened by discussing the restoration work done in the Preserve, but noted that he has seen many landscape changes in Eldorado itself, notably stressed trees and changes to flora. He feels it would be important for homeowners to have an idea how to landscape so that plants will survive despite climate change. He understands that some monies were put into the 2016 budget to do some work in Eldorado. This could include identifying microclimates to help people to think about Eldorado's future.

Jerry mentioned the on-going transition between Zone 5 and Zone 6 and on-going changes in climate.

There was some discussion about budget; there is money in the 2016 budget for education of residents on Fire Wise communities and the planting of natives. The Architectural Committee has developed a list of native plants that are recommended for residents to use. There are also the Master Gardeners which Cherry is tapped into. John mentioned the welcome packet that new residents receive that we might amend, if that is an objective. He feels that we could help facilitate awareness without it being a huge workload.

There was some discussion as to what the effort might look like, i.e., education of residents. Jim felt that information put into the welcome packet would be lost, but if we could put something together that would be sent to each resident outside of all the other noise, it might garner some attention.

Eduardo mentioned a book by Carole Tashel, Gardening the Southwest, that might be a good resource. The State Engineer's office also has publications on water conservation and xeriscaping. There are many resources available.

It was suggested that a subcommittee be put together with Eduardo as chair to put together a one-page proposal to develop something. Jerry and Greg were nominated to the team. Eduardo suggested that someone from Master Gardeners would be good to be on the committee. Cherry will see if she can recruit someone. This sub-committee will put together a name for the effort, objectives and a draft budget next month.

Tom Brimacombe suggested that they check with the New Mexico State Engineer, the Soil and Water Conservation District, etc.

4. **Status of Greenbelt work between the Library and the Railtrail:** Jim sent an email to Steve Griego who believes that when the landscaping work for the Senior Center begins, the trail work by the county will commence. Jim asked Steve to keep us informed so that we can make sure that the flags have not been moved around.

5. **Update on PNM Easement:** today we received an email from Brenda about the draft PNM agreement. The Board's attorney has responded requiring some changes due to some inconsistencies within the document. There was a discussion about who corrects the proposed agreement. Jim will amend the text to correct the inconsistencies raised by the attorneys, and send the draft to the committee members.

6. Salt Cedar Remediation on 200 Series Trails: Tom had raised this issue earlier. He met a contractor who does salt cedar remediation who uses a backhoe with a special tip on the end of the backhoe that will uproot the trees. Otherwise, they use garlon which is used for woody shrubs. There are a dozen or so trees of various sizes, some of which are getting pretty big. Tom has found a source for garlon (\$250 for 2.5 gallons). Greg cautioned the committee about the Pesticide/Herbicide policy and suggested that we run this by Brenda first. John suggested that we try to dig out what we can before we move to garlon. This chemical was used in Everglades; Cherry will contact a botanist to find out what the protocol was in the park. Tom Bredenberg suggested that we get a MSDS sheet to see what potential issues might be. We will tentatively do the work on April 9th to initiate the mechanical removal.

7. Cholla in Greenbelts: Several residents have reported that they are not using the Greenbelts because of proliferation of cholla adjacent to trails and pieces of cholla placed in the trails themselves by packrats. Jim suggests that we begin on the Library trail to remove the cholla, using the new tools that were acquired at the end of the year.

John suggested that we develop some sort of trail standard—i.e., remove all cholla within 20' of a trail tread. He also believes that we need to address the cupped trails because that collects the cholla. He suggests that we develop a trail standard based on other land management agencies' standards so that we can defend our approach from people who may be concerned with our activities. He is willing to draft a one-page trail standard for the greenbelt. We may apply that to the Library trail as a test case. Tom Brimacombe notes that the Pilot Project Trail was built to standards with a certain set-back.

8. Report on Development of New Trail Junction Signs for 100 series Trails: New digital files for all the rest of the 100 series trail junctions were completed just before the end of the year. We hope that we can find the funds to produce these signs in 2016..

9. Discussion of Incorrect Greenbelt Access on Monte Alto Way: There is an access point to the greenbelt that incorrectly crosses private property. The property owner has requested that an access trail be constructed in the easement. Greg reports that with the snow, the easement trail can be seen. The correct access is along a gradient and neighbors will grub out a proper trail. They are requesting a load of gravel to be furnished from the committee will install water bars to develop steps. John moved that we ask Mark to install proper green stakes that say Greenbelt Access. The committee will assess the easement in the spring to see what needs to be done, especially if mechanized improvements need to be made. Tom Bredenberg seconded and all were in favor.

10. Report on COLTPAC Meeting: John reports that he is asking to be reappointed as his temporary appointment expired. A full term is 3 years. They will be working on management plans for county lands that are developed by contractors.

The contract for the Rail Trail between Avenida Vista Grande to Avenida Eldorado has been let and work should commence when the weather gets nice.

11. Status of 2016 Budget: The Board approved a budget of \$7650 for the Conservation Committee and added \$2000 for weed control in the Greenbelts. The 2015 budget has been closed out; we spent almost all of our funds, but had a few hundred unexpended.

We had put a camera in the Eldorado preserve. We have gotten photos of deer and coyotes.

13. Annual Report: Cherry drafted an annual report for 2015 and passed it out. She has asked for comments from the committee and we will finalize the report at next month's meeting. It will be due on Feb. 15th.

12. Other Business:

Tom has some projects that he would like to see get done in 2016. He will bring a draft list next month of projects that do not require funding. There was also a discussion about the 401 trail and erosional issues there.

John has spent a lot of time on the pilot trail. Someone has been using a 4-wheeler there.

Mary has not seen any additional 4 wheeler tracks on the 105 trail.

13. Adjournment: John moved we adjourned, Jerry seconded, all unanimously agreed.

Next Meeting: February 2, 2016 at 7:00 pm