

Conservation Committee Minutes

February 2, 2016

Attendees: Cherry Payne, Jim Daniel, Mary Clark, Mark Young, Tom Bredenberg, Rob Egemeier, Jerry Gulseth, Tom Brimacombe, Greg Colello (Board Liaison)

1. **Guests:** Eduardo Krasilovsky, Brenda Leonard, General Manager, ECIA
2. **January Minutes:** The minutes were reviewed. Tom Bredenberg moved to accept,
Jerry seconded. All approved the minutes.
3. **Update of Ad Hoc Committee—Best Landscaping Practices:** Eduardo and Jerry submitted a proposal to create an informational brochure regarding sustainability. Tom Bredenberg suggested that a brochure may not be the best way to go, that other avenues of communication might be more cost effective. There was a discussion about what the product might be; the goal is not to recreate anything, but to cull existing information and synthesize it. Various means of outreach were discussed (Vistas, website, etc.). Eduardo mentioned bringing it to the Architecture Committee for their input. The project is similar to the project that we have put into our 2016 budget to develop Firewise materials with Jan-Willem's help. The Committee suggested that the ad hoc group develop an outline that could be the springboard for the project and we could then loop Jan-Willem into the effort. Thanks to Eduardo, Jerry and Sharon Paris for their good work.
4. **Status of Greenbelt work between the Library and the Railtrail:** Nothing to report at this time.
5. **Update on PNM Easement:** The agreement was completed and sent to Brenda, General Manager. We hope the Board will review and address it soon.
6. **Discussion of Greenbelt trail standards drafted by John:** John was absent from this meeting. Tom Bredenberg noted that a separate SOP would be included along with the trail standards. Jim noted that we should articulate how the trails should be, the process that we go through to achieve that, and to get the Board's approval. It was noted that we need to include Trailheads as a part of the standard. There was a lively discussion about what "maintenance" consists of and whether or not the Pilot Project trail was maintenance or an improvement. Greg talked about the library trail and the benefits of mowing vs. addressing v-cuts and draining issues and suggested that there be two classes of work—mowing vs. trail repair. There was some discussion if we should mow first and then blade, or vice versa. Tom Brimacombe suggested we pick a trail and use it to apply the standards. It was agreed that we use the Library trail to apply the standard.

7. Proposed projects in addition to those we will do with Jan-Willem—Tom

Brimacombe: Tom walks in the Preserve and has identified a few things that we can do in-house with the existing Committee. A small team of people could address many of these:

- Trail 203: Reroute the upper half. (Priority 1).
- Trail 201: There is a large headcut that is creeping toward the trail; a relatively easy fix would be to put deadfall in. (Priority 3).
- Trail 201: Picnic tables—move them to shady spots. (Priority 3).
- Trail 401: The long descent on the northern side is over 30% and has erosion issues. Perhaps a work party could begin to put in some switchbacks to alleviate the problem. (Priority 4).
- Trail 105: Install a connector trail from 105 to 1D; Tom has marked a proposed trail with cairns that would break up the long run of the trail 105 and create a shorter loop. (Priority 2).

Jim suggested that next month we discuss setting a date to start on Priority 1; we could get it flagged beforehand.

8. Discussion of Charter revision: Cherry talked about the changes she made to the Committee's mission statement; essentially, education has been added to the mission statement.

9. Discussion of 2015 Committee Annual Report and Goals for 2016: The report was reviewed and accepted. Cherry will submit it.

10. Discussion of incorrect Greenbelt Access on Monte Alto Way: One stake has been installed. The Committee had talked about installing two. Jim asked if we needed to redefine existing trailheads. Mark noted that in some areas, the trailheads do not need to be defined as there is little usage. There are at least two trailheads that are not correct where the social trails cross private property. The two that we know of should be addressed this year. Mark will install a second stake at Monte Alto Way once the ground thaws. There is also a problem area off of Cuesta Lane.

11. Report on COLTPAC Meeting: John was absent, so there was no report.

12. Status of 2016 Budget expenditures YTD: There is no budget report for this month.

13. Other Business:

a) Greenbelt Maintenance: It has become more and more evident that the greenbelt trails require some attention due to cholla and cholla pieces put into the trail treads by rats, as well as erosional problems from monsoons. Additionally, trailheads need to be marked consistently and clearly. Greg presented a proposal to maintain the greenbelts to a certain year (circa 2000). Most felt the standard is to make trails passable to people and their

pets. The standard might be to construct them so as to be sustainable and to better withstand heavy rains. Brenda noted that the ECIA has the duty and right to restore trails to a certain standard. Rob noted that the language is captured in John Parker's draft trail standard document for the Greenbelts. Brenda suggested that the ECIA maintenance crew might be able to help; however, Cherry stated that the work levels involved are a challenge for the Committee. Tom Bredenberg added that the failure of the Committee on the Pilot Project trail was failure to notify neighbors prior to commencing work. That criterion has been included in the draft trail standards. Jim suggested that we put something out in Vistas that we are developing a plan to maintain the Greenbelts and will begin work over a series of years. Greg suggested that we use the trail near his residence to mow the grass. He and his neighbor will build a stairway into the area. Cherry said that rather than talking about specific projects, it would be more appropriate to develop a standard for Greenbelts that the board can approve prior to beginning specific projects. There was a discussion about training ECIA staff. Greg suggested that if this kind of effort requires staff time, that the Committee may need to identify estimated hours as a part of the budget process.

b)Charter review: We are happy with it as it is. No changes were made.

c)Tom Brimacombe has been pruning the Preserve trails on his hikes.

d)Trail camera: Tom has relocated the camera to an active wildlife area; he has a lot of coyote photos, squirrels and rabbits. There have been some mountain lion tracks in the area and he hopes to get a shot of that.

14.Appointment of minutes keeper for March 1 meeting (Cherry will be absent): Mark graciously volunteered. Tom Bredenberg and Greg will help, also.

15.Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM

Next Meeting: March 1, 7:00 PM