

# Prioritization of Volunteer Activities In Individual Villages and Hamlets

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November 13, 2006

The first blush of enthusiasm after the formation of a Village or Hamlet is likely, in addition to bringing forward extant projects, to see a burst of proposed "supported projects" that Clackamas County Staff will need to deal with. It is altogether fitting and property that the County provide guidelines and require some degree of processing order so that time urgent projects can proceed expediently.

Resources That a Village or Hamlet should consider/prioritize/cultivate in priority order:

## 1. **Volunteer Willingness, motivation, staying power**

Volunteers are probably the scarcest resource for a Village or Hamlet. There will be lots of "ideas" about "things that must be done" but, as the expression goes: "when all is said and done, more is 'said', than 'done'". The cultivation and retention of effective volunteers is an art requiring skills that are not generally held and the county should consider funding training of BOD members in this area.

## 2. **Volunteer Ability/Capability**

As the Texas Board of S/W Licensing noted, people's opinion of their skills and ability often far exceed their actual skills and abilities. It can be very problematic if motivated, enthusiastic volunteers do not have the skills, ability, or insights to structure and move forward a useful, interesting community projects.

The major projects carried forward will likely involve significant financial amounts, require having or the ability to hire and manage skilled project managers, accountants, lawyers, etc. Groups of citizens, especially informal or ad-hoc groups who are unwilling or unable to form 501(c)(3)s and/or form partnerships with fiscal agents, are likely to be a problem as the lack of fiduciary responsibility will lead to possible rash, improper, or inappropriate actions with major problems, possibly raising the risk of litigation.

## 3. **Local resources needed short and long term:** \$, people, venues, events calendar space,..

The accounting needs to span initiation, startup, maintenance, shut down, end-of-life/cleanup, and risk management/insurance. One of the biggest issues that is likely to be encountered is the "horizon effect": not worrying about the cost/commitment of things not yet needing work. Long term maintenance (cleaning the toilets, emptying the trash, repairing the roof) is the bug-a-boo of volunteer projects:

"It is easy to build an outhouse, but who cleans it?" - Kathleen Walker, Forest Service.

## 4. **County Resources**

This is both the lowest priority and should be a negotiation between the Villages/Hamlets and County Staff codified in an MOU. Projects requiring little, if any, resources, should not be held up by projects representing long term commitments, high \$, or high opportunity cost. A partial enumeration of the county resources/considerations that need to be included are:

1. time criticality
2. likelihood of success/actual need (in the case of applying for grants)
3. staff resource needs for initial evaluation
4. staff resource needs for execution: fiscal agency, project management, etc
5. staff resource needs if the volunteers drop the ball: fallback/recovery
6. staff resource needs to "clean up" at the end of the project (scenario analysis): accounting, reports, archiving, PR
7. non-staff county resources: land and \$
8. long term commitment of staff, land, or \$: maintenance, operation, etc
9. opportunity cost

In general, these are issues for the County to manage and but to require a Village or Hamlet proposal to articulate clearly, "crispily", and completely. County staff will need to review and audit the proposal, and to hold the proposal team "accountable" (which is why a legal entity is likely mandatory.)