

Harvey and the City of Auburn's Endurance Capital Committee

By the ECC
November, 2014

In April, 2003, Harvey Roper was one of the group who presented the petition to the Auburn City Council asking the City to adopt the tag line "Auburn, Endurance Capital of the World". Following the well-documented presentation, the Council unanimously approved the petition, and shortly after, the official City of Auburn "Endurance Capital Commission" (ECC) was established. Harvey, in spite of his overflowing plate of other responsibilities, volunteered to become a member on this commission. Eleven years later and right up until his untimely passing, he spent thousands of hours helping the ECC fulfill its mission statement:

Showcase endurance and outdoor sporting activities taking place in and around Auburn.

- Promote Auburn as a destination point for endurance and outdoor activities.
- Promote a healthier lifestyle.
- Strengthen existing events and attracting new events to Auburn
- Assist with the overall economic well being of Auburn.

Harvey had the vision to understand the positive impact the ECC would have on the City, and he was a knowledgeable, and steady motivator. His gentle ways, his adherence to principles, diplomacy, patience, sense of humor, generosity, and uncanny ability to foresee what would work for the good of all and then make it happen were the qualities we were blessed to see at work.

Harvey was a steady presence and contributor to the ECC - be it with his wisdom or with his labor - everything from public relations to manual labor to videography skills, to innovative ideas. Below are two sterling examples of how Harvey was able to positively impact us all - the ECC, the City's citizens, and all those who visit our beautiful community:

1) As a downtown business representative, Harvey was a member of the contentious Streetscape Committee, organized to help oversee the Old Town to Downtown redevelopment project. This committee was formed in part as a result of an ungrounded fear that the Endurance Capital Commission was going to turn the entire Central Square portion of the project into a tribute to the "Endurance Capital." Harvey was able to clarify to the Streetscape Committee the ECC's true position, which was simply to have a presence somewhere in the new design to honor the role of endurance sports in the history and economic development of Auburn. He suggested that a small portion of Central Square be designated as the Endurance Zone, and he was able to convince the SHAAC that this was a fair proposal. The Streetscape Committee adopted this proposal, and the rest is history. Now outdoor enthusiasts from all over the world make a pilgrimage to Central Square's brick pillar and its surrounding pavers to learn, take photos, and enjoy this "only in Auburn" display. Harvey - we couldn't have done it without you!

2) Every year a City Commission submits a work plan and budget to the City Council. The ECC's 2013-2014 Work plan included creating an Auburn State Recreation Area Safety and Trail Usage proposal, which would be submitted to State Parks to help them with their newly revised General Plan. This proposal would address the increasing numbers of people using the ASRA, the ensuing congestion, and find some consensus among the user groups about solutions to make the park safer and user-group friendly for all. The ECC's work plan was approved, and now the ECC had to map the steps needed to complete the ASRA Safety and Trail Usage goal. Harvey guided us in the direction of having user group meetings attended by equestrians, cyclists, pedestrian users (runners, hikers, etc.), and rangers. These groups would be asked to offer ideas. The first two meetings were attended by more than 50 people each and the ECC collected the ideas presented, The ECC realized that this large group was not a manageable force, so it appointed a subcommittee of 2 representatives each. The subcommittee met numerous times, and Harvey joined them many times as the ECC observer. His final act for the ECC was to compile the comprehensive maps with the best ideas for trail usage and construction, which he submitted just before leaving for that final elk hunting trip. These were just the piece needed for the report - achieved after more than two years of collaborative discussions, that the ECC subsequently submitted to State Parks. It is truly a part of Harvey's legacy that he worked up to the end on a plan that would help to improve Auburn's beautiful "back yard" for the good of all.

The ECC was closely involved with the City of Auburn in their creation of a Central Square commemorative tile for Harvey, following his sudden and premature passing. Since his efforts for the City extended to the entire City in so many ways, his tile is placed in a prominent location near the Western States Trail pedestal.

We will forever carry with us the suggestion offered by his wife Brenda at his Celebration of Life: "When confronted by life's quandaries, ask, 'What would Harvey do?' and you will find the answer."