

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2016

(Corrected as per May 11, 2016 meeting)

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:32 in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act at the Jack C. Sheppard Sr. Community Center.

<u>ROLL CALL</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Scott Barnes (Chair. / Planning Bd. Rep.)	X	
Sharon Ceravolo	X	
Maria Ceravolo	X	
Bob Bevilacqua	X	
Rich Dilks (Sec.)	X	
Dave Kreck (V. Chair.)		X
Julie Ream	X	

Associate Members Present: none.

Public Guests Present: Pat Duncan.

Minutes of the March 9 meeting were approved. (Motion: Bevilacqua, Second: Ream AIF)

Chairman's Report: Scott Barnes.

Review

Homeowner at 413 S. Marion. Rich and Sharon had previously visited the site and spoken with the homeowner and Bob had done so as well. The commission decided that the homeowner could be told he has permission to remove fallen trees and limbs in the conservation area directly behind his home but the WEC would be able to take on that task itself.

Homeowner at 2 W. Cedar. Rich reported that after we had Wenonah Police deliver a notice to the homeowner to clear the trail blockage and verify whose property the tree had been on or face a formal complaint, he met with Bob and Rich and then had the trail cleared the next day. He failed to provide any information on where his property line was and said he was unsure. The issue of whether the felled tree was on his property or conservation land remains unresolved. Bob suggested we hire a surveyor ourselves then request reimbursement as a part of a filed complaint. Pat Duncan said that in a complaint we file the burden of proof would be on the WEC. Sharon urged the WEC to consult with the borough solicitor before taking any action. Scott said the appropriate channel would be to contact the council member who oversees the WEC, Carl Houseman, as a first step. Scott said he would do so.

Homeowner at 10 S. Garfield. Rich had spoken with the homeowner and viewed the large tree that fell from the edge of the conservation area into the yard. The cleanup would require a tree service for the larger parts of the tree.

The commission feels there needs to be a consistent policy developed by the borough and the WEC for when trees or limbs fall from public land onto private property. Further the WEC feels it is beyond our function to do cleanups in these occasions. Rich noted that Dave in an email had stated the borough position that where no damage occurs when a tree falls from the clear space, its cleanup is the resident's responsibility. Rich feels that the conservation area trees may be an analogous situation. Sharon suggested we ask permission for our trail map and guidelines for homeowners be posted in the borough kiosk and made known generally. It was also agreed we should attend a council meeting to make these concerns known to mayor and council.

Plantings on Maple St on April 6. Rich reported that Gary Obenbrett had received 10 native shrubs donated by Platt's Nursery for planting at the Break Back Run Trail entrance on Maple Street. Gary organized a work party on 4/6 with Rich (WEC), Maria (WEC/STC) and Larry Bacon (STC). The borough dug the larger holes and once the shrubs were planted, Gary brought a portable water tank to water them and had the borough deliver two loads of mulch. The shrubs planted were 4 serviceberry, 2 sweet pepperbush, 2 witch hazel and 2 not clearly identified.

Near-Term Projects

Beaver Activity.

Eldridge Trail. The dam under the first bridge is holding back considerable water and the upstream lowlands are now a shallow pond. The trail has not been effected. No action is contemplated here.

Monongahela Loop Trail. The beaver flume installed on 3/19 is too high in the dam to lower water levels to the point the trail would be walkable. It needs to be lowered into the dam. Bob will also procure the wood for a second beaver flume for the smaller dam at that site. It was also suggested that rerouting the trail closer to side of the ravine was an alternative.

Wenonah Lake. Rich noted little new beaver activity. The trail is not presently effected. Rich said wiring additional large tree may be advisable.

Trail Maintenance

Comey's Lake/tea house. Bob reported he cleared the trail behind the tea house but stepping stones are needed to cross Camels Back Run since the stream has widened there. Julie noted new graffiti has appeared at the tea house. The tea house appear to currently be a hang out spot and the trash problem has increased.

Eldridge Trail. No problems.

Indian Trail. Bob reported he cleared the fallen tree and the trail is passable.

Monongahela Brook Trail One of the boards on the bog walk is loose.

Mantua Creek Trail. A section of bulkhead at Clay Hill needs repair. Bob noted he and Rich looked at creating an access trail from near the borough mulch yard on S. Garfield to MCT as a route for getting stone to the proposed extension of the trail rails there. A large fallen tree would need to be removed and a sturdier foot bridge built to accommodate the weight of the stone. Bob is storing some rails for the project there. Julie suggested getting the scouts involved would be helpful. This will be a long term project and require time and labor to accomplish.

Wenonah Lake. Bob reported that Ken and Brian of borough Public Works have moved and reset the Frank Eggert memorial plaque.

Camel's Back Loop Trail. Maria reported the small bridge nearest Glassboro Rd. has collapsed. Maria plans to retrieve some long planks near the stream and make a low boardwalk on the soggy northern section of the trail and look into replacing the foot bridge. She also suggested we could plant some native wetland wildflowers in the marshy area of the former pond bottom.

Trail Sign/Kiosk Project

Julie reported the materials for the kiosk have been purchased. Rich had forwarded \$600 from the FWT account to Gateway for the purchase. It was decided we would try to set a project completion date for the sometime in the week before Memorial Day. Dave had earlier said the borough would provide a flatbed to haul the completed kiosk to the Wenonah Lake site and a backhoe to install it. The WEC would be responsible for digging the two post holes. It was agreed that once set the post should be anchored in cement.

Julie also presented an oversize trail guide/map, printed by Dave Coates. She reported Rebecca Kreck has agreed to do the new lettering on the map to replace the pixelated text in the old file. It was also agreed we need an identifying title to be placed on the wood above the kiosk window. The approved title was "Wenonah Conservation Area" and the logo. Scott said he believed the Woman's Club will fully fund the kiosk and advised us that the Woman's Club wishes it

prominently stated on the kiosk that it was funded by them. A plaque on the wooden side of the kiosk or in the window with text such as "Funded by the Woman's Club of Wenonah and constructed by the students of Gateway Regional H.S." was suggested. Scott said the project for the smaller metal signs will be addressed later. He hopes the Woman's Club will also fund these but would need to confirm. Julie said Dave Coates could also assist with the metal signs.

Other Items

Scott said he would check with Dave Kreck about the purchase of any hand tools by the WEC.

Maria suggested the idea of WEC t-shirts for work parties as a way of identifying ourselves to the public.

Scott remarked the WEC recently received info on free trees from the state as a part of the Sandy tree replacement program. Since the trees we received the last time we participated were small bare root seedling with a low survival rate, the WEC agreed it was more productive to plant fewer but larger trees, when needed.

Bob reported he has a cedar post and plans to replace a trail post that had been destroyed.

Sharon brought up the possibility of the WEC applying for a community forest management grant. It could be used to remove some downed and uprooted trees in area that have been severely impacted. A watershed grant might also be possible for improvements like the bulkheads at Clay Hill. Maria noted the STC has used the community forest grants. There is significant record keeping involved and matching can be in kind with volunteer labor. It was also noted that grant writing can be an involved process.

Princeton Hydro-Dilks Pond & Comey's Lake

Rich reported that after the WEC approved contracting with Princeton Hydro for duckweed/algae control at Dilks Pond and Comey's Lake at our March meeting, he signed the contracts and forwarded the \$150 fee for the DEP permit. Rich said the first of three installment invoices have been received and forwarded to the borough for payment. Dilks Pond \$587.40, Comey's Lake \$988.35.

Bird Quest. Rich reported that he is again forming a WEC team for Bird Quest on May 7. Scott has sent an email to all WEC supporters encouraging participation and Rich has placed flyers in the borough hall, library, post office and Wenonah School. The team will bird at Tall Pines and in the conservation area.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account.

Expenses

\$150 to NJDEP for permit.
\$600. to Matt Emmett (Gateway) for kiosk materials
\$100 to Luke Berenato (Gateway student on kiosk project)

\$850 total expenditures

Deposits.

none

Current balance: \$9,087.08

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:08 PM. (Motion: Ream, Second: Bevilacqua AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.