

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2016

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:31 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 (V. Chair) | X | |
| Rich Dilks (Sec.) | X | |
| Dave Kreck | X | |
| Julie Ream | X | |

Associate Members Present: Dave Coates.

Public Guests Present: none.

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

Dave Coates was officially designated a WEC Associate Member.

Reorganization. WEC officers for the year were chosen. Scott stated he was willing to again serve as chairman and Planning Board representative. Rich agreed to continue to serve as secretary. Bob will step down as vice chairman and Dave will fill that office.

(Motion: Bevilacqua, second, M. Ceravolo, AIF.)

Scott confirmed our meeting times and locations as the second Wed. of the month at 7:30 P.M. at the Community Center, with exceptions for June (location Wenonah Lake) and Sept. (location the tea house and time 6:30 P.M.). It was also noted that Maria, Dave and Sharon need to have the oath of office administered, which can be done by the municipal clerk, Karen Sweeney.

(Motion: Barnes, second, Bevilacqua, AIF.)

Chairman's Report: Scott Barnes.

Review.

Maple Street work party Dec. 20. Rich and Bob reported that the work party was a joint effort with volunteers from the Shade Tree Commission and the borough chipper was also made available and maned by borough employees as volunteers. Much debris, fallen limbs and invasive vines were removed from the Break Back Run trail head area. Several unwanted trees were taken out as well. Gary Odenbrett suggested that it would be a nice project for the WEC & STC do plantings of native shrubs at the site. He noted the Wenonah sign there is also deteriorating. Gary said he would approach the Women's Club for possible funding. At Gary's request, Rich sent him a list of possible native shrubs for the project. The WEC also gave tips to the borough employees for donating their time to work the chipper for us. Bob noted there is still some debris further west on Maple St. that we could clear in a future work party.

Moonlight Hike Dec. 26. Scott reported the hike was a success, despite conflicting with an Eagles game, and drew eight people and two dogs. The hike began at the Glen Trail and ended at Dave's house for light refreshments. There was no moon visible due to the cloud cover.

Near Term Projects

Beaver Activity.

Eldridge Trail high bridge. A small dam at the bridge has slightly raised the water level but has not caused any flooding or trail problems.

Monongahela Loop Trail. A large dam about half way between the Eldridge Trail second bridge and Rt. 553 has created a large shallow pond and flooded a section of the "lower" Monongahela Loop Trail. Maria noted that some persons have been trying to pull the dam apart and the beavers keep repairing it. She was speaking to local resident, Jason Tongo, about this and has invited him to a WEC meeting. The WEC will discourage individuals trying to tear out the dam. Bob said he ran into Sarah Sommerville recently and said that Sarah believes the dams are the work of a family of beavers, not an individual. Bob also said he know a USF&W person who he would like to have see our dams and suggest appropriate action. One possibility is a flume that can be installed in the dam to control water levels. Bob hope to set up a meeting with the USF&W person and the WEC in the next few weeks.

Wenonah Lake. A beaver has built a small dam on the stream just north of the lake but has not caused any flooding or trail problems. The beaver has, however, been ringing an killing large Am. beech and black gum trees near the lake shore. The WEC plans to paint the trunks some trees the in the spring to protect them from beaver gnawing.

Trail Mantainance.

East Cherry St. entrance. The trail entrance (on private property) remains blocked by fallen trees. The homeowner has posted a no trespassing sign there. Although there is a possibility we can reroute the trail there at some point, it is now considered closed and will not be shown on our revised trail map.

Indian Trail. Bob noted a large fallen oak that he has only been able to partially cut so far.

Mantua Creek Trail. Bob reported he cut two large downed trees crossing the trail near the railroad embankment.

Break Back Run Trail. Sharon noted a small bridge near the Maple St. trail head is clogged and overflows. Bob noted the bridge is in poor shape and is working to repair it. He has planks there and needs to install them. Dave has also requested planks for us to be sawed from the tulip trees that fell on conservation land behind Pine St and are being sawed by a neighbor.

Wenonah Lake Loop. Bob sawed the sweet bay magnolia that was blocking a footbridge on the lake's west shore.

Additional items. Maria noted that along Mantua Creek near the Island, a "beer bottle wind chime" has been strung in the trees and that a fort with a tarp and a car part are now found in that area. Maria also noted there is a deer stand on the unofficial trail along the creek to Maple Ridge. Hunting in that area would be a concern if the trail is ever approved. Maria also said the signs at Dilks Pond and Wenonah lake (Joe Berg eagle project) are in need of repair. Rich has the file for the signage. In addition, Maria said the portion of Monongahela Brook Trail west of Marion Ave. has a wash outs and a wet muddy spots and thick leaves. The trail could be improved there with trail rails and fill stone.

Trail Sign Project.

Julie reported that she, Maria and Rich met on 12/20 to identify revisions to the trail map. Julie now plans to meet with Matt Emmett from Gateway to update the map with the revisions. Julie reported the maximum width of the map will be 24". It can be any length, depending on the final shape of the map. Julie said Matt is confident the project can be completed before the end of the school year. Julie will now look to get a completed drawing and cost estimates. The WEC agreed the plexiglas on the kiosk will be secured by screws, not a lock, to discourage tampering.

Scott noted there was nothing to report from the Planning Board. Sharon inquired whether the date of the 3/19/16 spring work party could be changed since she and Maria would be unavailable. Scott felt that was impractical since the date is published on the town calendar and elsewhere well in advance.

Maria reported on Shade Tree Commission activities. She announced that if someone is looking for a shade tree to be planted, the STC is willing to provide one. She also noted the STC is conducting the iTree survey. The STC has had to remove 75 trees this year that need to be replaced. Maria also noted the borough is applying for its 20th year as a Tree City USA and suggested that might be a 4th of July celebration theme. Maria also reported that several people have reported seeing coyotes in the Lenape Trail area of Wenonah.

Dave reported that he will speak to the borough about our kiosk project at Wenonah Lake. He also said the new well at Dilks Pond is soon going to bid and drilling will begin this spring.

Maple Ridge. Rich reported there was a meeting on 12/15 of the County, Mantua Twp. the SJLWT & the Friends on Maple Ridge. The County has put in place a three phase plan to get the park ready for the opening ceremonies this spring. Very high on the list is barring vehicles from the park with barriers. Rich reported that beginning in Feb. the Friends will sponsor monthly park cleanups with other nonprofits. Rich suggested the WEC could participate in one of these.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account.

Expenses

\$200.00 tips to borough employees for helping with the Maple St. clean up.

Deposits.

Donations \$300.00

Clean Comm. \$213.48

Trail guide sales 24.00

Current balance: \$10,031.08

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:37 PM. (Motion: Bevilacqua, Second:Kreck AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Rich Dilks, Sec.