

# WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes  
February 10, 2016

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:34 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, John Mullens.

**Public Guests Present:** none.

Minutes of the January 13 meeting were approved. (Motion: S. Ceravolo, Second: Ream AIF)

## **Chairman's Report: Scott Barnes.**

### **Review.**

**Five Mile Hike.** Scott reported a successful hike. We had 17 participants and one dog (Dave Coats'). The trails were largely snow covered which provided a bit of a challenge on some trails. A highlight was a side trip up the Monongahela Loop Trail to view the beaver dam. The hike ended at the tea house with light refreshments.

### **Near Term Projects**

#### **Beaver Activity.**

**Monongahela Loop Trail.** Rich reported that he and Bob met with John Piccolo of the USF&WS on Monongahela Loop Trail this afternoon. John is very knowledgeable about beaver behavior. John believed only a single adult is currently at this location and likely has a den under the stream bank. John noted beaver slides on the bank and the numerous felled or gnawed trees, especially near the foot bridge. John recommended we install a beaver flume, an elongated wooden box with openings at both ends, to control the water level behind the dam and prevent flooding of the trail. Further, John will put us in touch with a saw mill for the wood. The mill owner may be willing to construct the flume for us. Bob suggested installing the flume might be done as part of the Spring Work Party on March 19. It was noted that the lower section of the loop trail is not currently flooded and could be made walkable by the addition of some boards at muddy spots. The WEC will ask Tricia Duer for permission to access the area through her property for the work party.

**Wenonah Lake.** John Piccolo suggested we could wrap chicken wire around the base of trees at the lake to prevent them being gnawed or killed by the beaver. This would be less visible and less permanent than painting the trunks.

#### **Trail Maintenance.**

**Indian Trail.** Bob noted he has partially cut a large fallen oak and needs to finish. Julie said the trail has been re-routed around another large fallen tree.

**Mantua Creek Trail.** Dave reported by email that there is a flooding problem on MCT in low lying sections near the creek. He believed the loss of several large trees in the area during the

June the storm may be contributing to the problem. Bob suggested the installation of a low boardwalk at that location could be done.

**Break Back Run Trail.** Bob reported he has dropped off a 6x6 board at the small bridge near the Maple St. trail head. He still needs to install it to raise the level of the bridge. Sharon suggested we can also easily dig some of the mud and debris out of the stream to improve water flow.

**Wenonah Lake .** Scott noted the short trail that goes from Maple St., behind the Public Works yard to the Lake Loop and Eggert Trails is blocked by a large fallen tree and overgrown brush. Bob advocated clearing rather than abandoning this trail. The WEC agreed that getting the trail open again would be desirable.

**Shade Tree proposal to share tree removal cost.** Rich noted that Gary Odenbrett of the STC has asked if the WEC would be willing to help fund the removal of several trees along S. Marion, three of which are on the border of conservation land at the Monongahela Brook Trail street crossing. The total cost for all trees is \$900. Rich had already informed Gary that the WEC 2015 budget has been spent and that we have not yet received word our 2016 budget has been approved. Members raised additional concerns that although we gave the STC permission to remove the trees, doing so was not a priority for us. Further, it was noted, using our funds to remove these trees could set an unwelcomed precedent when property owners request the WEC remove standing trees in the conservation area near their property. All such requests are currently forwarded to the Borough. Finally, it was suggested. taking on this task could involve us in liability issues, particularly if we choose to honor some tree removal requests and not others. For these reasons, the WEC decided not to assist the STC with this cost. Rich will inform Gary of our position.

### **Trail Sign Project.**

Scott reported he has updated Jenny McQuade of the Women's Club of our progress. Julie reported the trail sign committee had met in Dec. and Feb. to update the trail map and the text on the guide. She noted there were still some changes that need to be done. Some of the changes done were the removal of the green squares in the areas of the Wenonah Swim Club, removal of the E. Cherry St. access trail and removal of the pond at the former Synnott's Pond Trail. The W. Cherry St. access trail will also be removed as there is no real public access there. Julie brought a paper mockup of the kiosk window showing dimensions and how the map and other materials could be displayed. Once the editing is complete the map will be transferred from Photoshop to Illustrator.

Maria noted she has used the NJ Trails website for data for a GPS trail map. Julie suggested that could be made available on our web site when completed.

Julie will send out to all the WEC members for comments the revised text for the trail guide. The question arose whether all the text in the guide should also be on the kiosk map. Scott felt it might be too much verbiage for that context. The issue was not decided and the WEC will look at a more complete version before doing so. It was noted the new trail descriptions and history might be posed in some form on the web site.

Julie also brought a diagram of the proposed kiosk design and dimensions. The design met with the approval of the WEC and Julie will forward it to Matt Emmett at Gateway to get an estimate of the cost of materials.

Julie pointed out we should change the name of the Synnott's Pond Trail since the pond no longer exists. She suggested Camelback Loop Trail. The WEC agreed to the change (Motion: M. Ceravolo, Second: Bevilacqua AIF)

Bob recalled working on the original trail guide 17 years ago with the late Wenonah historian Milton Webb. In an age before much of the technology used today, it was a remarkably successful effort and the basis for the revisions we are incorporating now.

**Newsletter.** Scott announced the borough newsletter deadline is 2/16. He will submit mention of the 3/19 Spring Work Party and the beaver dam, requesting residents not disturb it.

**Tool purchase.** Scott noted hand pull saws would be a good investment. Sharon also suggested pole loppers for high branches.

**Bird Quest.** Rich reported the Gloucester County nature Club has requested the WEC again become a BQ cosponsor at the \$100 level. The WEC agreed to do so.

(Motion: Dilks, Second: Ream AIF)

**Additional Items.**

Bob reported a resident on S. Marion requested we remove downed trees and limbs in the conservation area near his property. Maria responded the area now is good wildlife habitat. The WEC declined to take on removing the tree and limbs.

Scott noted the Women's Club will hold a wine & cheese event on March 19 and also that there was no reportable activity from the Planning Board.

Maria informed us the theme for the 2016 4<sup>th</sup> of July will be the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Park Service.

**Maple Ridge.** Rich reported the County has put in place a three phase plan to get the park ready for the opening ceremonies this spring. Rich reported that beginning in Feb. the Friends will sponsor monthly park cleanups with other nonprofits. Rich invited the WEC to participate in one of these.

**Friends of Wenonah Trails Account.**

**Expenses**

none

**Deposits.**

Trail guide sales        \$6.00

Current balance: \$10,037.08

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:00 PM. (Motion: S. Ceravolo, Second:Bevilacqua AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Rich Dilks, Sec.