

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
November 9, 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	X	
Rich Dilks (Sec.)	X	
Dave Kreck (V. Chair.)		X
Julie Ream	X	

Associate Members Present: Chuck Forsman.

Public Guests Present: Laurie Forsman.

The minutes of the Oct 12 meeting were approved: (Motion: Bevilacqua, Second: Ream, AIF)

Chairman's Report: Scott Barnes.

Review

Wenonah Fall Festival 10/22. Scott reported we had a successful information table despite some morning drizzle. Scott, Dave and Rich manned the table and promoted the Friends of Tall Pines and the M.H. Tree Party in addition to the WEC.

Mad Hatter's Tree Party 10/23. Scott reported a successful event with about 120 people participating. The installation of the paver stepping stones on the Eldridge Trail worked well and made the flooded low section of the trail passable. Dave Coates took photos at the event. Julie's beaver photo board was very helpful at the beaver station by the bridge dam.

JIF hazard inspection of the tea house and amphitheater. Karen Sweeney informed the WEC the JIF inspection had concerns with the amphitheater citing holes in the concrete and uneven and crumbling surfaces. The report also erroneously stated the only trail access to the tea house was through the amphitheater. Scott, Bob & Rich met at the site and decided to recommend three things be done. 1. A sign indicting the actual trail to the tea house, which does not cross the amphitheater; 2. A sign at the place where people cut across the amphitheater that would warn of uneven surfaces and would provide some historical information on the tea house and amphitheater; 3. A section of rail fence could be installed at that point. Bob said he could install the rail fence. Rich talked to Karen who agreed, on behalf of the Borough, to our suggestions.

Fall Work Party 11/5. Several independent projects were undertaken during the work party. A main focus was the amphitheater where the holes mentioned in the JIF report were filled with crushed stone. A large section of the amphitheater long under dirt and vegetation was excavated. Some over growth of vegetation and wisteria in the area was also removed. In other projects, Sharon painted the new surface on the bog walk, Dave worked on the W. Cherry St. access trail and Maria and Dan Ceravolo installed a low raised boardwalk over a muddy section of the Wenonah Lake trail. Julie noted the last minute changes for the work party plans were a little confusing.

Near-Term Projects

Mantua Creek Trail Improvements. Discussions focused on the 150 ft. muddy section and how to fix this: wooden walkway or stone path. Scott said he liked the current trail rails with crushed

stone on the adjoining section of trail and would like to see that extended. Rich suggested a low raised boardwalk, similar to what was installed at Wenonah Lake as a possible alternative that would be easier to construct than the trail rails with stone. It was agreed that scout Jack Costantino, who has offered to take on this project, should be involved with any decisions we would make about trail design and materials. Julie said we need cost estimates for both suggestions and said Maria could provide those for the wooden boardwalk. The amount of lumber for a wide trail of this length could be expensive. Bob said the MCT section needs to be as wide as the current stone path, whichever design we use.

Lions Club Donation Project. An observation platform on MCT was suggested at the last meeting. Bob cautioned that it could become a “hangout/party” place. Chuck noted that new structures likely would need approvals and permits, as opposed to a restoration project. It was agreed we need to formally meet with the Lions to settle on a project, the trail improvements, an observation deck or some other improvement. Scott noted he invited members of the Lions Club to tonight’s meeting but they were unable to attend. We will attempt again to have them attend a meeting in the near future.

Kiosk Plaques. Julie noted creating the plaques was in progress.

Beaver Signage. Julie presented a prototype of the beaver sign- Leave It to the Beavers- with photos, beaver info and the appropriate Borough code. She said the wording may be a bit too much and may need to be reduced. The sign has a keystone graphic to highlight the beaver as a keystone species. Julie also showed a photo of a sign post- a rigid post shelter design. It is relatively inexpensive and if we used it not just for the beaver sign but for our trail map signs and other signs in the conservation area, it would provide a uniform look for conservation area signage. She said they cost \$50 for one, 5 for \$44.50 each and 10 for \$35.50 each. Julie will also contact Gateway about our signs and get a cost estimate.

Clean Communities 11/12. Scott said we plan to participate. It will largely consist of leaf raking in the park. He will send out an email.

Sustainable Jersey Proposal. Scott said former WEC member, Bill Klaus, has suggested we try again to get certification and could work with several Gateway students as volunteers. Scott had the brochure that explained the application process. He said it was a complex point based system. One requirement was an official ERI, which could cost \$12,000+. Also other aspects of the application would require other actions and assistance from the Borough in areas outside of our jurisdiction. Scott said the program is really geared for larger communities with staff to commit to this. It would require at least one and more likely several people to commit to doing this project. It was decided that we really don’t have the resources to accomplish this.

Conserve Wildlife Grant opportunity. The grant from DEP would offer \$1,000 to \$3,500 to awardees. The filing deadline is 12/15/16. Rich noted that eligibility is limited to 501c3 or 501c4 organizations, so our eligibility is doubtful.

Trail Conditions Survey. Scott noted a survey was done a couple of years ago with various sections of trail assigned to various WEC members. He said Maria has offered to coordinate a new up to date trail survey. It was decided to defer this until Maria is available for inclusion in the discussion.

Long-Term Projects

Comey’s Lake land transfer/easement. Scott noted this issue is now on hold with the current owners apparently putting the property up for sale.

Bob noted today was his birthday. Happy Birthday, Bob!

Scott noted the Planning Board is involved in updating the Borough’s master plan. He said Dave hopes to include a goal of extending out trail system to Tall Pines Preserve in the plan.

Rich gave a brief report on the evening Drum Circle at Wenonah Lake held by the nature club on 11/6. It included drumming and storytelling and drew about 50 participants.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account.

No expenses:

Deposits: Trail Guide sales \$91.00

Current balance: \$\$8,755.10

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:46 PM. (Motion: Bevilacqua, Second: Ream, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.