

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

February 8, 2017

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 Member Present: Chuck Forsman, John Mullens

Public Guests Present: Laurie Fosman

The minutes of the Jan. 11 meeting were approved as amended: (Motion: Bevilacqua, Second: Ream, AIF)

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Review

The 5 mile hike Jan.28. Scott noted this was a very successful event. We had approximately 50 participants, one of the largest turnouts in recent years.

Near Term Projects

Moonlight Hike- is scheduled for Sat. Feb. 11 at 8PM. The walk will be on the Wenonah Lake Loop Trail. The forecast is for cloudy skies. Rich will provide light refreshments at the end of the walk.

Jack Costantino's Eagle Scout Project on Mantua Creek Trail. Scott said he has sent the sponsor letter to the scout council. Dave informed the commission by email that Jack Costantino's scout council denied the application due to concerns about environmental impacts. Dave said he has researched DEP GIS mapping and confirmed that we are not in wetlands but are in a tidal flood hazard area. He said a permit by rule #22 should suffice. This does not require a submission to DEP. We just have to ensure that we comply with the conditions of the Permit by Rule. Dave said that as a PE, he will prepare a letter for scout council explaining this.

Dave also said the Public Works is going to drop a pile of dirt in his yard on Friday so he can backfill the new bridge and holes on MCT.

Dave further mentioned he is still trying to find a suitable location to store our tools so everyone can get access at any time. Public Works has a spot for us but it will be locked on nights and weekends

Sustainable Jersey. There is nothing new to report since the Jan. meeting.

Beaver Activity.

To Reschedule Visit from Veronica Van Hof of Unexpected Wildlife Refuge. The scheduled visit to our beaver area on Sun. Feb. 5 was canceled when Veronica became ill. Julie will suggest some dates for a rescheduled meeting. Maria noted John Forren is a certified wildlife

biologist and that he would be interested in attending. Sharon noted that previously Veronica had advised her and Julie that we should cage the beaver flume entrance to assure a good flow.

Lions Project. Bob said he wanted to meet with Mike Sheehan and Dave at the site to confirm the proposed walkway's correct height and design. Maria said the Lions plan to purchase all the materials for the project themselves. Concerning the Stewart Estate rules for a memorial plaque for Frank Magin, Sharon said that she checked with Karen Sweeney but was unable to find any useful information. Chuck said it was his understanding that private memorials in the conservation area were contrary to Stewart Estate guidelines and detract from the naturalness of the area. It was suggested that the memorial could be routed into the wood of a bridge plank, rather than on a sign or plaque. It was noted that the memorial could be put on the far bridge that is on private property (Coleman property). Maria suggested we have the Lions draft the text for the memorial.

Julie noted she has wrapped quite a few additional trees with wire and has additional wire in reserve. She is submitting the purchase receipt to the Borough for reimbursement. Julie also noted there is no change in the status of the Monongahela Loop Trail area.

Trail Survey Project. Maria reported on her trail survey project. She and Dan are identifying and numbering all the bridges and structures on the trails. We can then check and track the condition of the bridges and prioritize repairs or replacements. Scott noted there is a 2006 spreadsheet of then existing bridges and structures. He will get a copy to Maria. Scott also suggested we include the dates of any new trail infrastructures.

Trail Maintenance

Sharon noted she found very little trash on the trails recently and believes hikers are policing them. She also noted there is some trail rail erosion on the southern portions of Break Back Run Trail and that she had wedged some wood to lift and stabilize some boards on that trail.

Julie noted that thick layers of leaves collect on the trail section east of the bog walk. These obscure the small boards placed at muddy spots there. Raking some of the leaves away and using longer boards there would improve that section.

John Mullens reported the boardwalk on the island has needed some adjustments. He is using metal sign posts to anchor the boards and reported they are working very well.

Bob noted he has the materials for repairing the washed out section of the bulkhead at Clay Hill. He said he hopes he and Dave can complete repairs by the next meeting. Bob also said he could work with Rich to replace the Frank Eggert Trail sign. He asked Rich to email him the length of the metal sign post needed. Rich has a replacement sign.

Borough Newsletter. Scott said the article for the Borough newsletter is coming due. He said he will mention the spring work party, the Lion's Project and the MCT eagle scout project (if it receives approval from the scout council). He will also include an account and photo of the 5 mile hike.

Julie said she has reached out to Joshua Hazelton about the beavers and our activities. She reported he is a fan of the beavers and is fine with us wiring the trees. His only concern was whether trees felled by the beaver could fall on his house. Julie thought that very unlikely. Joshua also said he welcomes hikers using his access trail and has installed additional lighting.

Scott reported there was no Planning Board activity. He also mentioned he viewed a website where an official speculated the gas tax increase could be a new source of funding for the light rail project.

Minnow Collecting. John Mullens said he has seen people park near his property and go down to Mantua Creek and collect large numbers of minnows in traps. He inquired whether this was legal. The Commission concluded this would not be an instance of recreational fishing, may alter the ecosystem and would be a violation of Borough Code. It was suggested that should this sort of activity be observed, one should notify the police.

Bird Quest. Rich reported the Gloucester County Nature Club has requested we again sponsor Bird Quest with a \$100 donation. Rich also said he plans to organize a WEC Bird Quest team again this year. The Commission agreed to donate \$100 to Bird Quest.

(Motion: Dilks, Second: Bevilacqua, AIF)

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account.

Expenses:none

Deposits: \$48.00 trail guide sales

Current balance: \$9,182.14

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:26 PM. (Motion: Bevilacqua, Second: S. Ceravolo, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.