

# WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes  
April 12, 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

**Public Guests Present:** Jenny McQuaide, Laurie Forsman

The minutes of the March 8 meeting were approved as amended: (Motion: Kreck, Second: Bevilacqua, AIF)

## **Public Guest**

**Wenonah Woman's Club proposal.** Jennie McQuaide of the Wenonah Woman's Club addressed the Commission stating the club is seeking a partnership with 3 additional civic organizations to replace 4 old and dilapidated benches on Mantua Ave. (2 at Monroe Ave., 1 at Jefferson Ave. and one at Lincoln Ave.). Each of the organization will fund a bench and the organization's name will be engraved on the bench. In addition to the WWC, the American Legion and Wenonah Historical Society have agreed to fund a bench. Jenny invited the WEC to join them as the 4<sup>th</sup> organization. Jenny said the cost of the two WWC benches at the Community center was \$1,250 including shipping. The cost of each bench, when ordering 4, would be less per bench with a total cost of about \$2,400. The cost of letter engraving would be \$3 per letter. Julie calculated "Wenonah Environmental Commission" would be 30 letters for a cost of \$90. It was also suggested an anchor kit could be installed by the Borough and that laying a concrete base would be possible. Dave said the Borough's main street improvement project, expected to begin in Aug. would end at Monroe Ave. and the benches would not be a problem for that. Jenny said the cost for the WEC would be approximately \$600. Bob said he supported the proposal and noted the many times the WWC has worked with and assisted the WEC, such as the two stone pool garden restorations and the kiosk. Dave said of the \$1,487 remaining in our 2016 budget, Jack Constantino's eagle project would use only about \$800. The remainder could be spent for the bench. If that was not sufficient to cover the cost, the difference could come out of the Friends of Wenonah Trails account. Bob moved we accept the WWC's proposal and fund a bench for the WEC.

(Motion: Bevilacqua, Second: Kreck, AIF)

## **Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes**

### **Review**

**Woodbury Hts. COAH proposal.** Scott attended the Woodbury Hts. Planning Board meeting where a developer was requesting a zoning change from commercial to residential for a proposal to build 70 COAH units on the old Bell Telephone site on Rt. 553. The WEC was alerted to this by an email from Pat Duncan. There was concern the development there could affect Wenonah Lake should runoff get into Queens Lake then move downstream. Scott said runoff

could well be reduced by this project since a large area of impervious surface would be replaced by designs providing better drainage. The hearing was a contentious one with many residents voicing objections. The proposal failed to gain sufficient votes by the board to be approved.

**Wenonah Trails in NJ Monthly Magazine.** The magazine's current issue in an article, "The Ultimate NJ Hiking Guide" listed our trail system as one of NJ's 36 best hiking trail and provided a short positive write up.

**Joann Sparks Passing.** Scott noted the recent passing of Joan Sparks, formerly a WEC member and volunteer.

### Near Term Projects

**Mantua Creek Trail Eagle Project.** Dave reported that Jack Costantino's trail improvement project is set for Sat. May 13. Dave said he is ready to purchase the needed materials and will directly invoice the WEC budget for reimbursement. Bob said there were a number of 10 ft. 4x4's available from the Eldridge Trail boardwalk project as well as additional lumber of various sizes.

**Beaver Activity.** Scott noted the dam has been disturbed with sticks pulled out on the north side. The pond level is down a foot to 18". Sharon talked to a Pine St resident who seemed to indicate that "well meaning" adults may be responsible. Julie displayed a laminated copy of the Borough ordinance prohibiting this activity. She suggested we should post this along with wording such as "Do Not Disturb Beaver Dam. Violators can be fined up to \$2,000." Bob suggested the sign be placed in the water to prevent vandals from tearing it down. Bob said he would price a 24"x 24" sign for this. Julie said the educational sign project is still a goal for the site but we need to get the word out that tampering with the dam is both counterproductive and illegal. Jenny McQuaide said educating people about the beaver is an important element in this.

Maria noted someone had tossed pieces of lumber about the Eldridge Trail.

Scott noted there is now beaver activity at Boy Scout Island now.

**WEC- Lions Club Raised Walkway on Eldridge Trail.** Scott noted the walkway is complete and quite an amazing structure. The organization names, WEC and Wenonah Lions Club, and the date 2017 have been engraved into the wood. It was remarked the memorial name mentioned in the original proposal was not mentioned at the most recent Lion's meeting. Julie presented a laminated display of photos and text that she will put in the kiosk. Maria noted that over 60 volunteers took part in this project and especially pointed out the efforts and skills of Bob and his family members, and volunteers such as Jason Howard. Bob noted there is still some minor cleanup to do at the site. The total cost to the Lions was \$3,900, which exceeded their original budget of \$3,500. This included materials and the pizza lunch. Bob noted he had receipts for \$66.28 in WEC costs and \$292.21 Lions costs. It was decided the WEC would pick up Lions costs.

(Motion: Kreck, Second: S. Ceravolo, AIF)

Dave said he would talk to Mr. Coleman about a formal easement for the portions of trail and walkway on his property. It was noted the house at Comey's Lake is now for sale.

### Trail Maintenance

**Garden Trail.** It was noted the garden area needs considerable work and the lamination on the small sign is badly cracked. Large holes from fallen trees along the trail should be filled. Dave said the Borough could haul dirt to the area for us to use. **A work party was scheduled for Tues. April 25 at 6PM. Scott will send out an email to volunteers.**

**East Cherry St.** This access trail is walkable (one must navigate over some fallen trees) but should not be considered open to the public. The part on private property is still posted.

**Wenonah Lake.** Julie reported a tree limb hit the kiosk, dislodging a shingle. She will affect repairs. Maria reported the metal Eggert Trail sign had been bent completely back. She straightened it as much as possible.

**Mantua Creek Trail.** Dave noted since the heavy rain a new hole opened up on the trail. He will fill it. There are two trees down on the trail; one on the island and one east of the Glen Trail. Also the recent storm has dislodged sections of the boardwalk on the island. Dave will work on repairs.

Dave also noted the Borough can haul dirt for us to the Garden Train and Glen Trail to fill holes but not to the large hole on MCT on the east side of the RR tracks.

**Camels Back Loop.** Maria reported she and Dan have installed a screech owl box.

**Monongahela Brook Tr,** Julie noted new rails need to be installed there.

**Comey's Lake.** Maria reported there is a pine tree down on the trail that needs to be cleared and another tree down that is blocking the stone drainage channel near Willow St. Runoff is now going down the trail. Rich noted the plexiglass cover for the interpretive sign at Comey's Lake has been slashed and a hate word inscribed. The laminated poster underneath it is not harmed.

**Break Back Run Tr.** Sharon noted the rails will need replacing between W. Elm and W. Poplar but that the trail is walkable and this can be put off for now.

Maria said the police were not helpful when she reported the game camera and told her she was not authorized to remove it. When she later checked the site the camera was gone.

**Shawnee Dr.** Dave noted the erosion behind Shawnee Drive is still very severe but the cor logs have effectively prevented the sediment from flowing down the stream valley.

**Indian Tr.** Maria reported the owners of the home on the dead end at Indian Tr. have been cutting trees along the conservation area and possible within the conservation area, and also tossing debris in to the conservation area. Dave said he would check it out and file a complaint if warranted.

**Conservation Area letter.** It was agreed we need to educate residents, particularly those who back up to conservation area lands, what is permitted and prohibited. Dave will forward Chuck's letter from several years ago to Sharon for any necessary editing and updating.

Scott reported the NJ legislature will apparently use funds from the new gas tax to complete the environmental study for the proposed light rail.

Maria reported that Melissa Powell of Gateway was concerned that intern Neil Sheridan was unsure how to proceed on the Sustainable Jersey application and certification. It was agreed he would need to contact Bill Klaus, who proposed the project. Sharon will get in touch with Neil.

Rich reported he led a hike at Tall Pines on April 8 for 20 or more Wenonah cub scouts, leaders and parents.

**WEC Bird Quest Team.** Rich said he is again forming a WEC team for Bird Quest. He has distributed fliers to Wenonah School and other public places. Scott will send out an email to all WEC volunteers. The team birds Tall Pines and Wenonah trails. Bird Quest is May 6.

#### **Friends of Wenonah Trails Account.**

Expenses: none

Deposits: \$2.00 donation

Current balance: \$9,085.14

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:54 PM. (Motion: Bevilacqua, Second: Kreck, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Rich Dilks, Sec.