

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

June 14, 2017

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:39 in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act at the Wenonah Lake picnic pavilion at the conclusion of the WEC annual picnic.

ROLL CALL	PRESENT	ABSENT
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: Laurie Forsman, John Dominey, Kathy Schools and additional guests.

The minutes of the May 10 meeting were approved as amended: (Motion: Bevilacqua, Second: S. Ceravolo, AIF)

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Review

Clean Communities Day May 13. Scott reported the WEC achieved its requisite 10 volunteers, who worked in and near the borough park clearing overgrown vegetation and debris.

Mantua Creek Trail Projects. Dave gave a report stating that Jack Costantino's eagle project to place trail rails and crushed stone on a trail section near W. Cherry St. has been successfully completed. A bench (originally part of the project) will not be placed on the MCT. Dave said it is not needed and there is no obvious site for it. There is a possibility the bench could be placed elsewhere in the conservation area. There are currently two step over trees down. Dave also reported that he had filled in a hole on the trail, repaired a section of the boardwalk on the MTC island and cleared some vegetation encroaching on the trail. Scott said he heard from Matt Goodman on Facebook. Matt took part in the original blazing of MCT some decades ago.

Beaver Activity.

Maria noted shoots and branches were growing out of some of the stumps where beavers have felled trees at Wenonah Lake. It was also noted there is considerable beaver activity at Comey's Lake. Also they have apparently built a lodge on the lake's western shore. Beaver are also noted in the Boy Scout island area. It appears the beaver may have abandoned the beaver pond and dam on the Eldridge Trail.

Trail Maintenance.

Wenonah Lake. Maria noted in general all our trails are in good shape. She said she and Dan have placed another puncheon at a muddy section of the trail. Bob has replaced the Eggert Trail sign with one of thicker gage, much more difficult to bend.

Monongahela Brook Trail. Sharon reported that her friend ,Patrick Donnelly, has repaired the trail rails on a section of the trail. He is also enthusiastic about doing similar repairs on Break Back Run Trail. Dave said he had wooden stakes available. Bob said the cut offs from the walkway project are now stored at the borough garage.

Indian Trail. Julie noted homeowner at the end of Indian Trail continues to cut trees. One fell with some branches crossing the trail. It is not clear whether a portion of the trail in this area is on conservation or the homeowner's land.

Comey's Lake. The interpretive sign at the lake has been vandalized with a hate word cut into the protective plastic covering. Julie will try to buff it to remove that. Otherwise, the plastic will need to be replaced.

E. Cherry St. access trail. It was noted this trail is no longer usable and has been removed for our current trail map.

Letter to Conservation Area Neighbors Sharon said the draft letter includes portions of the Borough Ordinance and a B&W copy of the trail map. The letters have been placed into packets of 25. There was discussion whether the letter should be hand delivered door to door or mailed. When a similar letter was distributed several years ago, it was hand delivered. The consensus was that although delivering it in person gives us the opportunity to personally engage with some homeowners, mailing the letters would be far more efficient. Scott has developed the mailing list. Dave suggested the letters should be put in Borough envelopes to indicate they do officially come from the Borough. Kathy Schools said she has a borough return address stamp. Sharon will contact Karen to discuss the best way to do this.

Poison Ivy. Scott said that poison ivy is thriving along many trails in the conservation area, particularly in those areas where the loss of trees has increased the amount of sunlight now reaching the ground. The worst areas are along the trail rails built by Walker Green on the MCT am the trail east of the railroad. He feels there is a need to mitigate the hazard of poison ivy encroaching on the trails. He said strategies include cutting and pulling by hand and the use of herbicides. This could include the careful application of commercial herbicides such as Round Up or Triclopyr, or "homemade remedies using vinegar, salt & detergent. There is stronger "horticultural vinegar" with a 20-30% acidity. It would be more effective but is strong enough to cause acid skin burns and must be handled carefully. The vinegar methods will kill foliage but not kill the roots. Sharon noted poison ivy can also be suppressed by smothering with mulch or newspapers. Dave said he would use a sickle to cut some of it back. Chuck recalled that when the tea house area was first uncovered, there was a great deal of poison ivy there and the volunteers got badly infected.

Sustainable Jersey. Sharon reported the Sustainable Jersey application has been filed June 4 and is under review. Sharon also said the Green Team plans to take part in the harvest fair this fall with info on native species, green products or services, Julie's beaver sign and rain barrels. The WEC can also participate. Sharon will talk to the Home & School Assoc. about participating. Dave said he could likely get one of the AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassadors to participate.

WEC sponsored bench. Rich reported that to expedite payment, a check for \$598.96 from the Friends of Wenonah Trails account has been delivered to Jennie McQuaide of the Wenonah Woman's Club for the cost of the WEC bench. Since the WEC will be funding the bench from the WEC encumbered 2016 budget, the Borough will reimburse the WEC for that sum from our budget. It was noted the Wenonah Woman's Club may be willing to consider additional projects with us.

WEC Budget. Scott noted we still have approximately \$300 remaining in our encumbered 2016 budget. Dave suggested purchase a toolshed for out WEC purchased tools and to place it where we could have weekend access. Bob suggested using the W. Cherry St. mulch yard. He also suggested that site could be used for additional purposes such as a nursery area and for student activities.

Web site. . Scott said he would like to redo the entire web site sometime this year. The new design will focus on the trail map and basic WEC information. Scott said social media is now a better place for posting photos and promoting events.

Mantua Creek kayak dock. Glen Green sent an email to Rich stating the dock is currently unusable due to the large stones placed next to it during the bridge repair last year. The stones block access at low tide. Also at high tide the lower portion of the dock lists at an angle so that one cannot stand on it. Glen recommended moving the dock to a better location a few feet away. Sharon & Rich will meet Glen at the dock on Sun (6/18) to assess the situation.

Princeton Hydro. Rich reported PH will be out this week to inspect and treat Dilks Pond and Comey's Lake. At present there are no problems with duckweed or algae. Rich also reported that the second of three payment invoices from PH have been received and will be forwarded to Karen.

4th of July Hike, 4PM. It was noted the hike will be along the Eldridge Trail beginning at E. Pine St. and ending at the tea house. It will feature the new raised walkway.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account.

Expenses:

\$598.96 check to the Woman's Club for the WEC bench.

Deposits:

\$45.00 trail guide sales.

Current balance: \$7,966.55

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:25 PM. (Motion: Kreck, Second: Bevilacqua, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.