

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2017

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:33 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: Dave Coates

Public Guests Present: Don Sparks, Anne Marie Sparks

The minutes of the June 14 meeting were approved: (Motion: Bevilacqua, Second: S. Ceravolo, AIF)

Scott welcomed public guests, Don & Anne Marie Sparks, who recently moved into a home on Princeton and Willow, and are conservation area neighbors.

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Review

Frank Eggert Memorial Student Environmental Awards. Because Scott was out of town, Rich presented the awards at Wenonah School 6th grade graduation on June 21. The awardees were Farrell Donnelly and Lily Cline. The awards consisted of a check for \$100, letter, certificate of award, Wenonah Trail Guide, Audubon Birding and Trails brochures and a Peterson First Guide.

4th of July Hike. The annual hike was well attended with approximately 30 people and one dog. The hike took place on the Eldridge Trail. Hikers traversed the newly built raised walkway and the hike concluded at the tea house.

Beaver Activity.

Scott reported that beaver activity has recently been seen at "beaver lake". Julie noted she recently saw a beaver family at Comey's Lake- first a large male, then a kit and female. She also noted the flow and level at the beaver lake has not changed much recently, although it would not take a great effort for the beavers to repair the dam. Beaver activity was also noted at Wenonah Lake and in the area east of the trestle. Maria suggested we could have a tree wrapping work party to protect mature trees in areas with high beaver activity.

Trail Maintenance.

Wenonah Lake. Bob said the newly replaced Eggert Trail sign is holding up well. He also said he removed a beaver felled tree neat the bulkhead north of the lake. Bob noted the bulkhead repair at the north end of the lake has progressed. Maria said one additional piece would be needed.

Monongahela Brook Trail. Sharon reported that Pat Donnelly has completed trail repairs and installed new the trail rails on two sections of the trail. Pat made a full report by email. It was agreed he did an outstanding job.

Camel's Back Loop. Maria noted this area is very overgrown with vegetation, including quite a lot of poison ivy. Maria suggested this area could be turned into a more park-like setting with some trail maintenance and native plantings. This could be a good fall project. Sharon asked if this area would be suitable for a bluebird box. Rich said he will try to get Dave Gilcrest of the NJ Bluebird Society to evaluate the site.

Comey's Lake. Julie said she tried cleaning up the vandalized plastic covering of the interpretive sign at Comey's Lake. She said that made the vandalism a bit less noticeable but that the plastic coating would need to be replaced. Bob said he will see if he has another piece of plastic large enough.

Mantua Creek Trail. Scott said he noticed grass clippings dumped near the Willow St access trail. He then contacted homeowner Ryan Koenig to instruct his landscaping service not to do so. Sharon noted there are 3 trees down on MCT, including one near the RR and a small step over. Sharon also noted some of the boards on MCT near the Mantua Ave. entrance are loose or broken and need to be repaired or replaced. Dave said he has seen motor bike tracks on the trail. Maria said she saw some too at Wenonah Lake.

Glen Trail. Sharon said there were three white garbage bags filled with trash (mostly beer related) left on the Glen Trail. She brought them up to the curb on W. Cedar. When she checked later, they were gone. One was subsequently found opened and scattered around at the RR tracks.

Break Back Run Trail. Sharon complimented Bob on the new access trail from W. Poplar St. Bob said his grandson assisted with mulching the trail. Sharon asked if there were any more posts for trailhead signs like the ones Bob placed here. He said the wood was from some red cedars at Wenonah cemetery and that he would look to see if he could find additional pieces.

Kayak launch at Hanisey's Landing. In June Sharon and Bill Ceravolo and Rich met at the kayak launch with Glen Green. Glen said the launch was unusable because of rocks placed next to it during the bridge renovation and because the lower section of the launch was badly tilted. He recommended the launch be moved about 10 feet downstream from its current location. At the new location the launch would likely not be usable at low tides. Glen also pointed out that kayakers have been parking on Mantua Ave. and dragging the boats down a short steep path to the launch site. He said doing so created a safety hazard. It was suggested possibly putting a sign to point people to the Hayes Ave. access route to the launch. Glen also suggested installing Ha rope on the steep path. Sharon and Rich said they would report to the Commission.

Sharon reported she looked into commercial floats for the dock and found them too large and expensive. She found inexpensive solution- rectangular kitty litter containers- that could be sealed and bolted to the underside of the launch (the current floats on the launch are cylindrical plastic buckets.).It was noted moving the dock would be a labor intensive project. She said Dawn Carson has offered to have the Boy Scouts volunteer to help. It was noted the current posts are steel or aluminum and a missing one would need to be replaced. It was agreed the rope on the steep slope would put the borough at liability risk in case an accident and should not be installed. A sign placed right at the center of the path entrance and directing kayakers to the launch by way of Hayes Ave. was approved with the text "Access to kayak launch off Hayes Ave." with an arrow pointing in the direction of Hayes Ave. A second sign would be placed with an arrow to direct people to turn at the pumping station. Bob said he would look into getting the sign made up.

Letter to Conservation Area Neighbors The letters were mailed out on 6/16/17 to approximately 120 borough residents and used an official Borough of Wenonah return address. Only 6 letters were returned by the Post Office as undeliverable, including the one for Dave Kreck, due to a minor discrepancy between his mailing address the tax records address. The Sharp's said they decided to attend tonight's meeting as a result of receiving the letter.

Dave noted the house at Comey's Lake has been sold and is now under contract. It was noted the Daumer's (house at the Eldridge Trail head) may move as well.

Stone Pool Garden sign. Bob said a replacement sign acknowledging the contributions of the Wenonah Woman's Club should be made. Scott will send him a photo of the old sign. Bob said he works with a stone engraver at the Wenonah Cemetery who might be able to do a stone sign.

Sustainable Jersey. Sharon reported the Sustainable Jersey application has been filed June 4 and is still under review.

Acting Chair for Aug. & Sept. Scott will be away for those meetings. Dave as Vice Chair will fill in.

Tool shed & nursery. Dave said he will concentrate on this project in the fall. He also mentioned that Public Works will be delivering fill dirt for the MCT sinkholes.

WEC sponsored bench. Jenny McQuaide has informed us the benches have been ordered.

Natural info signs. Sharon suggested nature interpretive signs as a future project. Julie said the \$35 sign posts she had researched would be ideal for this.

Scott noted there will be a special council meeting on July 13 to consider the Borough's purchase of the Lizzie/Wenonah Meadows property. He said the town has some of its COAH obligations on that site and options for development would be limited.

Princeton Hydro. Rich reported both ponds are currently in good shape with minimal duckweed and algae.

Tall Pines/Pricket property development proposal.

Scott brought up the issue of a possible high density development on the 55 acre former Prickett's Nursery, which directly borders Tall Pines Preserve on the south. Rich explained the development proposed by Greywolf Builders LLC, consists of 138 units of age restricted housing, 9 unrestricted homes and additional buildings. The builder has asked Mantua Twp for a zoning variance to change from agricultural/residential (AR) with a 3 acre minimum per home to high density residential. Rich said the Friends of Tall Pines strongly oppose this development that will put high density development right at the southern border of Tall Pines. The Friends have been rousing public opposition. The Mantua Land Use Board will consider the variance request at a public meeting on July 18. The Friend will attend and speak in opposition.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account.

Expenses:

\$200.00 Frank Eggert Memorial Environmental Awards.

\$16.99 Peterson First Guides (2) to Eggert awardees.

Deposits:

\$598.96 transfer from WEC budget for WEC bench

\$167.00 donation from Ananda Yoga & Wellness

\$20.00 trail Guide sales (4th of July)

Current balance: \$8,435.52

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:35 PM. (Motion: Bevelacqua, Second: M. Ceravolo AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.