

# WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

August 9, 2017

Vice Chairman Dave Kreck called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:30 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:** None

**Public Guests Present:** Wayne Dahmer, Alma Dahmer

The minutes of the July 12 meeting were approved as amended : (Motion: M. Ceravolo, Second: Bevilacqua, AIF)

## **Vice Chairman's Report- Dave Kreck**

**Fallen Tree at 106. N Jackson.** Dave noted the homeowner called the Borough concerning a large tree that fell from conservation land along Break Back Run Trail on to the edge of his yard. The Borough referred him to the WEC and he contacted Rich. Rich inspected the very large tree and told the homeowner the WEC lacked the resources for removing the tree and to speak with the Borough about what could be done. The Borough suggested the homeowner contact his homeowner's insurance agent to determine if removal would be covered, and that if not, the Borough may be able to assist. Dave said this situation arises repeatedly with conservation area neighbors and that he has urged the Borough to adopt a consistent policy.

**Dead Tree.** Dave noted there is a dead tree also on Break Back Run Trail. He noted that the Borough has an obligation to act if tree or tree branch is on conservation land and poses a danger. Wayne Dahmer recalled that several years ago, a large tree fell blocking his driveway. He said the Borough came out and cut the tree to clear his drive.

**Wenonah Meadows.** Dave reported the Borough is purchasing this property from the bank. Borough ownership gives the town more control over what eventually may be built there. The property is designated for low to moderate income and enables the Borough to meet its COAH obligation. Therefore, the Borough cannot build other structures there but may make it into athletic fields for now. The Borough is selling two lots on Linden Ave. to defray the cost of the purchase.

## **Public Guest Comments**

Alma Dahmer said trash and use on the Eldridge Trail is up, including by teenagers, and showed cigarette butts she collected on the trail. She is concerned about the fire hazard from smoking, particularly during dry weather periods. The Dahmers offered to place a trash can at the trail head and maintain it. The WEC approved and thanked them. Dave noted there was also trash at the bench area on the Glen Trail. Wayne said he had some lumber that the WEC is welcomed to use. Wayne also asked if the WEC would object if he had some of the wisteria on conservation land behind his home removed. Rich replied wisteria is an undesirable invasive species and that the WEC would be grateful for his efforts.

**Beaver Activity.** The Eldridge Trail dam has been repaired and the beaver pond is back at its full depth. Rich reported the dam on the Monongahela Loop Tr. is still functioning and the shallow pond behind it is stable. Thus, the lower portion of the trail is currently unwalkable.

### **Trail Maintenance.**

**Comey's Lake.** Julie had cleaned the vandalized interpretive sign near the dock. Rich said the scratches and cuts in the plastic can be seen but the words are really not discernable. Dave said the sign could be left as is for now.

**Eldridge Trail.** There are some small limbs and logs that need cleaning up. Dave said the on Fri. he and John Forren will be doing a general trail clearing and minor repair work, starting at Mantua Ave. on MCT and work towards the Eldridge Trail.

**Monongahela Brook Trail.** The new trail rails installed by Pat Donnelly have stabilized and improved significant sections on that trail.

**Garden Trail & Stone Pool Garden.** The garden needs weeding and clean up. Also the root holes of some fallen trees need filling. Maria suggested a work party for the Garden Trail.

**Mantua Creek Trail.** There are a couple of trees down near the RR. Also the heavy rains have continued to cause the sink holes near W. Cherry to loose material and more fill is needed. Dave has realigned the boards on the trail near Mantua Ave. and repaired a loose trail rail on the new stone trail section that was moved by heavy rains. Dave noted the repaired boardwalk on the island has stayed in place and is working well.

**Break Back Run.** Maria reported there is a large limb down on the northern section of the trail.

**Wenonah Lake.** Bob has installed the new bulkhead at the bridge at the north of the lake. An additional bulkhead is being considered for the other side of the bridge. Maria expressed concern about trash on the trail and broken glass, particularly near the bench on the west shore.

**Camel Back Loop.** Bob reported he has repaired the bulkhead at the north bridge over Camel's Back Run and mowed the trail entrance from E. Elm St. He said there is considerable bank erosion, the stream is cutting very near the trail and needs to be stabilized. He suggested sand bags filled with a cement gravel mixture would work and suggested we recruit the boy scouts to help with the labor.

**Hanisey's Landing kayak launch .** Bob said rather than move the launch, we should remove the rocks next to the launch on the side facing the bridge. He said he and Tommy Lombardo have done so. We now need to install the new kitty litter box floats. Bob displayed two new metal signs to be installed: 1. At the "trail" on Mantua Ave. "Kayak Launch Off Hayes Ave." with an arrow; 2. Near the road to the landing off Hayes Ave. "Kayak Launch" with an arrow. Unfortunately the first sign had the arrow left pointing instead of right and will be redone.

Dave noted that Associate WEC member, John Mullens, is being treated for cancer and according to Cindy is home and doing well. It was agreed that Rich would send him a card on behalf of the WEC.

**Future work parties.** Dave said the highest priority sites are Camel's Back Loop and the Garden Trail.

**Tool shed & nursery.** No new developments.

**WEC sponsored bench.** The foundations for the benches on Mantua Ave. are under construction and the benches have arrived in Wenonah and are being assembled by Public Works. Dave asked if we had any preference for where our bench would be placed. Since no one expressed a preference, He will let Jenny McQuaide know the bench can be placed where the Woman's Club and Borough think best.

**Newsletter.** Dave noted the deadline for articles is 8/18. He said Scott would be back in time to write the article but would appreciate any ideas for entries we could send him. He will also mention the Mad Hatter's Tree party set for Oct. 22.

**Trail Markers.** Maria noted that small disks, 2" or 3" in diameter, could be used as unobtrusive and inexpensive trail markers affixed to trees. She said she has seen them at other parks. They could be used, for example, where a main trail forks with an access trail. She will try to get more info on them.

**Princeton Hydro.** Rich reported both ponds are currently in good shape with minimal duckweed and algae. Princeton Hydro was last out on July 25.

**Conservation Land easements.** Dave said obtaining the Colman & Zupko easements (Eldridge Trail by the walkway) and S. Stockton Ave. access to Comey's Lake should be priorities to protect the trail system. It was noted the S. Stockton property has been sold and new residents will soon move in.

**Trees branches engulfing conservation area signs on Mantua Ave.** It was suggested the trees should be trimmed or the signs moved closer to the street.

**Borough news.** Dave reported bids have come in for the Mantua Ave. improvements project. At present there are some disagreements between the bidders that need to be worked out. Dave also said the Planning Board is looking at zoning changes to allow some commercial or professional uses for Mantua Ave. residences in the "downtown" area. Dave also reported the construction of the new well is complete. However, there is still some work to be done to get the pump operational.

**Light Rail.** Dave reported there is renewed interest in the Camden-Glass. light rail due to increased revenues from the gas tax increase. He said the environmental Impact Study is again being funded and staff from the study are currently trying to determine whether the endangered long-eared bat is present in the Wenonah area. This was not done in the earlier EIS, which would have therefore been considered incomplete.

**Thank you letter.** Maria presented a thank you letter from Lily Cline to the WEC for the Eggert Student Environmental Award she received in June.

**Tall Pines/Pricket property development proposal.**

Rich reported that with the withdrawal of the high density development proposal, the land owner is now planning to apply to Green Acres to have the land preserved.

**Friends of Wenonah Trails Account.**

Expenses:

\$102.10 Reimbursement to Sharon Ceravolo for costs from the letters to conservation land neighbors mailings.

Deposits:

\$300.00 Clean Communities Day Grant.

**Current balance: \$8,633.42**

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:39 PM. (Motion: Bevelacqua, Second: M. Ceravolo AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Rich Dilks, Sec.