

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2018

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 6:33 in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act at the Tea House amphitheater in the Wenonah Conservation Area.

<u>ROLL CALL</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Scott Barnes (Chair. / Planning Bd. Rep.)	X	
Sharon Ceravolo	X	
Maria Ceravolo	X	
Dave Coates		X
Rich Dilks (Sec.)	X	
Dave Kreck (V. Chair.)	X	
Julie Ream	X	

Associate Members Present: Scott Conway, Bob Bevilacqua, Heidi Congalton.

Public Guests Present: Frida (canine)

The minutes of the August meeting were approved as amended:
(Motion: S. Ceravolo Second: Ream, AIF)

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Near Term Projects.

Tool Shed. Dave reported the Borough has laid down the dirt foundation for the shed. He said Public Works has been very busy but he hopes to have the shed installed later this fall. Scott Conway will assist Dave with that.

Beaver Activity. No recent beaver activity was noted in the conservation area. Julie inquired whether the WEC wanted to keep the wire cages, that are protecting numerous larger trees from the beaver, in place. The general consensus was to keep them in place.

Trail Maintenance.

Tea House graffiti. Sharon reported she had contacted Sargent Drew Hayes of the Mantua Police. The two teenage girls were contacted by the police and they and their parents took part in a "station house" conference. The girls were apologetic, saying they were invited to the tea house and did not understand it was a public structure. Both were given 20 hours of community service. Sharon said we will oversee their service and track the hours completed. We will have the ability to request they do specific jobs for us in the conservation area. It was agreed they would be scheduled to pull weeds at the tea house as part of preparing the area for the Tree Party in Oct. Sharon also noted the Mantua Police have a Community Service Program and we can request the services of others doing community service to do projects in the conservation area such as trash pickup, i.e. trash cleanups at Wenonah Lake and the trail near Princeton Blvd., or helping at work parties. Our contact for the CSP would be Salvador Aldarti of the Mantua Police. She said the Mantua Police have been given a WEC trail guide and will investigate if suspicious activity is reported in the conservation area. Julie noted that 6 volunteers worked about 3 hours last Sat. to remove the painted graffiti for a total of 18 man hours.

Maria suggested that since the two girls did show some artistic ability that they also paint a sign to be placed at the tea house. The sign would have info about the history of the structure and also state the WEC maintains the tea house and surrounding grounds for the benefit of the

public. Bob suggested any sign should be as vandal proof as possible and suggested stone or bronze. Julie said she had historical text that was used in the revised trail guide. She will share that as a basis for creating the text for the sign.

Julie suggested the girls could also paint some signs for the MH Tree party. They could do an entrance sign and tree species specific signs for the stations. Rich will communicate this suggestion to Erik Mollenhauer, who coordinates the Tree Party.

Mantua Creek Trail. Dave said recent storms and flooding have wreaked havoc with many of the MCT boardwalks. They have been uprooted and the lumber scattered. Bob's recently constructed bridge and boardwalk section came through the flooding well but not much else did. Bob said we need more metal sign posts and will likely need to purchase them. Dave said the sink hole in the portion of the trail near W. Cherry has grown and is now a safety hazard. He said the trail will need to be rerouted at that spot and the trail will be blocked at the site of the sink hole. Dave said he and Scott Conway will attempt to reset some of the boards along the trail. Maria raised the possibility of partnering with the Lions Club again to create a permanent raised boardwalk on the vulnerable sections of the MCT island. The Lions' ability to provide man power is impressive. She said she would mention the suggestion to Dan Ceravolo. Sharon suggested we can also use social media for fundraising for this project.

Break Back Run Trail. Dave noted Tyler Demaise has been working on several sections of the boardwalk near N. Jackson Ave. Dave noted also the access trail at the Steward Estate plaque on N. Jefferson, near W. Buttonwood, needs to be re-cleared. Sharon asked if the Borough could deliver a load of mulch to the site for the access trail. Dave said he would arrange it.

It was also noted there is still a problem with erosion in the conservation area from the gully at 206 N. Jefferson Ave. He said the homeowner recently had trees taken down on his property and had areas regraded. He has not dealt with the erosion. Dave said that because the gully is on private property, we would need to be cautious in any action we would take.

Indian Trail. Julie noted large amounts of silt are building up behind the coir logs along the little stream.

Near Term Projects.

Wenonah Lake Interpretive Sign. Julie had contacted several companies and requested samples of various materials for the sign replacement. At the meeting she presented two samples of a fiberglass board with a full color photo image etched into it. One sample was ¼ inch thick and the other ½ inch. The material is attractive, very sturdy and not bendable. It is also vandal resistant to paint. The cost of a 20" x 30" sign replacement would be \$150-200. Julie and Bob said they could remove the old frame and prepare the pedestal for a replacement.

Mad Hatter's Tree Party. Scott Barnes noted the Tree Party this year is scheduled for Sunday Oct. 21. He said in preparation we should pull the weeds and sweep up around the tea house and make sure the trail is in good condition. A work party will be scheduled sometime before 10/21.

Sustainable Jersey. Sharon reported that last month Claire Klaus and Bill Klaus had been working to get all the materials together for the re-submission. She said our submissions have now been filed ahead of the 9/3/18 deadline. We are now waiting for a response. Dave noted the SJ program often asks for excessive and sometimes irrelevant details, which can be frustrating.

Fall Work Party. Sat. Nov. 3. It was decided the fall work party will focus on the Mantua Creek Trail and boardwalk repairs.

Conservation Easements. Scott noted the Borough does not have a comprehensive list of all conservation easements. Also some areas that are not conservation lands such as Lisle Field and the Borough garage are not distinguished from preserved natural areas. Scott presented a detailed list of lands acquired as conservation lands beginning in 1912. He also pointed out

some issues that need to be resolved. It was decided that due to the fading of twilight to postpone further discussions to our next meeting.

WEC Photo Contest. Julie said she and Dave Coates were discussing the idea of the WEC sponsoring a photo contest, possible with entries restricted to phone cameras. The suggestion was enthusiastically received but details will need to be worked out.

W. Cedar paper street. It was noted the property owner on W. Willow St. (former Lentz property) had a tree service cutting trees on the W. Cedar paper street adjoining his property. No trees on conservation land were cut. Dave said he is unsure whether this is allowed or not on a paper street which is Borough property. He said the situation is complicated by the fact our W. Cedar access trail is partially on the homeowner's property.

Duckweed. Rich reported he has received the 4th and final invoices for the year from Princeton Hydro for Dilks Pond and Comey's Lake. He noted both ponds were in good shape and the typical late summer algae blooms were largely absent this year.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since last meeting.

Deposits: none.

Expenses: \$168.28 To Julie as reimbursement for beaver presentation materials and WEC banner.

Current balance: \$11,926.77

MEETING ADJOURNED at 7:44 PM. (Motion: S. Ceravolo; Second: Bevilacqua, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.