

# WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes  
November 14, 2018

Chairman Scott Barnes 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
Dave Coates		X
Rich Dilks (Sec.)	X	
Dave Kreck (V. Chair.)	X	
Julie Ream	X	

**Associate Members Present:** Scott Conway.

**Public Guests Present:** Bill Klaus, Watershed Ambassador Jonathan Fernandez.

The minutes of the October meeting were approved:  
(Motion: Kreck Second: S. Ceravolo, AIF)

## **Public Guests.**

**Jonathan Fernandez**, current Watershed Ambassador for our region of the lower Delaware (Palmyra Cove to Old Man's Creek). Jonathan said he would continue as WA until July 2019 and wished to introduce himself to the WEC and offer his services on projects. He said his primary duties are in environmental stewardship and that he also conducts school programs. Dave said he has Jonathan's contact info and Jonathan also gave it Sharon. Jonathan said he could assist on the Library rain garden project and will work with Dave. Jonathan said he also does cleanups, macro invertebrates surveys and works with water management topics. Sharon suggested doing a Sustainable Jersey rain barrel workshop and other possible projects with Jonathan, who said barrels might be donated by Coca-Cola. Bill also suggested we could partner with Rutgers on this. Dave is also interested in working with Borough storm water management issues.

**Bill Klaus.** Bill announced Wenonah has now been certified for Sustainable Jersey at the Bronze level. He noted we first tried for certification in 2010! He thanked the Green Team and all who made the prolonged and sustained effort for certification. He also showed us the SJ plaque. Bill enumerated a number of areas where we were approved for SJ including: education, the Green Team, community outreach, Environmental Commission, rain garden, community forestry and tree cover and Rx drug disposal. He said areas where we were not approved as of yet included community garden, audit for downtown improvement project (audit was done 6 years ago, one year too early for acceptance), tree planting and community information procedures. Bill said we can continue to work on items to come into compliance and earn points. Our certification must be renewed in 3 years and will require 150 point for continuing, improved and new projects.

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

### **Reports.**

**Mad Hatter's Tree Party, Oct. 21.** Scott said the event with the GCNC was successful and well attended with about 150 people, but numbers were down a bit due to cool and windy weather.

**Wenonah Fall Festival.** The event was moved to the school all purpose room due to rainy weather. This reduced the number of attendees somewhat. Scott B. and Rich manned an info table with displays for the WEC, sharing the table space with the Friends of Tall Pines.

**Fall Work party, Nov 3.** Scott said rain the day before flooded the MCT island so work on the new boardwalk was not possible. Wood and materials for the boardwalk were moved to staging positions and a section of trail just west of the island was upgraded with trail rails and a dirt covering, with dirt delivered to W. Cedar St. by the Borough. The construction of the boardwalk has been plagued by rainy weather and flooding that has make work impossible so far.

**Clean Communities, Sat. Nov 10.** The WEC again participated in this event. Most volunteers worked in the park raking leaves or doing trash pickup. The WEC is expected to receive a portion of the CC grant for our participation.

### **Near Term Projects.**

**Tool Shed.** Dave K. reported the perimeter wood for the shed foundation has been purchased but stone is still needed. Scott B. said Dan Cox has brought up the possibility of the Borough moving the leaf/mulch drop from this location.

### **Trail Maintenance.**

**Mantua Creek Trail.** Dave said the recent heavy rains have wreaked havoc with MCT creating muddy spots, dislodging boards and washing out sink holes. He said the land itself seems to be changing with a higher water table and saturated ground presenting new challenges. Dave said we might we might consider raising the new island boardwalk even higher than planned and that we could do so by adding a second layer of 6 x 6 's. He said he would discuss this with Bob.

**Trail Repair Standards.** Sharon proposed the WEC create and adopt uniform standards for trail repair and infrastructure in future. This would ensure boardwalks and other structure are built to withstand conditions and have a much longer use life. Also standards would address safety issues, such as boardwalk width and provide a uniform aesthetic appearance for the trails. She said once the standards are developed, they would be used for both our repairs and for Eagle Scout projects. Dave suggested we could create a written manual of trail standards. Standards would include condition and terrain based boardwalk widths, heights, materials and cost analysis. Dave suggested we form a trail standards sub-committee and Sharon could chair.

**Budget balance for Trail materials.** Dave said we have a balance of \$575 in our current budget that can be used for needed materials. He said boardwalk materials and puncheons for MCT and Monongahela Br. Trail are needed. He said he would send out an email to the WEC for any suggestions for additional materials that should be purchased. Julie said she needed post for the bog walk. Dave said we will need additional sigh posts.

**Break Back Run Trail.** Sharron reported she has been looking at Tyler's boardwalk construction near N. Jackson Ave. and has met with Tyler and Chris Demaise. They said they were not sure how to proceed and would welcome guidance. Sharon said the boardwalk with was too narrow and presents a safety hazard. Sharon also had concerns about areas where short boards have been placed with gaps in-between. She said her friend Pat had drawn up detailed plans and diagrams for the BBR boardwalk based on US Forest Service standards. She gave them to Dave to look over. Sharon also said the access trail at N. Jefferson near W. Buttonwood has been completed.

**Eldridge Trail.** Julie said there has been no change concerning the leaning tree by the raised boardwalk

**Tea House sign.** Julie presented a first mock up for the tea house sign design with the historical photo and text. She said the area just to the right of the tea house steps is a good area to place the sign. We will need to decide on the sign material. Bob had suggested stone. Julie has researched acrylic and fiberglass. The fiberglass is quire durable and fairly vandal resistant. It comes in 2 thicknesses. She said a 20" x 30" sign would cost \$257 plus shipping. A smaller 18" x 24" would be \$199. We could use wooden posts and the sign could be affixed to a wood support.

It was also suggested we adopt a set of standards for signage and that the 3 nature signs (Joe Berg Eagle project) be upgraded to the same material. Scott B. suggested we could seek funding for the sign from an organization such as the Woman's Club.

**Camel's Back Loop.** Dave said he would have the Borough drop the dirt off there for backfilling where there has been erosion at the bulk heads.

### **Near Term Projects.**

**Erosion at 206 N. Jefferson.** Dave reported the erosion gully behind 206 N. Jefferson is actually on Matt Schultes' property. It is widening and his tennis court is in danger of eroding in one corner. The resident at 206 has been putting large blocks into the gully, with questionable effects. Dave said he is really not sure who is responsible for dealing with this and he would need to discuss this with the Borough attorney.

**Newsletter.** Scott said the submission date is 11/16. He will include the photo (taken this evening) of Bill Klaus with the SJ plaque, Mad Hatter's Tree Party photos, and mentions of our upcoming moonlight and 5 mile hikes. He said he will also mention the impacts the heavy rains are having on our trails and our ability to maintain them.

**WEC Photo Contest.** Julie reported that Mayor Dominy, Deb Mix and Dave Coates have agreed to be judges for the contest. She said Deb Mix recently was awarded a prize for her photo in the PPA photo contest and would help us develop rules based on those of the PPA contest.

**NJ Tree Recovery Campaign.** Scott noted tree seedling will again be available for planting. Rich and Dave remarked that these small bare root seedlings have a very low survival rate when we have planted them in the past. They recommended we pass on the seedlings and use or cultivate more survivable saplings when we need to plant tree in future.

**Wenonah and WEC Open Space Review.** Scott gave a brief overview of the research he has been doing to identify and inventory conservation lands in the Borough and distinguish them from other public lands with other uses, such as athletic fields and Public Works structures. He mentioned this as authorized as a WEC function in the 1975 ordinance that created the WEC:

#### **Borough Code, Cp.20-3 Powers & Duties, 3:**

It (the WEC) shall keep an index of all open areas publicly or privately owned, including open marshlands, swamps and other wetlands, in order to obtain information on the proper use of such areas and may from time to time recommend to the Borough Planning Board, plans and programs for inclusion into the Master Plan and the development and use of such areas.

The 2012 ROSI (done for the Tall Pines GA grant) included non-conservation area public lands. Scott estimates the actual size of the conservation area 121 acres, not 135. The question arose as to whether our conservation lands were encumbered as a result of the GA grant for Tall Pines. Dave said he thought not, since the grant was for land outside the Borough, and at any rate the DEP never pressed the Borough to do so. He said there is no evidence of encumbrances as a result of the GA grant and no deed restrictions.

**Trail Guides.** Rich reported we have about 85 trail guides left out of the 1500 that were printed in 2007. Rich suggested we look into printing copies of the revised guide early next year, after a careful review of the revised text and map.

**Planning Board.** Scott said there were no issues other than a request for a fence variance by a Mantua Ave. resident.

#### **Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since last meeting.**

Deposits: \$3.00 trail guide sale

Expenses: \$76.50 to Lowes for boardwalk materials

\$34.41 reimbursement to Julie for corrugated signs (tree party)

Total Expenses: \$110.91

**Current balance: \$11,818.86**

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:14 PM. (Motion: Kreck; Second: Ream, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Rich Dilks, Sec.