

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

July 10, 2019

Vice Chairman Dave Kreck called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:33 in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act at the at the Jack C. Sheppard Community Center.

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

Associate Members Present: none.

Public Guests Present: none.

The minutes of the June. meeting were approved as amended:

(Motion: Ream Second: Conway, AIF)

Vice Chairman's Report- Dave Kreck

Review.

Fourth of July Hike. Dave noted the hike was very sparsely attended this year. He suggested in future we might change the day (i.e. to the weekend closest to the 4th) and or time of the walk to attract more participants.

Near Term Projects.

Tool Shed. Dave reported the tool shed is complete and entrance is protected by a combo lock, the combination of which has been distributed to WEC members. Dave said he has stored some WEC tools inside and invited members to store any tools or other items there they may have at home that would be useful to the WEC. Julie suggested we could store our banner in the shed. Julie also proposed we should keep a clip board or sign in the shed where WEC members would sign tools in and out when they use them, so we could track what tools are in use. It was agreed to do this.

Weed Wacker purchase. Scott Conway has been researching brands, models, gas vs. battery, and other product features and gave an update on his findings. Scot looked primarily at Stihl models based on that brand's quality and performance. He said he felt the battery models will be fine for our purposes and have sufficient power and operating time. He said we can also purchase a spare battery as a backup. He said the gasoline models can be temperamental, would require a gas-oil mixture for fuel that would age out after a year and are basically higher maintenance than the battery models. He said the batteries could run from about 30 min. to an hour on a charge, depending on what speed the trimmer is run on. A larger battery would increase that time modestly. Scott said he contacted all the Stihl dealerships in our area but found none that could rent us the model he chose in order that we could try one out before purchasing. However, they do offer a 7 day return policy. Scott said the trimmer would come with both the string and a mowing head. It carries a 2 year warranty. Scott said the cost would be about \$600 for the trimmer itself, \$35 for the mowing head and \$180-230 for the battery. That would give us an approximately total cost of \$845. Scott said he will put all his research together in a report and send it out to the WEC before our next meeting. It was noted the batteries for the trimmer would also work with battery chain and pole saws. Dave suggested the cost of the weed

wacker come out of our regular budget rather than the FWT account. He asked Rich to confirm the amount of the budget we were approved for this year. We had requested \$7500.

Tea House and Joe Berg sign projects. Julie reported the Tea House sign was installed by Scott Conway and herself on June 21. It seems solidly in place despite the high water table they encountered when digging the post hole. Julie also said the layout and information on the 3 Berg signs may be revised from the original. Julie said, and members agreed, that including some info on the locations and history of where the signs are placed (Wenonah Lake, Dilks Pond, Comey's Lake) would be appropriate. The revised text and design would need to be worked on. Julie said the bases for the signs at Wenonah Lake and Dilks Pond were in good shape and can be used. She said the cost of the thin option for the sign material would cost about 1/3 that of the thick option (used for the Tea House sign) and therefore the cost for the 3 signs combined would be about the same as for the Tea House sign.

Trail Maintenance.

Dave said recent storms and heavy rains have caused numerous problem in the trails with downed trees and erosion. He said he plans to go out with John Forren and his 18" chain saw and clear some problem blockages. Dave asked all WEC members to email him about any downed tree problems on the trails

Mantua Creek Trail. Dave noted there is a downed tree on MCT on the west side of the RR near the trestle. It is more of a climb over than a step over. There is also a tree at Clay Hill that has fallen into the creek with its branches facing up stream. Dave said the tree has the potential of catching debris and creating a blockage in the creek that could increase flooding in the Clay Hill area. Removing the tree, or at least some of the branches, will require getting into the water, likely with hand saws. Dave also reported a washout at the small bridge near W. Cherry St. He said filling the sinkhole with stones would be more effective than sand or dirt. He also said the bulkhead there seems secure. Dave noted the small bridge just east of Clay Hill needs to be replaced.

Comey's Lake. There is a washout on the east side of the bridge near the Tea House. Dave said he would check it to determine the best method of repair.

Eldridge Trail. There is a step over tree down.

Monongahela Brook Loop. The upper portion of the trail is passable.

Monongahela Brook Trail. Sections need trimming.

Garden Trail. The trail is passable. A neighbor has been mowing the trail access south of Clinton Ave. It was noted the homeowner the has created his own small boardwalk access to the Garden Trail.

Break Back Run Trail. The boardwalk upgrade near S. Jackson by Sharon & Bill Ceravolo, Pat Donnelly and Chris Demase is underway and is a major project. The completed sections are a very impressive piece of work, well designed and built.

Camel's Back Loop. There is still a large tree down across the trail.

Photo Contest. Julie reported we have had no entries to date. Julie said one rule of the contest, stating each photographer can enter only one photo, may need to be changed as it may discourage participants from entering until very late in the contest. Jules said offering modest cash prizes may also encourage more participants. Julie has distributed laminated signs in various places around Wenonah to publicize the contest and the online entry system Scott B. created is up and running.

Trail Guide reprint. Julie said aside from a couple of small edits, the file is ready to go to print. She will have the printing done at Bellia. It was decided to have the new Guide available to the public for the Fall Festival in Sept.

Passing of John Mullens. Dave noted with sadness the passing of John Mullens. He was an associate member of the WEC and a good friend to many of us. His transfer of land to the conservation area made the extension of MCT across the island possible. He was a valued

volunteer and supporter. Scott Conway noted that Bob Bevilacqua spoke at John's services, paying tribute to his service to the WEC and the community.

Bee Hotels. It was suggested the bee hotels would be a good craft to have at the Fall Festival. We would need a source of bamboo, from which we could cut and dry sections, and cans or boxes to house the bamboo sections.

Motorbikes. Dave noted he has seen no recent evidence of motor bikes on the trails. It is uncertain to what extent bikers are still riding along the railroad tracks.

Gloucester County Bicycle Coalition. Dave said Rebecca Kreck will attend our next meeting on behalf of that organization to propose a possible cycling, hiking and kayaking event that would include a hike through the conservation area.

Firefly Festival June 29. Rich reported the GCNC event held at Tall Pines was very successful with nearly 200 attendees. There were crafts and natural history talks at various stations and visitors could observe firefly displays in a natural area. One highlight was a storytelling circle by Ibbi, a Nigerian artist and author whose work has firefly themes.

Duckweed/Algae Control at Dilks Pond. Rich reported in late June we received our second installment invoice for Comey's Lake and first installment invoice for Dilks Pond. Both have been forwarded to Karen for processing. Rich asked WEC member to keep him informed if they see any duckweed or algae problems developing at either lake. Rich can report the problems to Princeton Hydro.

Clean Communities. Rich reported the WEC received a mini-grant of \$292.77 for participating in the May Clean Communities event.

SJLWT Wenonah Woods Walk June 29. Rich reported the walk led by the SJLWT coordinator, Michael Hogan, was well attended by about 20 people. Originally planned to go from the Glen Trail to the Tea House, Michael shortened the route to just the trestle and back due to the very hot weather. On the walk Michael and Rich pointed out the history of the area and many plant and tree species.

Vacation of N. Lincoln Ave. Rich reported that at the Borough's request he has submitted a letter stating his request that his half of the proposed vacated street, (33 ft. in width) be retained by the Borough as a conservation easement.

Long Tailed Weasel Rich noted that last week driving down Maple St near the Wenonah Lake dam, he saw a long tailed weasel cross the road. He said it was his first sighting of a weasel in Wenonah.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since last meeting.

Deposits:

\$292.77 Clean Communities grant.

Expenses:

\$100.00 Environmental award for Benjamin Cline.

\$100.00 Environmental award for Thomas McCabe.

\$16.95 reimbursement to Rich for 2 nature guides for student awards.

\$122.87 reimbursement to Pat Donnelly for bolts (Break Back Run Trail project)

\$923.21 reimbursement Sharon Ceravolo for materials (Break Back Run Trail

project)

Total expenses: \$1253.03

Curent balance: \$10,165.52

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:43 PM. (Motion: Ream; Second: Conway, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.