

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

April 8, 2020

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:32 P. M. in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act. Due to the restrictions in place to combat covi-19, this meeting was held as a video conference through Jitsi Meet.

<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 Guest Present: Glenn Green, couple living at 745 Leslie Ave., Deptford (names not given).

The minutes of the March 2020 meeting were approved as amended.

(Motion: Kreck Second: Ream AIF)

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

New graffiti at Tea House. Scott Conway reported he discovered new graffiti on the floor, posts and railing of the Tea House this morning. After a brief email consultation with WEC members, it was agreed Scott would contact the Mantua Police. He then met with Officer Shaw of the MPD at the Tea House. Officer Shaw took photos and said he would investigate further, including following up on a telephone number that was part of the graffiti. Julie sent out an email saying she had been at the Teas House yesterday at about 4PM., before the graffiti attack. She said as she was leaving, she saw three young people pull up in a car, two females and one male, and head into the conservation area. Julie felt there was a strong possibility they were responsible for the graffiti. Julie's email was subsequently forwarded to Officer Shaw. It was agreed that we can now paint over the graffiti. Scott Conway offered to do that. Julie will retrieve the paint and supplies from her home or the WEC shed.

Review.

State and local park closures. Scott Barnes noted as of April 7, all state and county parks were closed as social distancing measures. This included Tall Pines State Preserve. Scott B. also said Mantua Twp. has closed Chestnut Branch Park and Ceres Park. Scott had no information on any Deptford park closings. The Borough of Wenonah has taken no action to date to close the trail system. It was agreed that the WEC be proactive about encouraging social distancing practices if the Wenonah trails remain open. Maria suggested we encourage hikers to wear protective masks. It was also suggested the Borough could cordon off the lake parking lot to discourage out of town visitors. Scott B. has sent out an email listing appropriate social distancing practices and posted them on the WEC web site. He said he would also post them on our Facebook page, including the encouraging people to wear masks. Scott said he would also contact Mayor Dominy to maintain good communication between the Borough and the WEC on this issue. Scott C. said he has noticed an increased trail activity around Clay Hill on weekends but not so much on week days.

Bees at Clay Hill. It was noted the bee activity seems to be diminishing for now. People can walk the trail there and not even notice them. It was agreed the signs can remain up for now. Scott C. expressed concern that many young people walk up and down the slopes at Clay Hill,

including the south facing slope were many of the bees nest and asked if there was a way to protect that area from foot traffic. Scott C. also said that we will need to have a plan to accommodate the bees when we undertake the needed renovations at Clay Hill.

Raccoon/squirrel sickness in conservation area. Although several sick raccoons and squirrels, likely suffering from canine distemper, were seen in the conservation area in the past month, Dave said he has seen no new sick animals in the past 4-5 days. Scott B. has posted information about this on the web site, including the telephone number and a link to Gloucester County Animal Control. Scott said Animal Control was very willing to come out and assist in situations such as this.

Near Term Projects.

Debris removal. Dave said he has flagged the debris piles to distinguish them from saved materials and mark them for removal. He has also marked their location on a map. However, for the present, the Borough is not doing bulk pickups and Glenn Green informed us all Boy Scout activities are suspended through 4/30 and possible beyond.

Poster shelter installation. A utility mark out needs to be done before the 4 shelters can be installed. Dave said mark outs for this purpose can be done. He said the utilities do mark outs whole blocks at a time so there is no need to physically mark the exact locations now. Julie will forward a list of the location to Dave so he can get the process started.

Trail Maintenance.

Bog walk. Bob had sent an email with several photos to report on the progress of the bog walk restoration and upgrade. He is making significant progress. Julie will take an unused puncheon from the Bog Walk area for use on a muddy spot on Indian Trail.

Mantua Creek Trail. Dave reported he has been back filling the bulkheads of the small bridge near W. Cherry St. and has been making good progress. He said with another 1 to 2 hours of work he will use up the fill dirt that was delivered for the cancelled spring work party. He said Bob has also placed concrete blocks at the base of the bulkhead to prevent future undercutting and erosion.

Comeys Lake fountain. The fountain is now operating.

Unauthorized boardwalk at Break Back Run Trail. A couple identifying themselves as owners of 745 Leslie Ave. Deptford, the property adjoining 735 Leslie Ave. from with the boardwalk extends, spoke up on the issue. The man said he had built the Trax extension on 735 Leslie with the previous owner. Further he stated that the entire boardwalk was on the property of 735 Leslie and not in the Wenonah conservation area. He further stated the Trax were "wetlands compliant". Dave responded that we would need to see a survey or other documentation to determine where the property line between 735 and Wenonah actually is. (Note: It was subsequently established that the property boundary was at the stream line of Break Back Run, and that a substantial section of the old boardwalk and all the Trax extension were built without permission on Wenonah conservation land). The man also incorrectly cited a Wenonah corner marker as the 735 property boundary. In another issue he asked our permission to remove a downed tree partially blocking vehicular access to the Mantua Creek kayak launch. Dave replied that is a utility easement and that property is not owned by the Borough so we do not have the authority to authorize any action there.

American Legion Program Guide & Yearbook. Scott B. said he has been in touch with John Forren and has told him the WEC will take part in the project. He said there was an informal goal of having it ready by July 4th. It would promote 2020-2021 WEC activities and projects and could also have a memorial article for Chuck Forsman. Scott B. said a subcommittee should be formed to work on this. The subcommittee will consist of Scot B. Sharon & Rich. Maria suggested we look for appropriate photos for our entry.

Chuck Forsman memorial. Dave reported he believed Bob has ordered the stone. It will be 36" x 18" and weigh about 300 pounds. We will need assistance in transporting it to Comey's Lake, either from the Borough or John Van Dine, who uses a small mechanical carrier in his business. It was also agreed a tree planting will be done nearby. Dave & Bob will scout a good location for the tree. The species and a planting date are still to be determined.

Beaver presentation. Julie said she suspects the beaver program/field trip for Gateway students, scheduled for June 4th will likely be cancelled. She will contact Gateway to confirm.

2020 Duckweed/Algae treatments for Comey's Lake & Dilks Pond. Rich reported he signed and forwarded the contracts for Dilks Pond 2020 and Comey's Lake 2020 & 2021 to Princeton Hydro on March 12, along with the DEP \$150 permit fee. He said PH has forwarded copies of both DEP permits to us and will keep us informed of their treatment schedule, which should begin this month. PH is designated an essential service and can continue to operate during the current covid-19 business closures.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since last meeting.

Deposits: none.

Expenses: \$1,200.00 To Timber Cut Tree Service for removal of timber blockage at Bog Walk

\$150.00 DEP Permit for Comey's Lake

Total: \$1,350.00

Current balance: \$6,861.35

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:28 PM.
(Motion: Kreck, Second: Ream, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.