

# WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2020

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:31 P. M. in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act. Due to the restrictions in place to combat covid-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:** Kate Sporer, Chris Scheeper.

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

(Motion: Kreck Second: Ream, AIF)

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

### **Review**

Scott Barnes welcomed public guests Kate Sporer and Chris Scheeper to the meeting. Chris and his son Ryan had been assisting Bob with his repairs to the Bog Walk.

**American Legion Guide & Yearbook.** Scott B. reported our entry for the guide has been completed and forwarded to John Forren. Scott B., Sharon and Rich worked to put the article together. The publication date is not yet known but it is assumed will be by the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. Scott B. noted the article with its "Looking Back" and "Looking Ahead" sections could also serve as content for the updated WEC website.

**WEC paver in Wenonah Park.** Scott noted the 8' x 8' paver has been installed in the memorial area of the park, on the left side as you face into the park.

**Newsletter.** Scott B. announced he has submitted the WEC article for the summer Borough Newsletter. It mentions the July 5 hike but does not give the location and the WEC paver. Later in the meeting it was decided that mention should also be made of the ongoing graffiti problem at the Tea House to increase public awareness of the problem. Scott said he would forward this to the Borough as well.

### **Near Term Projects.**

**Atlantic City Electric grant possibility for Clay Hill.** Sharon has proposed we look into the Sustainable Communities Grant Program funded by Atlantic City Electric for Sustainable Jersey certified communities for funding for the renovations needed at Clay Hill. Sharon offered to tackle the paperwork to put an application together. Dave, who has written numerous grant proposals, offered to meet with Sharon and look into the details of the grant. Sharon said Pat may also be willing to assist with advice. It was clear we will need a detailed plan and a budget. The application is due 7/16/20.

**Debris removal from Trails** Dave noted the debris is identified but still on the trails. It was noted that Borough bulk pickup will resume on Tues. 5/26 and we may be able to get some of the debris to pick up points by then. Sharon noted she has three 5' puncheons at BBR Trail that could be used elsewhere. Scott C. noted the puncheons on the Eldridge Trail near Indian Trail are deteriorating and the BBR ones could go there. Sharon noted there is also a 10' linked double

puncheon available. It was pointed out that there is a muddy spot on the Wenonah Lake Loop in need of a puncheon. Kate Sporer said her son has a truck and may be able to transport the double puncheon to Eldridge Trail.

**Sign Project.** Julie reported the sites of the 4 poster shelters are ready for mark up. Julie has them plotted on a map and will forward that to Dave. She and Scott C. can then install the posts. Julie also said we ought to have some signage marking the new access trail to BBR Trail near Buttonwood St. and N. Jefferson Ave. Dave suggested a metal "Trail" sign like the ones proposed to link BBR Trail and MCT. He said the signs are inexpensive and he will purchase one for the N. Jefferson Ave. site.

### **Trail Maintenance.**

**Tea House.** Scott B. reported he found more graffiti at the Tea House today. He shared photos of this latest attack. Scott C. said he will report this latest incidence with photos to officer Shaw of the Mantua Police and then paint over it tomorrow. He said he is keeping the police informed of each incident. Sharon suggested mounting a surveillance camera. Maria also suggested putting up a "Smile You're on Camera" sign and/or a fake camera as a deterrent. It was agreed a notice should be posted at the Tea House telling people that graffitiing the structure is a crime and that the area is under camera surveillance. It is hoped that even if there is no camera, the notice would give people pause. Another point was that increasing community awareness of the problem is needed. Scott B. said he would add mention of the problem to the newsletter article and put a post on our Facebook page.

**Wenonah Lake Loop.** A large tree has fallen on and damaged a foot bridge on the trail on the west side of the lake. The area is still passable but the tree needs to be cut and the bridge repaired. Sharon said there were small branches on sections of the trail, likely due to recent wind storms but that they have not actually blocked the trail.

**Mantua Creek Trail.** Dave noted he has finished hauling the dirt and back filling the bulkhead of the bridge near W. Cherry.

**Break Back Run Trail.** Dave confirmed the Trex sections encroaching on conservation lands. . have been removed. The older wooden boardwalk remains. Since this follows the agreement we originally reached with the Grahams, owners of 735 Leslie Ave., we can now consider the incident closed.

**Camels Back Loop.** Gary Odenbrett had sent us a photo of the arched bridge with several boards missing. It appears that Bob is making repairs on the bridge as some of the older boards have deteriorated. It was also noted the bridge over the storm drain channel needs to be stabilized and improved.

**Chuck Forsman memorial & tree planting.** Bob now has the engraved stone. Dave said he and Bob will go out to Comey's Lake to select a location for the memorial. It was agreed a tree planting should also be done but the time and location need to be determined. Sharon suggested there is a 20'-30' dead pine tree on the trail near the lake. We could remove the dead tree and possible use that site for the planting.

**Independence Day Hike- Sun July 5.** With the installation of Chuck's memorial at Comey's Lake, it was decided to conduct the hike on the Eldridge Trail to the Tea House. It was also suggested that WEC members wear cowboy hats in memory of Chuck.

**Frank Eggert Student Environmental Awards.** Rich said Wenonah School contacted him last week about the awards. After confirming with the other members of the WEC he informed the school we would again be offering two \$100 awards to graduating 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

**Woman's Club proposal of gift cards to Wenonah School and Gateway graduates.** Scott B. said we received a proposal from the Woman's Club to participate along with four other community organizations to pool our resources and make a \$260 donation per organization to purchase Wawa gift cards for Wenonah School and Wenonah Gateway graduates, approximately 62 students in all. After discussion, it was agreed to participate in this. Scott B. said he will suggest the gift card be for Hawk's Deli rather than Wawa to support local business.

It was further agreed that we would continue to offer the *Frank Eggert Memorial Student Environmental Awards* of \$100 each to two graduating Wenonah School students.

(Motion: Kreck Second: M. Ceravolo, AIF)

**Prescriptive Easements.** Dave said he is consulting with the Borough Solicitor on the subject of prescriptive easements and how that may pertain to the trail sections that cross private land. The concept is the continued use of a piece of real estate for an extended period of time (perhaps 21 years in NJ) can create a legally recognized easement even if the property owner has not made any formal agreement to establish the easement. Sections of Monongahela Brook Trail, Mantua Creek Trail and Eldridge Trail, for example, cross portions of private property.

**WEC June picnic.** Scott C. inquired about the status of the June picnic at Wenonah Lake scheduled for June 10<sup>th</sup>. Scott. B replied that holding the event is unlikely. Wenonah Lake may delay its opening this year and the date is not yet certain. Further Scott B. said that restrictions on public gathering will likely still be in place. He also said he expects we will continue to meet by video conference for several more months.

**Friends of Wenonah Trails checking account changes.** Rich reported that he recently discovered Well Fargo had deducted a \$14 activity fee from our account. On looking into the matter he determined that the type of business checking we had with WF was called a Business Choice Checking and required a minimum balance of \$7,500 to avoid a monthly \$14 activity fee. Rich further determined this was not an appropriate account type for us. The WF business checking called Simple Business Checking is designed for community organizations and non-profits. It has a minimum balance requirement of \$500 before a \$10 activity fee is incurred. This was clearly the type of business account that was appropriate for us. Rich then contacted the banker at the Wenonah branch and then WF main banking services by phone. He was able to have our account switched immediately from Business Choice Checking to Simple Business Checking, and was able to have the \$14 fee cancelled and was assured no further fees would be incurred. The \$14 fee was incurred because for the first time in many years our account balance dropped below \$7,500. Rich suggested that large expense items for the remainder of the year be paid, where possible, from our budget. Our 2020 budget is \$7,500, \$5,223 of which goes for the duckweed/algae pond treatments. That leaves \$2,277 available for other expenses.

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

**Deposits: none.**

**Expenses: \$252.73 To Bob Bevilacqua for material for the Bog Walk repairs  
\$20.81 To Scott Conway for supplies for painting over graffiti at the Tea**

**House**

**Total: \$273.54**

**Current balance: \$6, 587.81**

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:35 PM.  
(Motion: S. Ceravolo, Second: Ream, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Rich Dilks, Sec.