

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2020

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:30 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: Jim Walsh.

The minutes of the June 2020 meeting were approved.

(Motion: Kreck, Second: Ream, AIF)

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Review

Letter form Mike Matalavage. Scott B. informed the Comm. that he receives a letter from Mike Matalavage thanking the WEC for providing him the opportunity to serve the public by contributing his efforts to WEC projects. He informed us he had recently been the recipient of a community service award and said he hopes to continue working with us on projects when he is home from college.

Near Term Projects

Atlantic City Electric/ Sustainable Jersey grant application for Clay Hill. Dave reported he has been working on a budget and budget narrative for the grant. He has priced the wood and materials needed for the project at Home Depot and other retailers. The project consists of replacing the steps, the retaining wall ,adding railing, 2 benches and a historical interpretive sign. The cost would be \$5,100. (The grant requested is for \$5,000.) Dave said the bulkhead along the water line at Clay Hill also needs to be replaced but that will not be in the grant application since it may raise DEP concerns with structures in or on the water. Rather, he will be looking into using the vinyl bulkhead slabs, similar to those used on Camel Back Run near E. Elm St. Dave will check out the cost and practicality of vinyl, which may need to be driven fairly deeply into the ground to be effective. Sharon reported that grant application is just about ready to go. She still needs the support letter from the Lions Club, which she expects to receive shortly. She said she already has letters from the local running club, Gateway Environmental Interns program and Gateway biology students. Sharon said the application involves several components and will require follow up, if received, including highlighting the project on the 2021 4th of July public hike. Additional public relations activities also would be required. Sharon said the Lions Club has also shown a possible interest in financially contributing to the Clay Hill project. Any contributions could go toward the cost of the new waterline bulkheads.

Chuck Forsman memorial. Scott noted the stone plaque is now in place and Rich has purchased 3 native shrubs (winterberry, Itea, oak-leaved hydrangea) and two cinnamon ferns for planting near the plaque. Rich plans to get a few additional ferns or wildflowers for the plantings.

The plants will be put in at the plaque in early Sept., in time for the rescheduled Independence Day hike on Sept. 6th.

Independence Day Hike. Scott B. noted the Wenonah Independence Day activities have been rescheduled for Sat. Sept. 5th and our hike will follow on Sun. Sept. 6th.

Trail debris removal. Dave reported there is still some debris to be removed from Hanisey's Landing and BBR Trail. He said the borough had removed items from E. Elm St. Salvageable items went to storage and trash was disposed of.

Sign projects. Dave said he had purchased 8 metal sign posts. He said he and Scott C & Julie will get together to install the 4 poster shelters once the hot weather breaks. Sharon said she determined the best place for the arrow trail sign directing hikers from the south end of the Wenonah Lake Loop Trail to BBR Trail would be next to the existing No Parking sign.

Trail Maintenance.

Tea House. Scott C. reported that he filed 2 additional police reports since our last meeting, 5 in all. The good news was that the amount of graffiti at the Tea House has diminished over the last month with only minimal amount in the last two weeks. Julie said she does not plan to repost the graffiti warning notice, as it may have had a counterproductive effect on the graffitiists. Scott C. said he has been using the primer paint to cover the graffiti and that once the incidents cease, we should repaint the area with the top coat.

Comey's Lake. Julie said there were a lot of branches and other natural debris at the south shore of the lake near the gravel path. She said it was unsightly but may be difficult to remove.

Eldridge Trail. It was noted there are erosional ruts that need to be filled in the stepped area leading from Pine St. to the first bridge.

Monongahela Brook Trail. Scott C. noted the Bog Walk section that crosses water is securely held in place but the plywood surface is deteriorating. He and Pat Ream had repositioned the land puncheons after the recent rain and flooding. Scott C. said the stakes do not have vertical grip against rising storm water and should be replaced with metal sign posts. Scott C. estimated we may need 20 sign posts for this and an additional 20 to secure all the puncheons on MCT as well. Dave said we can purchase whatever we need. Dave also purchased lag bolts to be used for this.

Garden Trail. Scott B. reported he cut intruding branches along the trail and worked at cleaning debris out of the stone pool. Sharon also worked at cleaning the stone pool.

Mantua Creek Trail. The sink holes are currently under control. Dave also brushed MCT trail and continued to brush the trails all the way to S. Marion.

W. Willow St. access trail. Scott B. said he was talking to Mike Mix who indicated the owner of the former Lentz property (Tim Huhn) had been concerned with hikers coming onto his property. Dave said the access trail is clearly on the Willow paper street, and wholly on Borough property. It was also mentioned that some hikers, when they get to the trail section near the lawn area, become confused and turn back. Scott B. suggested a solution would be to reroute the access trail a little further down the side of the ravine. Julie said putting an arrow trail marker there would also help. One complication was a large tree was recently (1-2 weeks ago) taken down in the area and the stump dumped into the public lands where the trail could be rerouted. Dave said he would talk to Mike Mix, check out the area and report back.

Break Back Run Trail. Scott B. said he trimmed the north entrance section of BBR Trail. Scott B. also cut several hazardous projecting tree roots on BBR Trail, and also on MCT near the RR and on the Wenonah Lake Loop Trail.

Wenonah Lake Loop. Dave hopes to repair some of the small bridges on this trail and place puncheons on muddy sections. He said he hopes to work with Mike Sheehan on this. It was noted that Pat Stafford and Mike Sporer may also wish to volunteer with the WEC. Scott B. said

there has been no new activity at the party pit on Eggert Trail. At the end of the season we should clean up the trash and do what we can to restore the area.

Dilks Pond. It was noted that some algae has been seen on the pond. Rich said he pond was treated twice in June on 6/2 & 6/23. He said if the algae persist he will contact Princeton Hydro. It was also noted that no more dead fish have been seen since our last meeting. Sharron voiced a concern that the dead fish might be a side effect of the pond treatment, or a reduction of oxygen in the water caused by dead plant material or lack of water flow. Rich said that Princeton Hydro maintains that its pond treatments are not harmful to wildlife, but technical questions would need to be addressed to them. Dave also noted a new drainage pipe was installed at Dilks Pond this spring, but that it is subject to blockage and periodically needs to be cleaned out.

Camels Back Loop. It was noted several presumably damaged or rotting planks have been removed from the arched bridge. Dave said he had some suitable wood and can replace the planks.

Equipment purchase. Scott C. reported he had the chain blade of the chain saw sharpened, purchased a second chain blade and a second battery charger. He submitted the cost directly to the Borough for payment from our budget.

Green Team. Sharon reported she met recently with Melissa for the Wenonah Green Team. The Team must soon file for recertification for 2020-21 and needs to earn additional points. Sharon suggested approaching the Borough to request space on the Borough website for both the WEC and the Green Team. The proposed web page could promote current and upcoming projects and events for both the WEC & GT. It was also suggested the GT could be highlighted on the WEC web site as well. Scott B. said that could be done and also is interested in putting an invasive species page on our web site, as elements of the updated WEC web site. Sharon will contact Karen Sweeney about the proposal for the Borough web page.

WEC fundraising. Julie inquired whether or how, as a Borough Commission with a budget, that would that effect any fundraising activities we might do. Scott. B said at minimum we would need to inform people that we are a funded commission but have projects that the budget is insufficient to cover. Sharron said one possibility would be to charge for our public walks as the SJLWT does. (The SJLWT charges \$3 to non-members for its Walks in the Woods Program.). Sharon said many out-of-towners now use our trails and attend our walks. A question of insurance liability for anyone injured on the trail arose. Scott B. said since the conservation area is Borough owned, any liability would fall on the Borough. Julie suggested we table any more discussion on fundraising until we know it outcome of the grant. If we do not get the grant, the Clay Hill restoration could be a fundraising focus

SJLWT Wenonah Wood Walk. Rich mentioned Michael Hogan of the SJLWT will conduct a walk in the conservation area on Sat. Aug. 15 form 8AM to 10AM. The walk will begin at the Glen Trail head on W. Cedar ST. and end at the Tea House. Participants should RSVP with the SJLWT web site. The cost is \$3 a piece for the public with SJLWT members free.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since last meeting.

Deposits: none.

Expenses: none.

Current balance: \$5,344.11

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:37 PM.

(Motion: Kreck, Second: Ream, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.