

# WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

August 12, 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:** Don Sparks.

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

(Motion: Kreck, Second: Ream, AIF)

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

### **Near Term Projects**

**Damage from recent storms.** Don Sparks said he has been checking the Tea House for graffiti but also reported two problems from the Aug. 11 heavy rains. He said the area on the Princeton Ave side of small footbridge near the Tea House has been severely eroded by the storm. A fallen tree at the bridge may have diverted waters to wash out that ground at that side of the bridge. Don also reported that there was substantial flooding and erosion at the area of the Comey's Lake dock and dam, and that the dam may be compromised. Dave said he plans to go out with Public Works and examine both the dam and footbridge tomorrow.

**Tea House graffiti.** Scott C. gave an update on the situation. He confirmed we have sufficient evidence to determine the identity of the person of interest (p.o.i.) who is responsible for a substantial portion of the recent Tea House graffiti, that Investigator Lawrence believes there is sufficient evidence to file charges, if we choose to do so, and that Scott C. has communicated to the p.o.i. what evidence we have. He said we now need to determine our actions going forward. The general consensus of the WEC was that we would attempt to resolve the issue informally if the p.o.i. is willing to meet certain obligations and actions set forth by the WEC. If that course fails, we would still have the option of filing charges with the police. Dave suggested the p.o.i. be required to reimburse us for the cost of the painting supplies used to paint over the Tea House graffiti and for the time and effort put into these efforts by WEC members. Further, the p.o.i. would be required to monitor the Tea House for a stated period of time and to paint over any additional graffiti that occurs there. It was suggested the period would be to the end of 2020, approximately 4 months. Sharon suggested the p.o.i. should make periodic reports to the WEC, which could be done in writing or verbally at our monthly meetings. A question arose about the cost of the painting supplies. Rich said he had checked our expenditures and found a receipt from Julie from Oct. 2019 for \$272.80 for painting supplies and a receipt for \$20.81 from Scott C from May 2020. He said the total cost was \$293.61. It was suggested we come up with a round figure that included reimbursement for our time and work as well as the supplies. \$500. was suggested. Scott. C said he would run our plan by Investigator Lawrence. It was agreed that we should draft a letter to the p.o.i. offering to resolve the matter and containing the terms of an agreement he would be required to follow. Scott C. and Julie will draft the letter and then share it with the WEC for review and comments.

**Boardwalk incursion from 410 S Marion.** Scott B. reported he receives a report from Graham Land from Mantua of Twp. Code Enforcement indicating the small boardwalk is entirely on Borough conservation lands. It crosses a small wet area and has apparently been there for some time. Until recent months the area was covered in vegetation and the boardwalk was not really noticeable. Sharon she first became aware of it when Bob saw it and mentioned it to her. Apparently when the Boddys built a shed and disturbed the adjoining area on their property, they cleared the boardwalk area. Rich said that since this is an unauthorized boardwalk on conservation lands, it should be removed. Dave suggested that the boardwalk could be repurposed for use elsewhere in the conservation area. He said he would need to see how it is put together and what condition it is in. if necessary, perhaps Public Works could assist in moving it.

**Atlantic City Electric/ Sustainable Jersey grant application for Clay Hill.** Sharon reported the grant application was filed on July 17. The deadline was extended to July 26. We have not yet had a response.

### Trail Maintenance.

**Comey's Lake.** Concern was expressed about the state of the dam that Don had earlier reported. Don said the flood waters may have been as high as the dock and the lake had overflowed. The dam structures are under the dock and have two components; a galvanized metal outflow pipe, believed to have been installed 1978-9, and a wooden lock that regulates the level of the lake.

**Tea House.** The fallen tree at the footbridge was cleared from the bridge but is still in the stream and may be causing erosion. Julie suggested we could remove much of it with hand saws and tools, but would need to stand in the water to do so.

**Mantua Creek Trail.** Dave reported on the rerouting of the Willow St access trail. He said Mike Mix and Tim Huhn had marked the new route with stakes. The new entrance will be closer to Willow St and further from the Huhn driveway and lawn. Dave said he hopes to relocate the trail head marker Frank had put in to the new trail head. It is believed to be anchored in concrete and we may need to use Borough equipment to remove it. Dave said once he has given final approval to the new route, Mike and Tim can clear the trail. Dave said the sink holes are back on that section of trail downstream from Clay Hill. He said at least one "land side" hole has opened up. He also said the sinkholes can be filled and that for now the trail is still passable. Dave also reported the fill behind bulkhead of the small bridge near W. Cherry St had been almost entirely eroded and washed away by the heavy rains, and that another severe storm could destroy the bulkhead itself. We need to come up with a strategy to stabilize and protect that area.

**Monongahela Brook Loop.** Scott B. said a trail user had suggested to him that a sign be put up informing hikers that the portion of the loop that is on low ground is impassable due to mud and vegetative growth. Julie agreed to make up a temporary sign, like the bee sign at Clay Hill, informing hikers the trail is impassable. The sign would be placed where the steps lead off from the raised boardwalk.

**Break Back Run Trail.** Scot B. noted there are survey stakes at the boundary of the property on S. Jefferson Ave., near Buttonwood St. They are likely connected to the fact the property was recently sold and is under contract. Scott noted that our trail, in part, crosses into that property. Dave reminded us that the prospective easement rule should protect the trail, should any questions arise.

**Wenonah Lake.** Scott B. reported there is now renewed beaver activity around the north end of Wenonah Lake. Dave said he believes the beaver are raising the water level there and effecting the low muddy sections of the trail there. He said we need to install additional boardwalks or puncheons in that section, perhaps as part of the Fall Work Party.

**Camel's Back Loop.** Dave said he has replaced the missing and rotted planks on the arched bridge and it is now walkable. He also reported that the support beams are in need of repair, but to make the repair would entail first removing the planks.

**Rescheduled Independence Day Hike- Dedication of Chuck's memorial.** It is now unlikely the 4<sup>th</sup> of July festivities rescheduled to Sept. 5 will take place. Although no decision has been made, the Lions are not actively engaged in planning. Our Independence Day hike, scheduled for Sun. Sept 6, also becomes problematical. Scott B said we would need to determine the legal number for outdoor gatherings, but having a large crowd for the dedication of Chuck's memorial would also be hard to manage. It was suggested that the dedication could simply consist of the WEC and selected guests, including Laurie and other members of Chuck's family. The event could then be live streamed to a wider public audience to watch electronically. Also with no Independence Day activities, we are not held to Sept 6, but could hold the dedication later in the month. Dave said he would reach out to Laure to determine what date is good for her.

**Newsletter deadline.** Scott B. said the Borough Newsletter deadline is 8/15. He said he would mention the challenges of maintaining and keeping the trails open in light of the recent storms and flooding, the Atlantic City Electric/ Sustainable Jersey grant application for Clay Hill and the Fall Work Party, telling people to check our website for details.

**Clean Communities Day-Sat. Aug.29.** Dave suggested this would be a good opportunity to tackle the trail problems at the north head of Wenonah Lake. Access would be off of Princeton Blvd., which offers a relatively short distance to carry in materials. Sharon said there were some extra posts from BBR Trail that could be used there. WEC volunteers will need to sign in at the train station but would then meet on Princeton Blvd.

**Boy Scout Island.** Scott C. reported that the party spot on B.S.I. has not been used for quite a time and is a bit overgrown. He noted that the large tree that fell and blocked access now has a limb sawed off so that a person could pass through. Scott B. noted there has been no recent activity at the Eggert Trail dug out party spot either.

**WEC Current budget balance.** Rich reported that our 2020 budget was \$7,500, and that calculating the expenditures anticipated or made to date, we have spent \$6,708.94. That leaves a balance \$791.06 available for additional expenditures.

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

**Deposits:**        **\$21.00** trail guide sales.

**Expenses:**     **\$514.00** to Tri-State Monuments for Chuck's memorial stone.  
                  **\$277.23** to Work Zone Contractors for 20 metal sign posts.

**Current balance: \$4,573.88**

**Note:** Rich has requested the cost of this month's two expenses (excepting a sales tax of \$17.23 on the sign posts) be reimbursed to the FWT account from our municipal budget. The total reimbursement will be \$774.00. When that is deposited in to the FWT account, the balance will be \$5,347.88

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:41 PM.  
(Motion: Ream, Second: Kreck, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Rich Dilks, Sec.