

# WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2020

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:33 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:** Max Pozza, Zach Solem.

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

(Motion: S. Cerevolo, Second: Ream, AIF)

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

### **Near Term Projects**

**Clay Hill ACE-Sustainable Jersey Grant.** Scott B. said that he and Sharon attended the web cast on 9/30 that announced the grant winners. He said our 2 minute video, shot at Clay Hill and featuring Sharon (with a walk on by Frida), was not one of those shown. Scott B also said that he Sharon, Dave and Rich met briefly on Oct 9 as a subcommittee to review the initial plans and grant requirements. Dave has worked out a multi stage plan for the project with sketches, hopes to begin construction in Nov. and have the construction of the stairs and decks completed by the end of the year. The plan is to do this in stages that will minimize the time the trail may need to be closed. The plantings, landscaping and interpretive sign would be in the final phase, in the spring. Sharon said she is contacting the Lions Club to determine what assistance they will be contributing to the project either in in-kind labor and/or monetary contributions. The subcommittee also decided that it would be helpful to meet at Clay Hill to go over the plans. It was originally suggested that an initial work party could be scheduled for 11/14, but it was subsequently decided that we would need to have a clear plan of action in place first and also that that date conflicts with Clean Communities Day. Scott B. said having a Clay Hill subcommittee was an efficient way to handle the details of the project and that if other WEC members are interested in participating they would be welcome. Julie brought up the question of disturbance to the mining bees that nest underground at Clay Hill. Sharon replied that the disturbance would be confined to the trail areas not on the slopes where the bees nest and that we would hope to avoid any disturbance during March-April when the bees are active. Scott B. said that we have already received \$2,500 of the grant but that the remaining \$2,500 will be withheld until the project is completed. We would need to purchase some materials out of our budget and FWT account and then be reimbursed from the final grant payment. It was also noted we need to take photos to record the progress of the project and to track our man hours. Sharon said that after we and the WHS have settled on a photo and text for the interpretive sign, Julie could assist with the final design and manufacturing of the sign since it would be similar to the job she did for the Tea House sign. Scott C. raised the question whether the WEC can use our sales tax exemption to purchase materials with the grant money. Scott. B and Rich said that

any purchase we make as a municipal government commission should be tax exempt regardless of whether the funds come from our budget, the FWT account or the grant.

### **Trail Maintenance.**

**Tea House bridge.** Scott C. said the Tea House bridge he and Bob have been repairing is functional but that Bob wants to drive metal signposts in to further anchor it. Scott C. also said the bulkhead on the west side of the bridge needs back filling. Julie noted some sand is already naturally filling in the site. Scott suggested a bucket brigade could move fill sand from a sand bar slightly down stream. This could be an activity for the 11/7 work party.

**Eldridge Trail.** The water bars in the section off Pine St. were discussed. Scott. C. said a problem is that they cannot function properly since the sides of the trail are higher than the water bars. He said he would like Dave to look at this and suggested it might be possible to use equipment lower the sides of the trail to permit runoff.

**Mantua Creek Trail.** Julie noted the boardwalk on the west end of the island had come loose during recent flooding. Scott. C. said he wants to use longer metal sign posts to secure the boardwalk and to use lag bolts since screws have a tendency to break under pressure.

He said he would work on the area when available. Sharon brought up the sink holes on MCT. She suggested we could use cinder blocks as fill. Scott C. noted Dave was pounding stakes vertically in to the holes to create a sort of bulkhead. It was noted that additional sink holes are appearing in that section and that we need to study the best methods for stabilizing them.

**Break Back Run Trail.** Scott B. said that some of the steep slopes are eroding and some fill might be needed. Sharon reported that Zach Solem has offered to do his Eagle Scout project on BBRT. Zach was present at this meeting, along with Scoutmaster Max Pozza. Zach said he will be presenting his proposal to the Scout council, on Oct.31. He said he plans to construct steps on some of the steep slopes on the north section of the trail along with rope railings and fill where needed. He would then widen the southern portion of the trail and clear logs and brush from the Hayes Ave. entrance. Zach said he would work in stages, doing the steps and railings in the fall and winter, then the trail widening in the spring. He said the project will need to be done by May 10, 2021 when he will age out. Sharon and Max also said Zach will need to determine the cost of the project and then fundraise, possibly getting donations in kind from local businesses. He might also use social media for fundraising.

**Wenonah Lake Loop (northern section).** Rich said he recently checked out the beaver activity in the area. He said there are two dams impacting the trail system there. The dam about 200 ft. upstream from the small footbridge is diverting water out of the stream channel and it is flowing across and flooding the low section of trail there. There is a second low dam below the footbridge and near the west shore trail just past the first puncheons. It is backing up water under the bridge so that it will flood during rains, creating muddy spots at the bridge. Rich also noted a number of mature trees have been girdled and killed by the beaver, mostly black gum, but including a large sweet bay magnolia. He said some of the beaver activity was very recent. It was suggested we wrap some mature trees we wish to save with wire. Julie said she still has some wire that can be used. To control the flooding of the trail, it was suggested we install pipes or flumes in the dams. One suggestion was to retrieve the two wooden flumes that were installed near the Monongahela Loop Trail several years ago but that are no longer needed there. It was uncertain what condition they are now in, how heavy they would be to move or how feasible that would be. Another option would be to build new ones if we can get plans that show the design. Scott. C said he would construct them if we could get specs and plans. We could contact Bob about how he got the original flumes.

**Wenonah Lake (party spot).** Scott B. said a lot of trash has accumulated around the party spot hole on the Eggert Trail and that a cleanup there could be a good Clean Communities activity on 11/14/

**Fall Work party, Sat. Nov 7.** Scott B. said we will need to coordinate by email what projects we take on for the work party. We could wire wrap trees at Wenonah Lake but would need a plan in place before we take on controlling the flooding. Also we could place rip rap at the Cherry St

bridge on MCT but will need to assess the situation there first. Other suggestions were completing the repairs on the bridge near the Glen Trail, backfilling the bulkhead at the Tea House Bridge, dispersing tree limbs there and filling sink holes on the MCT.

**Plantings at Chuck's memorial.** Rich said he is ready to put in the plantings at the stone memorial. He said he plans to put 3 shrubs and some ferns behind the stone. He also said that Julie is donating ostrich ferns from her garden to be planted on the sides of the stone. Rich said he was unsure if he would need to wait until after the heavy equipment had brought fill to the nearby eroded slope. He said he would contact Dave for advice.

**Maria stepping down as WEC member.** Maria announced that due to professional and employment obligations, she is reluctantly stepping down from the WEC after many years of productive service on the WEC. On behalf of the WEC, Scott B. thanked Maria for the many projects she took the lead on and her many accomplishments and contributions, from the trail markers to puncheons to the Frank Eggert memorial float. Her energy, enthusiasm and competence were a great asset to the Commission. Thank you, Maria.

**Filling the WEC vacancy.** A discussion took place about finding a replacement for Maria. Several individuals were mentioned as possible candidates. It was decided that we would contact each sequentially, if needed, starting with our first choice. Sharon said posting the vacancy might also be an option. She said it is most important we find someone who is committed to our mission and that an individual with some expertise in trail maintenance would be an asset.

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

**Deposits:**           **\$100.00** Donation from David & Crystal Hanrahan  
                          **\$60.00** anonymous cash donation  
                          **\$350.00** Clean Communities Day grant  
                          **\$510.00 Total deposits**

**Expenses:**       **\$485.59** Reimbursement to Bob B. for bridge repair materials

**Current balance: \$5,372.29**

**Monies available in WEC munc. budget: \$718.13**

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:53 PM.  
(Motion: Ream, Second: Conway, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Rich Dilks, Sec.