

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
November 11, 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	
Rich Dilks (Sec.)	X	
Dave Kreck (V. Chair.)		X
Julie Ream	X	

Associate Members Present: none.

Public Guest Present: Glen Green, Dave Coates, Mayor John Dominy, Lisa Schroeder (Watershed Ambassador).

The minutes of the October 2020 meeting were approved as amended.
(Motion: S. Cerevolo, Second: Conway, AIF)

Public Guest Current Watershed Ambassador, Lisa Schroeder, introduced herself and said she was available to work with the WEC and Wenonah Green Team on future projects. Sharon said the Green Team will be working on Sustainable Jersey recertification and hopes to involve Lisa in projects and activities. Sharon said she would follow up with Lisa on this.

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Review

Fall Work party, Nov. 7. Scott B. reported that volunteers completed tasks at three locations. At Clay Hill volunteers, including a number of Lions Club members, removed some of the old stairway and wooden supports, in preparation for the trail restoration there. At the W. Willow ST access trail volunteers mulched the trail with wood chips. On Mantua Creek Trail additional volunteers filled sink holes with dirt and pounded in stakes to deter future undercutting. A pile of dirt was also left at that site in case additional work will be required in future.

Near Term Projects

Clay Hill Restoration Project. The old stairway was removed at the Nov. 7 work party. A discussion arose on Nov. 7 about whether a tree at Clay Hill between the trail area and the creek should be removed. Rich later inspected the tree (a fairly young and healthy chestnut oak) and reported the tree seems to be stable and not in imminent danger of falling. It was decided to defer any decision on the tree until after the full design of the trail and deck has been worked out, and then determine if the tree poses a risk to the trail or decking. Also some of the Lions Club volunteers suggested an expansion of the bulkhead at Clay Hill. Sharon clarified that the bulkhead was not an element in the restoration project for which we received the ACE grant. It was agreed any decision on the bulkhead would be deferred until after the restoration project is completed. Sharon said at present we do not have a fully thought through design for the trail and deck. Getting that done should now be our first priority. She suggested reaching out to Pat and Bob for ideas, and utilize Dave as a consultant to the extent he will be available. Once a plan is in place we will need to draw up a list of lumber and other materials needed and then make the purchases so construction can begin. Sharon said the Lions Club would be willing to assist the project financially if we run over budget. Scott C. said that he is now available to be a member of

the Clay Hill subcommittee. Scott B. reminded us that we will need to do media promotion of the project but that we should hold off on announcing an official start until we have a definite design and can provide more interesting visuals for any photos or video.

Trail Maintenance.

Tea House bridge. Scott C. said the bridge is safe and walkable but is not yet secured in place, so that a major flood could dislodge it. He said he needs 3 or 4 8ft posts to secure the bridge. He said sign posts are also needed to secure the repaired bridge on MCT near the Glen Trail. It was agreed that since we use a large number of these post, we should purchase them in bulk as needed. Scott B. said we could check with Bob to find out where he has purchased them.

Eldridge Trail. The water bars in the section off Pine St. were discussed. Scott. C. said to fix this problem we need to create a place for the water to flow off the trail. He said perhaps putting in a small ditch on the down slope side of the bars would help or using Borough equipment to scrape the higher side earth away. He said he will check out the site and see what can be done.

Glen Trail. There are plastic drainage pipes extending from the property at 100 W. Cedar that clearly extend into the conservation area. The pipes actually stick out into the air and will be discharging onto conservation lands. It is unclear whether the pipes are temporary or not or whether they constitute a zoning violation. It was suggested the best approach would be to have Dave arrange an inspection by a code enforcement officer, who would also have the background on what construction on 100

W. Cedar may be connected to the pipes. Scott B. noted the dead deer on the Glen Trail near the MCT has been vigorously worked on by scavengers and that we can let nature continue to take care of it.

W. Willow St Access Trail. Scott B. noted the original access trail there had flat placed stones at the trailhead by Frank Eggert. Scott noted that Frank often used stones in similar locations. Scott said he would take those stones and reinstall them at the new W. Willow St trailhead.

Mantua Creek Trail. The W. Willow St access trail has been mulched, sink holes near W. Cherry St have been filled and the old stairway removed from Clay Hill. See above section of minutes on the Nov, 7 work party for details.

Break Back Run Trail. Sharon reported that she has signed Zach Solem's paperwork for his Eagle Scout project at BBRT. Zach will now present his proposal to the scout council. Scott C. noted that earlier he had painted over graffiti in some trees on BBR.

Wenonah Lake Loop (northern section). Scott B. noted the beaver dams are still backing up water there but the trail is passible if messy. Scott said with the Clay Hill project, remedying the beaver dam situation at the lake will need to be a secondary priority for now. Scott C. said that Bob has sent him the diagram for the beaver flume. It can be constructed of wood or with plastic piping. Scott C. said he will look into the design and inspect the site. Julie said she had wired a large number of trees on the east side of the lake and near the foot bridge but wasn't sure how many trees needed to be protected on the west side of the lake. Rich said he would go out there and get an idea.

Signage.

Poster shelters. Scott C. announced that he and Julie, assisted by Julie's son Dan, have now installed the 4 poster shelters with trail maps using metal posts anchored in concrete. The locations are: Mantua Ave., near the MCT entrance, BBRT entrance on Maple St., the west side of S. Marion on the Monongahela Brook Trail and at Lenape Trail on the access trail near the pumping station. A 5th poster shelter is held in reserve.

Arrow sign. Sharon said a "Trail arrow" sign was needed where the Wenonah Lake Loop Trail meets Maple St that would point hikers toward the BBRT entrance. Sharon asked if the sign could be attached to an existing sign post there. Mayor Dominy suggested that if the existing sign is just an informational sign, that was a possibility, but if the sign were a traffic control sign we likely could not use it.

E. Mantua Ave. Conservation Area sign. Scott B. brought up the vandalized Conservation Area sign. It is unrepairable and some of the plywood is rotting,. Scott C. said the brackets are not movable. Julie said she has asked for a quote for a replacement sign from the sign company she worked with on the Tea House sign. Scott B. said he would look up where the Conservation Area signs were originally purchased.

Plantings at Chuck's memorial. Rich reported he was able to put in the shrubs and ferns at the memorial in mid Oct., soon after the large tree at the dam was removed. He said that Julie then planted ostrich ferns from her garden at the stone, completing the planting for now.

Clean Communities Day, Nov. 14. Scott B. announced Clean Communities is scheduled for Sat. and suggested we could do a trash cleanup at Wenonah Lake, particularly in the area near Princeton Blvd. and the Eggert Trail party spot. He noted there is considerable trash there. Rich said he would supply the grabbers, gloves, plastic bags and vests. Scott C. said there are 3 chairs and a tire at Boy Scout island that he would like us to remove if we have the man power. He suggested a wheelbarrow would be helpful there. Sharon said she had a wheelbarrow he could borrow. Scott C. noted that the BSI party spot has seen little recent use and vegetation is growing back.

Newsletter. Scott B. said the deadline for the newsletter is Nov.15. He said he would announce the receipt of the ACE-Sustainable Jersey grant. He said he would also list our upcoming activities. With the covid crisis, it is uncertain whether we can actually conduct the 5 mile and moonlight hikes with large numbers of people in early 2021, but we can make that decision closer to the time.

Filling the WEC vacancy. The vacancy on the WEC is still, open following Maria's resignation last month. It was suggested we could reach out to the public with a notice we are looking for a new member. That could be done through the newsletter and on our Facebook page. Dave Coates said that if finding a replacement becomes difficult, he would again be willing to serve. Scott C. asked how we would sort through multiple candidates. Scott B. said first we would invite them to a meeting and that the process may well be self-sorting. Candidates not chosen could be asked to serve as assoc. members. It was suggested someone with either social media skills or construction skills would be a welcome addition.

Camden-Glassboro Light Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Scott B. noted the Draft EIS has after several years delay been completed and virtual hearings are being held on Nov. 17 & 19. Scott said he plans to attend, as does Mayor Dominy. Scott said he has looked through the EIS online and noted several elements relating to Wenonah. He said the line would be 3 tracks from Maple St. north and 2 tracks south of that point. It was unclear how many trees would be taken out in the section along Wenonah Lake or how much disturbance of the area would occur. The plan also references the "Wenonah Ravine" the area between Cedar St. and the Mantua Creek trestle, an environmentally sensitive area due to the presence of the shingle oaks, a listed S1.1. species in NJ. Scott said the EIS acknowledges our trail system would pass underneath the Mantua Creek trestle. The EIS also indicates the tracks in Wenonah would be fenced on both sides. A station, if built in Wenonah, would be just north of the community center on both sides of the tracks and would take out considerable greenery in the area. Mayor Dominy reminded us that the decade long EIS is not an engineering plan and at present much remains unknown. He also said the light rail plan would cost from 2 to 4 billion dollars and is currently not funded. He said that whatever the future holds on the light rail proposal that Wenonah should work to get the best deal possible for our community.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since last meeting.

Deposits: none

Expenses: **\$67.96** Reimbursement to Julie for beaver wire.

Current balance: \$5,304.33

Monies available in WEC munc. budget: \$718.13

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

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.