

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

December 9, 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 (7:40)	

Associate Member Present: David Coates.

Public Guests Present: Julia Horn, Bill Ceravolo (for Clay Hill portion).

The minutes of the November 2020 meeting were approved with an amendment: the Glen Trail drainage pipes probably extend into the conservation area, but this has not been proven.

(Motion: Conway, Second: Ceravolo, AIF – *David acted as member to satisfy quorum*)

Public Guest: Julia Horn, whose family just moved to Wenonah, introduced herself. She offered help with social media as WEC had requested in the last Borough Newsletter.

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Review

Clean Communities Day, Nov. 14. Scott B. reported that it was a successful outing. Volunteers including Watershed Ambassador Lisa Schroeder cleaned up trash around Wenonah Lake and at Boy Scout Island. We had the required 10 volunteers to receive funding from the borough.

Near Term Projects

Clay Hill Restoration Project. Sharon reviewed the plans submitted by Pat Donnelly based on detailed measurements he and Sharon's husband Bill had taken at the site. Pat will be submitting a materials list later. Sharon proposed that we give Pat a \$200 stipend to partially compensate him for his time. After discussion, it was agreed to pay this stipend out of grant funds (Motion: Barnes, Second: Conway, AIF). Sharon will ask Pat to submit an invoice to the Borough.

On the east end, marine-type pilings will be placed in augered holes, cemented in place, to hold the raised boardwalk in place. A "tugboat-sized" rope railing will be used on the water side because it is inexpensive and resistant to vandalism. This is actually Phase 2 of the work. Phase 1 is an upper deck – also with a rope railing – plus the steps up to and down from the deck. The steps will be made from railroad ties, and will be held in place with rebar or stakes. Unlike in prior plans, the upper sitting bench will be on the hill side, not the water side. Sharon will ask Dave to weigh in on issues of soil disturbance near the creek, and whether the rope railing would be adequate from a safety perspective. The height of the east end boardwalk may need to be adjusted; Scott C. argued it would be impossible to raise the walking surface above the flood plain under all flooding conditions.

Sharon said Phase 1 construction timing will be weather-dependent, and could not start before late January. Even if only Phase 1 can be achieved, the overall goals of the grant would be

fulfilled. Bill said that Phase 1 is mostly labor plus cost of railroad ties; Phase 2 would have the majority of the material expenses. Labor will need to be recruited, including from the Lions Club.

Other concerns could be addressed by an on-site meeting: how much dirt will be removed from the hillside, where the sign could be placed, and what kind of bench could be used. Sharon said this meeting could occur sometime in January.

Trail Maintenance.

Tea House bridge. Julie reported that sand has naturally filled in the most of the upstream bulkhead. Scott C. said three of the four bridge corners still need to be secured to the posts.

Beaver activity. Julie reported fresh activity all along Mantua Creek. There is also a new dam on Monongahela Brook just east of Marion Avenue, well below trail level. Finally Julie wired several partially-gnawed trees in the area of the Chuck Forsman plaque. There is enough wire left for 3 or 4 trees.

Wenonah Lake. Two Saturdays ago, Scott C., Dave, and Scott B. opened up two possible beaver dams at the north end; it did not seem feasible to insert drainage pipes. As of Monday, Scott C. said water is still flowing and no beaver repair attempts were visible. There is still a 50-foot section of trail that is muddy and might need puncheons or added gravel. Julie wondered if the existing "trail rail" timbers were trapping water in place. This is a challenging location because it is a natural low spot; we don't want to inadvertently create dams of our own. Scott C. suggested waiting until the ground dries out before studying any potential remedies.

Scott C. had noticed bright blue graffiti on the lake side of a stormwater outfall. Scott B. said that based on property boundaries the structure was likely owned by Deptford Township. Dave might be able to contact their engineer for permission for us to paint over this structure.

Break Back Run Trail. Sharon reported that she has not heard from Zach Solem on his Eagle Scout project. She will contact him for an update. There is a danger that he will "age out" in the spring.

Scott C. noticed a small tree that had been felled by an axe several months ago. This was near the surveying stakes for 210 N. Jefferson Ave., which had been sold this summer.

Garden Trail. Scott C. noticed a fort and private property sign near the railroad on the last property past the end of South Clinton. Some trees were felled to construct the fort. The boundaries of conservation land in this area should be determined. Scott B. will send out links to the online tax maps that the County makes available.

Eldridge Trail. The water bars in the section off Pine St. were discussed again. Scott C. said that the slope of Pine St. itself may be working against us. Scott recommended that Dave see if the Borough has any role in changing the flow off of the street. Reconfiguring the water bars alone might not help at all.

Signage.

E. Mantua Ave. Conservation Area sign. Sign Boy has the artwork from the 2005 replacements. Julie proposed replacing only the one missing sign using the same material and mounting hardware. She inspected the other three signs using a stepladder; they have some deterioration but seem to be in reasonable shape. It was decided to follow Julie's recommendation and replace only one sign for \$225. (Motion: Ceravolo, Second: Conway, AIF).

Chuck's memorial. Scott B. said that we could dedicate the memorial at a future hike in that area, provided Lorrie Forsman could attend.

Borough Budget. Scott B. was not sure whether Rich had already submitted our 2021 request yet or not. There was a discussion over the appropriate amount. The consensus was not to request an increase in the current economic environment. We may have to focus more on fundraising in the new year, since as Sharon pointed out our trails are getting a lot more use.

Filling the WEC vacancy. Scott B. said we might use a social media campaign in the new year to recruit people with construction experience. Sharon proposed creating a Trail Maintenance Committee that is composed of volunteers who might be available for physical tasks but might not want to sit through formal meetings. David suggested tapping into the intense interest on the Wenonah-focused Facebook groups.

Camden-Glassboro Light Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Scott B. gave formal testimony at the Nov. 19th hearing questioning whether all the tree impacts along the line, especially in Wenonah, had been fully accounted-for in the EIS. Scott C. asked whether the borough would be submitting formal comments. Scott B. was not aware of any such comments from the mayor or council. Citizens in several communities including Wenonah are organizing opposition to the line based on noise impacts. Wenonah could potentially apply for a “quiet zone” designation that would avoid all horn noise, but at an unknown cost.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since last meeting.

Deposits: **\$250** from Clean Communities Day

Expenses: **\$27.32** Reimbursement to Scott C. for concrete for poster shelters

Current balance: \$5,527.01

Signage at Wenonah Lake. Scott C. spoke with Dave about guidance signs for hikers headed to the Break Back Run Trail. A metal disc would be glued to the guard rail on the north side of Maple Street pointing to the left. (Also, Sharon said Maria will deliver the remaining discs to the shed.) There are six remaining brown arrow signs (three left and three right). A left-facing brown sign would be attached underneath the poster shelter at the BBR entrance. There was general agreement to implement this plan. Scott C. will need to obtain bolts, either from Dave or elsewhere.

Metal Highway Sign Posts. Scott C. said there are two 8-foot, four 7-foot, and a couple of 3-foot posts in stock. Rich found that Bob paid \$13 per post at a local vendor earlier this year. Scott C. proposed buying another 20 posts at about \$277. We would have to ask Bob how these would get delivered. It was agreed to purchase these posts. (Motion: Ream, Second: Ceravolo, AIF.)

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:00 PM.
(Motion: Ream, Second: Conway, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Scott Barnes, Chair