

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2021

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:31 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: John Foren

Public Guest Present: Julia Horn, Zach Solem.

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

(Motion: Ceravolo, Second: Ream, AIF)

Reorganization.

Selection of officers for 2021. Scott Barnes opened the floor for nominations.

Sharon Ceravolo nominated Scott Barnes for Chairman.

Scott Barnes nominated Dave Kreck for Vice Chairman, contingent on his acceptance.

Scott Barnes nominated Rich Dilks for Recording Secretary.

Julie Ream nominated Scott Barnes as Planning Board Rep.

No further nominations were made. Each nominee present expressed willingness to serve. A motion was made confirming the above nominees will continue in their respective offices for the year 2021.

(Motion: Ceravolo, Second: Ream, AIF)

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Near Term Projects

Clay Hill Restoration Project. Sharon said she plans to meet with Pat at the site on Sat. Jan.23 along with any other interested persons. She had also reached out to Ron Cline. She reported Pat is working to simplify the plans and that he believes we may need a permit to construct the boardwalk due to its proximity to the creek. Pat is also working on the plans for the steps, upper deck and bench location. Scott C. said we should consult Dave on the questions of any possibly required permits and should schedule the site meeting for a time he would be available. Sharon agreed to do so. He said he hoped Dave could offer advice and guidance even though other commitments preclude Dave from fully being involved with the project. Sharon said Pat is also putting together a materials and cost list. Rich was asked to attend the meeting also to give input on the need to cut some beech tree roots at the site. Sharon said that members of the Lions Club were willing to contribute some of the heavy labor, such as carrying material to the site.

Beaver Activity. Scott C. noted that the beavers have been very active this winter in numerous locations along the trails. He said the area with the greatest activity is near the north and northwest shores of Wenonah Lake, where a number of trees have been gnawed or felled recently. Julie said she will purchase enough additional wire to protect 8 trees. She said she,

Scott C. and her son plan to go to Wenonah Lake on Thurs. to wire the trees. She said there is a limit to how many trees can be wired and we need to be selective.

Trail Maintenance.

Break Back Run Trail Eagle Scout project. Scott B. said Zach Solem's project has been conditionally approved by the scout council. Scott also said he has written and delivered a requested letter from the WEC as sponsor confirming our support for the project. Copies went to Zach and Scoutmaster Max Pozza. The project must be completed by May 2021 when Zach will age out. Zach brought up the question of gravel filling an eroded area on the trail west of W. Buttonwood and inquired if an erosion study was needed. Scott B. cautioned that we should not fill areas with gravel if it just washes away again. Sharon said she would like to meet with Zach at the site in question, possibly on Sunday, to evaluate what should be done. Scott. C. said the question needs to be resolved promptly. Zach confirmed that Dave had already approved the basic element of the project.

Muddy trail sections- Wenonah Lake & near the Tea House. Scott C. brought up the issue of habitually wet and muddy sections of some trails. The section just north of Wenonah Lake remains very wet and will need to be addressed. Scott also said there were problems on both sides of the bridge near the Tea House. He said the cement steps on the east side of the bridge were built over a seepy area and seem to have settled lower. There is often standing water on them. Scott noted there are wooded boards on the front vertical side of the steps that are now rising above the cement and retaining water. He said he cut notches in them to help water drain from the area. He also created a channel on the south side of the steps to help water drain. Scott C. also noted there is an old boardwalk section on the west side of the bridge that is sinking into the mud. He took some lumber down and was able to elevate it. He said there is another muddy spot nearby that needs a puncheon. He asked if there was any unused lumber on other trails for this, otherwise lumber would need to be purchased. Scott B. noted the puncheon on the Eldridge trail near Indian Trail is loose. Scott C. said he would fix it.

Lenape Trail access area. Julie noted that crushed concrete and mulch were recently dumped and spread on and near the access trail, but she was unsure who did it.

Pink arrow signs from running events. It was noted that a number of pink arrow markers used by running groups have been left on the trails after running events. Even though they are made of paper and are biodegradable over time, it was felt that the running groups have a responsibility to collect them after their runs. Sharon suggested that if the problem persists, we could write to the running groups, requesting the sign be removed and not left on our trails.

Tea House trash removal. Julie noted that the trash can at the Tea House has been emptied. John Foren said Chris DeMaize and family had an event there and emptied the trash can. Scott. C. noted they also picked up litter in the area around the tea House. The WEC thanks the Demaize family for their good deeds.

Signage.

Conservation Area sign. Julie said she will contact Sign Boy for an update on the conservation area replacement sign we have ordered.

Directional signs & markers. Scot C. reported he has installed a directional marker by the Wenonah Lake dam, directing people exiting the lake trail to the BBR trail entrance. Scott C. said he has purchased angle brackets which can affix signs on sign post at 90 degrees from the front. Also 2 more directional signs were installed between BBR trail and MCT. Now directional signage points both ways between the two trails. Scott C. said he wants to put an arrow marker disc on the guardrail at the lake loop trail at Maple St. but the temperatures currently are too cold for the adhesive to cure.

Kiosk. Julie said she will place our 2021 calendar in the kiosk and that if anyone had photos for the kiosk to let her know.

5 Mile Hike. Jan. 30. Scott B. said that current Covid restrictions for outdoor gatherings limit them to 25 people. He said that under these circumstances and in view of the large numbers this event often attracts, it would be best to cancel the event. There was general agreement. Rich pointed out the Moonlight Hike on Feb. 26 faces a similar circumstance. It was suggested the hike could be rescheduled for spring or summer when conditions have improved. Julia Horn suggested that people might be encouraged to do the hike on their own. It was agreed we would promote the idea and provide the public with basic info on the route. We could promote this on our Facebook page and web site with links to the online trail guide. We would post a trail map image with the route hand drawn, including the route back through town to the starting point. Julia said she would be happy to work on this and Scott C. said he would drop a paper map off to her.

Attracting volunteers and a Trail Maintenance Team. Sharon said we need to reach out to the public to attract new members and volunteers for the Trail Maintenance Team. We could use our FWT Facebook page and possibly the Our Town page. We would also need a way to capture and store contact info on folks who express an interest. Scott B. suggested an internet based Google spread sheet (like the one used for the Friends of Tall Pines memberships). Scott C. and Sharon said they would oversee and maintain the list of potential volunteers and T.M.T members. John Foren said the American Legion has organized a strike team that can assist Borough resident with various needs. Scott B. said we could post our volunteer request on the Borough web site as well as our own site and FB page.

Fundraising. Scott B. suggested we set a \$5,000 goal. Julie said we need to make our case to the public that we have costs that exceed our budget, that trail usage has increased and that that results in a greater need for maintenance. We can also let people know what the costs are. Scott C. said that those cost will include replacing or repairing older infrastructure, such as the bog walk. Increased cost of materials and more extreme weather event in recent years have also increased costs. Sharon said at some point we may be able to hire some needed people or machinery on some projects. Julie said we could make a dual plea for both volunteers and funds. It was agreed that we should start by informing the public of what we do and the need for volunteers then phase into the active fundraising later in the year. It was agreed that donations would be accepted by check but that electronic payment methods should also be used. Scott. B. suggested we use PayPal and link it to the FWT account.

WEC website. Scot B. said he hopes to work on revising and updating our website. The current design dates from 2004. Julia has offered to help.

Light Rail. Scott B. said there was nothing new to report.

Fire(s) in conservation area? It was noted a Facebook post referred to fires in the conservation area. WEC members are unaware of any recent fires. We could inquire with the fire company to clarify this.

Dead deer near Clay Hill. A dead deer was found near the little bridge east of Clay Hill. Although there was some speculation it was killed by a coyote, the cause of death was unable to be determined. Scott C. removed the deer about 100 feet from the trail. Vultures have been feeding on it and will clean up the carcass.

Wooded area near Monongahela Br. east of the RR. Scott C. said he has been observing the area where someone has posted a no trespassing sign and a "fort" was constructed. Scott said he has been checking tax maps to determine the boundary between the RR right of way, the conservation area and private property. He believes the no trespassing sign is posted at least 50 feet inside the conservation area. He is also concerned that the person building the fort is taking down trees to do so. He will ask Dave's opinion on this and will check for additional activity in spring.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since November 2020 meeting.

Deposits: **\$250.00** Clean Communities grant

Expenses: **\$27.32** to Scott. C. for cement for poster shelters.
 \$695.00 to Scott. C. metal sign posts.
 \$14.09 to Scott. C. for metal bolts.

Total **\$736.41**

Current balance: \$4,817.92

Note on \$695.00 purchase. The \$695 purchase was paid out of the FWT account but that account will be partially reimbursed from available monies in the 2020 munc. budget in the amount of \$493.13, leaving \$201.87 as the actual payment from the FWT account. When the budget reimbursement is received, the balance of the FWT account will be \$5,311.05.

Monies available in WEC munc. budget: 225.00 reserved for Sign Boy voucher for conservation area sign.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:07 PM.
(Motion: Ream, Second: Ceravolo, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.