

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting
Minutes
February 10, 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: Dave Coates

Public Guest Present: Julia Horn, Jeff Criag, George Ramsburg..

The minutes of the January 2021 meeting were approved as amended.
(Motion: Conway, Second: Ream, AIF)

Public Guests

Jeff Craig, who now lives in the former Frank Eggert home on W. Buttonwood, said he has an interest in serving and becoming involved with the WEC and its projects. Jeff is an attorney and formerly served on the East Greenwich Township Committee. Welcome, Jeff.

Offer to install duck nesting boxes along Mantua Creek. George Ramsburg told the WEC he is interested in installing wood duck and mallard nesting coils or baskets along Mantua Creek in the conservation area. The boxes could also be used by other water fowl species as well.

George said the duck population has declined in recent years due to predation and other factors, and the boxes could help reverse that trend locally. He said he has plans and approved designs for the construction of the boxes and coils. The wood duck boxes would be made of wood and mounted on 4x4 poles. He said he would also construct the mallard coils out of wood, although some designs use metal. George offered to email to photos of the wood duck and mallard boxes to the WEC so we could see the type of structures he is proposing. George said he will also monitor and maintain the boxes. He said the next step would be to scout possible box locations. The boxes would be placed in the marsh along the creek and would be visible from MCT. Dave K. Offered to accompany George to help scout locations. George suggested installing 5 wood duck boxes and 5 mallard coils. It was decided to scout the locations first, then determine the initial number of boxes to install. Julie asked if Clay Hill would be a good box site. Dave said the marshy area just upstream from Clay Hill might be a good site.

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Near Term Projects

Clay Hill Restoration Project. Sharon said she had sent out an email just prior to the meeting containing Pat's detailed designs and plans as well as a detailed list of materials and costs for the project. The list includes costs for Phase 1 and Phase 2. Sharon said the boardwalk construction in Phase 2 was affordable and is included in the costs budget. Sharon said she plans to purchase 19 gun barrel pilings of treated wood from a source in Barnegat. 14 piling will be needed for Phase 1 and 5 for Phase 2.. They will be driven into the ground to support the RR ties. We would need to rent a hydraulic posthole digger for this and also do the work when the ground is not frozen. The pilings are 4" in diameter and 10ft. long. She said she plans to

transport them with her trailer, if that is practical. Sharon also said she has a good source for purchasing the RR ties. Dave said he believed the Borough can supply the fill dirt so we would not need to purchase that. Scott C. asked Sharon to coordinate with him about any deliveries of materials to the staging area near his home. He said at present there is a large pile of plowed snow at the end of S. Jackson. Sharon said the Lions Club may be willing to donate funds, should we need them. March 6 is the scheduled date for beginning construction but that will be contingent on weather conditions.

Trail Maintenance.

Eldridge Trail. Dave said the Borough will be installing curbing at the Pine St trail head and that should prevent the storm water running down and eroding the trail. When that is done, we can address the repair of the trail and water bars. Julie inquired whether we can repurpose the stepping stones that were removed when the raised boardwalk was constructed. It was agreed we could. They are currently on the Monongahela Loop Trail just east of the boardwalk.

Glen Trail. Scott C. reported the drainage pipes from 100 W. Cedar are still there although they seem a bit shorter or more dirt has been added to the slope to cover them. Dave said the property owner apparently had obtained the permits for whatever construction they are doing. He said we should monitor the area but that unless outflow from the pipes creates problems on the trail, there is no action we need to take

Mantua Creek Trail. Dave said erosion continued in the gully behind Garfield Ave. and W. Cherry St. He said he could put some fill in at the bridge area for now but that a complete fix would be beyond the scope of our abilities right now.

Break Back Run Trail. Sharon said that Scott C. asked her to inform Zach that handrails should not be include in his Eagle project. She did so but said Zach has not responded to date. She said she was not sure whether Zach has received full approval for the project from the Scout council yet. She said she would follow up with him. Dave said that the boardwalk extending from the Leslie Ave. property in Pine Acres appears to be on the homeowner's property. Dave said he look at the deed for the property and found it extends to the east side of Break Back Run. Should the boardwalk be extended beyond that point, it would be on Wenonah conservation lands. Dave also reported the Borough is applying for a DOT grant for repaving N. Jefferson and that that will include curbing to prevent storm water runoff flowing into the ravine behind Shulties and further carrying sediments into the conservation area. The ravine itself remains unstable but is on private property, making any attempt to contain the sediment (i.e. coir logs) difficult.

Wenonah Lake. Julie reported that she along with Scott C., Sharon and Dave Coates used up 3 rolls of wire, wiring 24 trees to protect them from the beavers. She said she also painted the bases of 35 trees with a paint and sand mixture. She said the paint color is a good match with the trees and not very noticeable. She said she has one wire roll left. Julie said she also wants to paint some vulnerable beech trees on Eldridge trail near the beaver dam. Dave C. said he saw vehicle tracks along Eggert Trail. Dave K. reported he checked with the fire company and said they had responded to a fire in the large pit near Eggert Trail. A question arose whether we should contact Deptford Twp. for permission to paint over the graffiti on the outflow structure on the east side of Wenonah Lake. Dave suggested we simply go out and paint it over.

Tax exempt purchases. Julie noted she had a problem with Lowe's which told her our exemption had expired even it had just been renewed. It was generally agreed that we should make future purchases at Home Depot, where we have not had problems with tax exemptions.

Lumber donation. Scott C. note an individual in Woodbury Hts. Has offered us lumber, some of which is in good condition and could be useful. He said there are some 12 ft. planks that could be used on the trail at the north end of Wenonah Lake.

Conservation Area Sign. Julie reported she picked up the new sign Feb. 9 from Sign Boy. Sign Boy decided to make the replacement out of pvc rather than plywood. The pvc sign will be more durable. However it was an inch thick and could not be set into the mounting brackets. The corners of the sign will have to be ground down before the sign can be mounted. Scott C.

also noted the sign pole was listing from the vertical and that he could easily move it in the ground. He straightened the sign and plans to tamp the ground around it to keep its position stable.

Facebook FWT. Julia said she is posting items about once a week and that interest in our posts had increased 2400 %. She said she will put out a post urging people to volunteer for the WEC and for the trail maintenance team. She said this will lead up to our fundraising effort beginning in April, and that we need to be set up for online donations by then. She said she will hold off for now on promoting the spring work party (March 27) since details will need to be worked out at our March meeting.

WEC Fundraising. Scott B. said he has found a provision in the tax law that allows donations to government units for public purposes to be tax deductible (170c Internal Revenue Code). Dave said he talked to the Borough Solicitor about this. He said the donation may need to be for a specific project. It was unclear how specific that would need to be. Jeff Craig, who had served on the township committee in East Greenwich, said the donations may also need to go into a special account tied to the government but separate from general revenues. It was uncertain whether our current FWT checking account would be suitable for this purpose. The account would also need to be linked to PayPal. Dave said he would ask for additional clarifications from the Borough Solicitor. Julie offered a suggestion that we have an Adopt-A-Trail program where families and young people can volunteer to do trash pickup on a given trail section.

Bird Quest. Scott B. said the Glo. Co. Nature Club will hold BQ this year on May 1. He will be coordinating the event for the GCNC. It will be a scaled back event with no gathering or t-shirts. It will also adhere to the same covid guidelines as the Christmas Bird Count: mask wearing, no carpooling except for family members and social distancing. Scott said the GCNC is seeking the moral support of environmental commissions this year but no financial contributions. Rich said he would like the WEC to field a BQ team again this year to bird the conservation area and Tall Pines.

Tree Seedlings. Gary Odenbrett has informed us that tree seedlings are available from the NJ Tree Recovery Fund. After a discussion we agreed we would not pursue this due to the low survival rate we have seen for bare root seedlings in the past. Also the activity at the Borough mulch yard on Garfield would make setting an area aside to nurse seedlings for a year or two impractical. Rich suggested purchasing larger trees that would have a better chance of survival should we need trees for specific areas. Julie said some areas around Wenonah Lake where the beaver have taken out a lot of trees could be sites for future planting. It was suggested we let Gary know we would be interested in larger trees, if he came across any (such as the sycamores at Dilks Pond). Julie said she would mention that to Pat, who serves on the STC. Dave Coates also made an offer to plant trees in the conservation area.

Duckweed/algae treatment at Dilks Pond for 2021. Rich said he received a proposal and contract offer from Princeton Hydro to treat Dilks Pond for duckweed and algae in 2021. The cost would be \$1970. That is only a \$2 increase over the cost of \$1968 for Dilks Pond in 2020. PH has offered either a 1 year or 2 year contract. The cost for 2022 would remain at \$1970. We would also need to pay a \$150 fee for the 2 year DEP permit for the Dilks Pond treatment. The treatment of Comey's Lake is in the second year of a 2 year contract with PH, so no action on Comey's Lake is need at this time. After a discussion the WEC agreed to enter into the 2 year contract for Dilks Pond.

(Motion: Kreck, Second: Ream, AIF)

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since January 2021 meeting.

Deposits: **\$493.13** reimbursement from WEC budget for previous purchase of signposts.

Expenses: **\$96.85** to Scott. C. for metal bolts, nuts, lag bolts & screws.

Current balance: \$5,214.20

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:02 PM.
(Motion: Ceravolo, Second: Ream, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.