

# WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2021

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		X
Julie Ream (V. Chair.)	X	

**Associate Members Present:** none.

**Public Guest Present:** two anonymous online attendees.

The minutes of the March 2021 meeting were approved as amended.

(Motion: Conway, Second: Ceravolo, AIF)

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

### **Review**

**March 14 trail survey.** Several WEC members walked the trail system to identify and prioritize areas in need of maintenance or improvement. Julie took the info and created a spreadsheet so work on those areas can be easily tracked. Scott C. has been updating it as he has done repairs.

**Spring Work Party March 27.** Scott B. noted that Mail Chimp and Sign Up Genius were first used by the WEC for this event. They both performed well. Several volunteers came to the Wenonah Lake activities and 2 student came out to S. West Ave. Scott C. said the stone and mulch put down on trail sections at Wenonah Lake have held up well with recent rains. A second fire pit was discovered near the lake and trash in it was removed. Stone was also put down on muddy sections of the trail off S. West Ave and in the vicinity of W. Cedar. Scott B. suggested the WEC should consider purchasing wheelbarrows since it is difficult to get a sufficient number from volunteers at times.

### **Near Term Projects**

**Clay Hill Restoration Project.** A work party is scheduled for Sat. April 17. Sharon said the pilings have arrived and the post hole digger will be picked up from the rental business on Fri. Sharon also said we have 40 lbs. bags of cement to transport. The cement will be used for anchoring the pilings. Sharon also reported Gary Odenbrett has the two black walnut slabs for the benches, one about 5 ft. and one about 6ft. Suggestions have been made for both wooden and metal frames for the new bench, and questions were raised as to how to anchor them in the ground or to the RR ties. Scott C. noted digging at Clay Hill with a manual clam shell post hole digger is quite feasible. It may be that 6 ft. is too long for the upper bench site and the slab would need to be shortened. Sharon will check with Gary. Julie and Scott C. will put out the "trail closed" signs for Sat. and remove the bee sign, as bee activity has slowed. Sharon said the first \$2500 of the grant has now been spent and the final \$2500 will be given us when the project is complete. Sharon has been putting items on her credit card for now and that there are additional materials and plants to purchase. Rich said the upfront cost can also be met by our budget and FWT account, then reimbursed by the grant. Rich reported he met with the Wenonah Historical Society on Sat. The WHS has agreed on a final text and photo for the

historical sign. Julie has submitted the text and photo to Fossil Industries for art work and design. We will then receive a mockup of the sign. Julie said the total cost for the sign will be \$552. Julie suggested Fossil Industries could also do the required plaques. We could include the logos on that in full color. She said an 8" x 10" thin plaque was \$21 and an 8" x 10" .5" would be \$140. The plaque could be placed on the wall by the lower bench. Sharon said if we have a 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration this year, the dedication could be on the WEC walk. If not, we could still do a smaller dedication ceremony. Sharon said Sustainable Jersey may do a promotional video featuring our Clay Hill project. Julie said she would take additional photos on Sat.

### **Trail Maintenance.**

**Tea House bridge & bench.** Scott C. said he was cleaning around the base of the historic section of the Japanese arched bridge that is mounted behind the bench. He noted the wood has severely deteriorated. He said he has contacted the historical society to see if it would be interested in making an effort to preserve the bridge section. He will have them come and take a look and see what can be done. Scott also reported the bench repair is complete and as of today, the step repair is complete as well. Concrete was laid last Sat. and a peace sign was inscribed in to on Sun. (since removed). The new drainage channels at the steps are working well. Scott C. said once the repairs on the west side of the stream are complete, the stones and debris at the site will be removed. Scott C. noted there have only been two incidents of graffiti at the Tea House (promptly painted over), and that there have been no new incidents for two weeks. Julie noted the Carr's house at Comey's Lake is now for sale. Scott said his next project will be the muddy trail section west of the Tea House.

**Mantua Creek Trail.** Rich reported he received an email from a concerned resident that the three wood duck nest boxes placed along Mantua Creek by George Ramsburg do not have predator guards against snakes and raccoons. Rich will contact George to discuss the matter.

**Break Back Run Trail- Eagle Scout Project.** Scott C. noted the scouts and Dave R. have cleared debris out of two small streams but still need to build the wooded steps and construct puncheons over the 3 remaining muddy dips on the east side of Wenonah Lake. They indicated they hope to have these items completed by April 30. Scott C. said he bridged one of the dips at the lake to serve as an example for the scouts. Scott C. said he has six 6 X 6's for the scouts and was able to buy sufficient metal sign posts (sold by weight) to provide 12 stakes for the project.

**Joe Berg Signs.** Julie mentioned she had recently seen some very attractive signs on a trip and suggested we could redesign the Berg signs with new graphics and texts. She also mentioned she saw a boardwalk with shingles added for traction. She suggested that could be done for the boardwalk near the shed, since it has such a steep grade.

**Lost dog search.** Scott B. said the lost dog sought by Kathleen Bowles has been seen in the woods in Wenonah. Scott C. said the dog was spotted near the RR tracks. He also said a car stopped near his house and a food dish and trail camera were placed on the access trail to Clay Hill. They were removed the next day. The effort continues.

**Tree Donation.** Scott B. said he had been contacted by Ross Beitzel who has requested to have a tree/shrub planted in the conservation area in memory of a colleague. There would be no plaque or signage, just the planting. Possible sites suggested were Comey's Lake near the dock, Wenonah Lake and Dilks Pond. Rich agreed to contact Mr. Beitzel to work out the site and species of the planting.

**Chuck Forsman memorial.** Sharon suggested we might be able to do a small dedication ceremony in the near future with Laure and family and WEC members. Julie will contact Laurie to see what would be convenient for her.

**Central location for WEC documents.** Scott B. said we need to have a place to store all important WEC documents in an orderly and easily accessible manner. Some sort of folder in cloud storage might be best.

**Facebook.** It was noted that our recent Clay Hill post reached 4500 and was reposted by Sustainable Jersey on April 7.

**Trail maintenance standards and manual.** It was noted that Scott C. has written out instructions and specifications for puncheon and boardwalk construction for the BBRT scouts. He plans to augment these with pictures.

**Borough declines donation proposal & possible WEC 501c(3) designation.** Scott B. said the Borough will not set up an account for “public good” WEC tax deductible donations. The Borough must undergo an annual audit and someone could challenge any WEC expenditure under the public good concept. This could cause serious potential complication for the audit process, even if all expenditures were proper and done in good faith. The Borough suggested that we could apply to create a 501c(3) entity as a way to make donations deductible. After a brief discussion, it was decided the 501c(3) model would entail far more effort and expense than could be justified for our purposes. It was remarked that the donations we get are because people support our mission rather than because they may be tax deductible. It was agreed that while the WEC appreciates and welcomes donations, it is inappropriate for us to offer any advice on whether a deduction may be tax deductible.

**Fundraising campaign.** Julia said we can link our FWT account to a Go Fund Me page, PayPal or Venmo. We would need to compare fees and processes to see which service might work best for us. Scott B. suggested we might offer a recurring membership as well. Go Fund Me is on its own platform while PayPal and Venmo would be integrated into an existing website such as the WEC site. Julia said she could do a mock GFM page to give us an idea of what it could be like.

**Wood donation from Frank G.** Scott C. said he has getting some very usable wood from Frank and that some of it is going to the BBRT Eagle Scout project. He also said there were some very long (16') boards that perhaps the Borough could transport. Sharon said she has a trailer that might be able to carry them.

**Beaver Program.** Julie said the beaver program for the Gateway students is set for Fri. April 30 at 10 AM. She and Rich will again conduct the lecture and walk. It will be done on the Wenonah Lake Loop Trail and about 25 students are expected to attend. Julie noted she still has the old conservation area sign (now replaced on Mantua Ave.) She said she would put it in the shed.

**Clean Communities Day May 8.** It was agreed we could post a promotion for volunteers. Areas that might be targets for cleanup are along Wenonah Lake/Princeton Blvd., Wenonah Lake parking lot, the two fire pits nearby, N. Jefferson Ave between Buttonwood and Maple and along the RR tracks.

**Bird Quest.** Rich said the nature club is again doing Bird Quest on May 1. Scott B. is coordinating the event for the GCNC. This year due to Covid, the gathering will be virtual. Rich said the WEC will again form a team to bird the Wenonah conservation area and Tall Pines. He and Scott will send out an email to WEC supports to invite them to take part.

**Duckweed/Algae control.** Rich said the first invoices from Princeton Hydro for Comey's Lake and Dilks Pond have been received and submitted to the Borough

**Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since February 2021 meeting.**

**Deposits:**           **\$3.00** trail guide sale

**Expenses:**       **\$248.10** reimbursement to Scott C. for trail maintenance materials.

**Current balance: \$4,429.41**

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:13 PM.  
(Motion: Ceravolo, Second: Ream, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Rich Dilks, Sec.