

# WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting  
Minutes  
May 12, 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	
Julia Horn		X
Dave Kreck		X
Julie Ream (V. Chair.)	X	

**Associate Members Present:** Bob Bevilacqua.

**Public Guest Present:** Carl Ream, Glen Green.

The minutes of the April 2021 meeting were approved as standing.  
(Motion: Ceravolo, Second: Ream, AIF)

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

### **Review**

**Bird Quest, May 1.** Rich reported The WEC team had a successful morning and counted 45 species at Tall Pines and on the Wenonah trails. Rich noted that Scott B. had coordinated the Bird Quest event for the nature club. The afternoon gathering and the submission of the checklists were both done online. There were 16 teams and 43 participants. The winning team with 98 species was "Danny & Grammy", Sharon & Bill Ceravolo and grandson, Danny.

**Beaver Field Trip at Wenonah Lake, May 5.** Julie & Rich conducted the walk and beaver presentation at Wenonah Lake, where there has been significant beaver activity. The participants were 11 Gateway students along with Melissa Eckstein and a Gateway teacher. Because there have been no formal field trips at Gateway this year, the students were the interns from Gateway 2 Careers and arrived by cars rather than a school bus. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year Julie and Rich have given this presentation for Gateway students. The placing of puncheons at muddy spots on the trail on the east side of the lake the week before as part of Zach Solem's Eagle Scout project made those sections of the loop trail passable.

**Clean Communities day, May 8.** The WEC did trash pick-up on the trails at Wenonah Lake, concentrating on the section along Princeton Blvd. Trash was picked up at the Dilks Pond and School trails as well. Julie checked and brushed the trails at Comey's Lake in preparation for Chuck's memorial ceremony on May 15.

### **Near Term Projects**

**Clay Hill Restoration Project.** Sharon showed us one of the metal fasteners that will attach the rope railings to the pilings. These fasteners will be attached to the piling through drilled holes then bolted. The rope will be knotted at the fasteners to keep it secure. Sharon said we had to buy 300 ft. of rope, so there will be rope available for other projects. Sharon said she has planted the low junipers on the sloping section next to the steps (recently terraced by Scott C.) just today. Earlier she had planted inkberry and low blueberry on the flat space at the top of the stairway. She said she may want to put native herbaceous plants on the opposite side of the steps to keep the landscaping from looking too formal. Rich suggested several species,

including several he could transplant from his yard and garden. Sharon also is considering putting a native grass, such as switchgrass, on the hillside between the shrubs and the creek. Sharon said we will need to set up a watering schedule for the plantings for the summer. Sharon reported she has ordered a different design bench. It will have a back and will be installed with an in-ground mount rather than a surface mount. The new bench will cost \$204, including shipping, while the bench she previously considered would have cost \$778 including shipping. Sharon said she would get the logos to Julie so she can order the plaques. We will order two plaques from Fossil at a cost of \$21 each. Sharon said the grant funds are almost exhausted with only \$117 remaining and that we still have some materials to buy. She has contacted the Lions Club suggesting a \$500 donation. The Lions are meeting this evening and she expects to hear from Ron Cline soon.

**May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting with Atlantic Electric.** Scott B. reported that he and other WEC members met with a publicity advance person from Exelon at Clay Hill. This was in planning for a documentary to be filmed there by ACE (possibly in June) highlighting the Clay Hill project and including drone video and even a go pro camera mounted on a runner on the trails. It was noted that ACE employees often do volunteer work and that perhaps we could make use of them for future projects.

**Clay Hill sign.** Julie reported we have had a pixilation problem with the locomotive photo enlarged in the layout from Fossil. The problem is the photo was scanned at 96dpi but we would need 300 dpi minimum for a printed image. Julie has discussed this with Lou McCall, who provide the photo and has arranged with Larry Smith to borrow the book containing the photo so she can scan or photograph it at a higher resolution. If that fails to solve the problem, Julie will use the Hendrickson Wenonah 1770-1870 map instead. She said once we have a satisfactory layout, the manufacture of the sign should not take long.

**Zack Solem Eagle Scout Project.** Scott C. reported that Zach has completed the project the last week of April and said he was very pleased with the work Zach and the scouts did. The project included steps, boardwalks/puncheons and the clearing of debris in streams. The improvements were made at both the Break Back Run Trail and the Wenonah Lake Loop Trail. Zach has sent his final report into the Scout Council and is awaiting their response. Scott B. asked if there were any photos of the project we could use. Sharon contacted Zach who said he had photos and will get some to us.

**Duck Boxes.** Rich said he contacted George Ramsburg regarding a concern that was expressed to the WEC by a resident that the boxes had no predator guards. George explained there were indeed effective metal predator guards on the poles. They are simply not apparent from a distance and are not as visible or familiar as the baffle or pvc pipe guard designs.

**Brian & Paula Hayes protect trees at Wenonah Lake.** Julie reported Brian & Paula joined her at Wenonah Lake and worked protect mature trees from the beaver. They painted 25-30 trees and wired 20 more. They concentrated on a section near the fence at the lake shore. They have offered to protect additional trees by painting and wiring at their own expense. The WEC thanks them for their ongoing volunteer efforts. It was noted some trees inside the fences area of the lake have been gnawed by the beaver and the Lake Assoc (Duke Braun) should be made aware and this and methods to protect the trees.

#### **Trail Maintenance.**

**Comey Lake.** Julie noted the hole near the dock has not been filled in and may be a hazard, particularly for young children. Julie said she would reach out to Dave about what the Borough's plans are.

**The Bog Walk.** This will likely be our next big project. The decking is in poor shape. Scott C. said the pilings driven into the mud to support the walkway seem solid but the entire structure will need to be evaluated as the first step in the plan. He plans to reach out to Bob and Dave for input. Any new walkway would need to be wider, at least 2.5 or 3 ft. in width.

**Fundraising campaign.** Scott B. said PayPal is now linked to the Friends of Wenonah Trails account. He said the next component will be to redesign the WEC web site and then kick off the campaign this fall. Scott B. said he used a new web design tool to create the Bird Quest pages on the nature club web site and can use this tool for our web site as well. He said most visitors who come to our site do so for the trail map, not in-depth info on the WEC. It was suggested the future bog walk project could be a focus for fundraising. The Berg signs project could also be an opportunity to fundraise. Julie suggested the Woman's Club might be approached on this. Julie also suggested we might have a table at the Wenonah Farmers' Market later in the summer to give us a higher public profile. Sharon said the Green Team has a table also.

**Crane offer.** Sharon said she happened to meet Happy Cornell who said she would offer the use of a crane if needed for our projects. There is, however, no current need for us to use a crane and the question of how to get a crane to most sites in the conservation area would need to be resolved.

**Tree Donation.** Rich reported he has spoken with Ross Beitzel, who is offering to donate \$100 for us to plant a tree in the conservation area as a memorial. Rich said Mr. Beitzel would like the tree to be an evergreen. He preferred a hemlock, if possible, but would leave the choice up to us. Rich suggested the tree be planted at Dilks Pond near the two sycamores planted last year. Mr. Beitzel approved of the site. Rich said he would shop for a tree at area nurseries but wanted to avoid any delivery charge, if possible. Sharon said she has a trailer that could be used. Depending on the size of the tree, it was suggested perhaps the Borough could dig the hole with its equipment.. Rich said he would check with Gary Odenbrett at the STC if necessary.

**Memorial dedication for Chuck Forsman.** The ceremony will take place on May 15 at 11 AM. We will meet at the dock at Comey's Lake. Laurie, and perhaps other Forsman Family members, will attend. Scott B. will speak briefly at the ceremony. In addition, invitations have been made to Bob B. and Barbara Capelli. It was suggested that anyone who has a cowboy hat to wear it in memory of Chuck.

**Summer Newsletter article.** The deadline is May 15. Scott B. will mention the 4<sup>th</sup> of July hike, the Clay Hill project, the June picnic, the BBR Eagle scout project, other trail improvements, and our efforts to preserve trees while coexisting with the beavers.

**4<sup>th</sup> of July Hike.** It was decided to have the hike and to make the Clay Hill restoration project dedication ceremony the centerpiece. It was noted the Borough will have its holiday activities on Sat July 3. We will hold the walk on Sunday July 4<sup>th</sup> at 11 AM so we don't have to compete with the other events. The rain date is July 5. The hike will begin at the trail head at S. West Ave. and proceed to Clay Hill.

**June picnic/meeting on June 9 at 6:30 PM.** It was decided we will hold the annual picnic at Wenonah Lake this year. It was also agreed we should invite the Trail Maintenance volunteers and other supporters to attend. We should request RSVP's to get a number of attendees so we will know how much food to supply. We will check with Bob, as he has been the grill master at past picnics.

**Fairy installations.** The placing of porcelain figurines in the conservation area has become a fad with "installations" on MCT and at Comey's Lake. While the WEC feels they are inappropriate in a conservation area, some local residents have been enthusiastic about them. It was decided that we will not make a public issue of this for now and hope the fad soon fades away.

**Frank Eggert Memorial Student Environmental Awards.** The WEC will again offer \$100 awards to two graduating Wenonah 6<sup>th</sup> graders. We have informed the school we are offering the awards. The graduation will be on June 14 at Gateway HS.

(Motion: Ceravolo, Second: Conway, AIF)

**Frank G. wood donation.** Scott C. reported he and Sharon retrieved the last of the wood donation, including some 6x6's. Much of the wood is in Scott's driveway, where he is removing nails and making the wood ready to use. Scott C. said the wood has been of great use. Some was used in Zach's Eagle project and some was used for a new boardwalk just west of the Tea House bridge. It was agreed to invite Frank to the annual picnic as a thank you. Scott C. will contact him.

**Duckweed/Algae control.** Rich said the second 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 the April 2021 meeting.**

**Deposits:** none.

**Expenses:** \$35.19 reimbursement to Scott C. for purchase of metal posts.

**Current balance: \$4,394.22**

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:05 PM.

(Motion: Ream, Second: Ceravolo, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Rich Dilks, Sec.