

# WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting  
Minutes  
July 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 at the at the Jack C. Sheppard Community Center.

<u>ROLL CALL</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Scott Barnes (Chair. / Planning Bd. Rep.)	X	
Sharon Ceravolo	X (via teleconference)	
Scott Conway	X	
Rich Dilks (Sec.)	X	
Julia Horn	X	
Dave Kreck		X
Julie Ream (V. Chair.)	X	

**Associate Members Present:** Dave Coates

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

## **Public Portion**

Due to a large number of members of the public in attendance and wishing to address the Commission, the Commission adopted Public Portion Meeting Procedures based on the procedures used at Borough Council meetings. The procedures were as follows:

- 1. During public portions, each person wishing to speak, upon being recognized by the meeting chair, must clearly state their name, address, and the purpose of their comments.*
- 2. Individual comments during public portions are limited to three (3) minutes, which can be extended at the discretion of the meeting chair.*
- 3. Individual comments during public portions must be directed to the Commission, not to specific persons on the Commission or in the audience.*

The WEC approved the procedures.  
(Motion: Conway, Second: Ream, AIF)

Chairman Scott Barnes then explained the procedures to those present.

The WEC meeting was then opened for public comments.  
(Motion: Conway, Second: Ream, AIF)

There were in excess of 30 members of the public present. Dave Coates spoke briefly to express his approval of recent improvements on the trail system. The great majority of the public present were attending to speak or hear about the proposed GCL light rail. Although this issue was not on the planned agenda for the July WEC meeting, Dr. Peter Speth had contacted the Commission requesting to speak concerning this proposal. Among the persons that spoke on the proposed GCL were:

Peter Speth, Deptford  
Joseph Hetzel, Millville, former Wenonah resident

Matylda Biedron, Wenonah  
Jeffrey Craig, Wenonah,  
Warren Potis, Wenonah  
Ryan Campbell  
Gary Odenbrett, Wenonah, STC Chair  
Arlene (last name not recorded)

Nearly all comments were in opposition to the GCL, citing possible environmental and other concerns.

Two additional persons addressed the Commission, Sean O'laughlin and Vincent Wishart (and a companion who did not speak). They stated they had created the unauthorized trail in the conservation area. They asked what the procedures were for creating trails and whether they could do so. It was explained that the conservation area is Borough owned land and that the Borough authorizes, and controls trail creation and maintenance, and further that the Borough has largely delegated that function to the WEC. It was also explained that "free-lance" trail creation was in violation of the Borough Code and something for which they could be fined. It was suggested they keep in contact with the WEC and discuss with the WEC ways in which they can volunteer on the trails in cooperation with and under the guidance of the WEC.

At the end of the comment period, after all had been given a chance to speak, the public portion of the meeting was closed.

(Motion: Ream, Second: Dilks, AIF)

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

### **Review**

**Farmers Market info table, July 1.** The info table was quite successful. Numerous visitors to the table expressed interest in our projects, particularly the Clay Hill Restoration. Proceeds of \$21 were received from trail guide sales. Unfortunately, after about one and a quarter hours of the planned three hour event, the table had to be taken down when a thunderstorm hit.

**Fourth of July hike & Clay Hill dedication.** The Sunday, July 4<sup>th</sup> annual hike was very well attended with over 50 participants. The hike began at S. West Ave. with Scott B. giving a short address thanking all participants in the Clay Hill Restoration Project. The hike then commenced and ended at Clay Hill where the historical sign was unveiled and additional dedicatory remarks were made by Scott. B and project coordinator, Sharon Ceravolo.

### **Near Term Projects**

**Clay Hill Project and ACE/SJ Grant.** Sharon said the final report is due to ACE/SJ in Sept. and that she had received the forms from SJ. She said the report needs to include how the money was utilized, budgeted and spent. The report must include a photo of the permanent plaque, and show text crediting ACE and SJ with the funding. A # may also need to be included. It was discussed what publicity advantages we could take to highlight the project. Julia can do a Facebook post with photos. A website page could also be created. Julie said she had photos from the dedication and earlier in DropBox that could be made available. Sharon said she also had photos. Julie said that Fossil had increased the price of the plaque to \$95.00. Julie got Fossil to drop the art design fee so the total cost would be \$59.00 (\$30 plus \$29 for shipping). The cost of the plaque must come from our funds, not the grant. It was agreed to order the plaque.

(Motion: Ceravolo, Second: Ream, AIF)

### **Trail Maintenance.**

**Comey Lake.** Scott C. reported the boardwalk over the muddy spot just west of the bridge near the Tea House is now complete as well as the concrete steps to the east of the bridge. As of now the entire Comey's Lake Loop Trail is in good condition

**Eldridge Trail.** Scott C. reported that the water bar upgrade is on hold until the Borough installs the curbing on E. Pine St. Scott C. also mentioned the 14 puncheons and short boardwalks on the E.T muddy spot. He said some could be removed due to changes in hydrology that have caused formerly muddy areas to dry out. Also Some of the structures there are in need of repair or replacement. Scott C. said he had acquired some donated 2 x 6's that could be used there. The donated wood came from Anthony Silvestri, who had removed the wood during a deck renovation. Scott.C. now has the wood.

**Monongahela Loop Trail-Bog Walk.** Scott C. reported he had done a survey of the bog walk and confirmed it was in serious need of repair and upgrade. A section had tipped when he was walking on it and was a serious safety hazard. Scott C., with help from Dave Coates, was able to make a repair so the bog walk is safe for public use for now. Scott also filled in the gaps between the puncheons to the east of the bog walk with pieces of RR ties. The bog walk decking is badly deteriorated and some of it has come loose. He said the cross supports for much on the bog walk need to be replaced. Scott C. recommended we use 3/8"thick lumber cut 3' x 10' and widen the new surface to be 3 planks wide (27"). The question arose as to the logistics of doing the repairs. Could the workers using chest waders and standing in the water and muck be impractical? Scott C. said he would confer with Bob, who has worked on the bog walk in the past. Scott C. said in addition to the lumber we would need to purchase fasteners. Scott C. said he had priced the 3 x10 planks at Diamond M Lumber Co. on Rt 38 in Burlington County. They are \$50 per plank with a \$90 delivery charge. Scott C. recommended buying 35 planks, which would sufficient for the bog walk and also for an upgrade to the bridge on the east end of the island on the MCT. With additional costs for plank fasteners, he gave a total cost for the purchase of \$1862.05.for lumber plus about \$100 for fasteners, with a total purchase cost of about \$1960. Scott C. said with the additional cost of replacing cross supports, the total cost for the bog walk project should come in at \$2100. After a brief discussion, it was decided to authorize the purchase.

(Motion: Ream, Second: Ceravolo, AIF)

Scott agreed to have the lumber delivered to his house and then suggested the Borough move it to site when work would be ready to begin. A staging site on S. Marion might also be possible. Sharon said she would seek volunteers for the project when the time comes. It was suggested we could use the bog walk project for fundraising. Scott B. said any online fundraising would have to be on our web site where we can make use of our PayPal link. He said he could develop a web page for this.

**Garden Trail.** Scott C. said he cleared brush and vegetation around the pool and trimmed back the trees there. He also cleaned debris out of the pool. He said the pool level was high because the outflow channel, has silted up, preventing water from flowing out from the pool. He cleared out the channel. Scot C. also noted the water in the pool was not very attractive, since the pool is filled by ground seepage not flowing water. It was suggested perhaps the pool could be filled in and used as a planter, possibly with aquatic or wetland/bog plants.

**Break Back Run Trail.** Scott C. noted the small stream where the scouts removed debris is flowing freely and has channeled down so that it is no longer creating muddy wet spots. Scott C. also noted the graffiti (zzz and sometimes dates) that appeared on the Eldridge Trail is now on BBR trail too (12 places).It is on beech trees and even one post on the BBRT boardwalk. Scott has covered them up.

**Unauthorized trail.** There was a discussion about the two young men (Sean and Vincent) who built the unauthorized trail in the conservation area. Scott. C. said there has been no recent activity along that trail and that recently 2 trees fell over, hindering access to the area. Scott said the party spot on BSI has no signs of recent use. Julie said she would reach out to the two

young men to ensure they understand what is permitted in the conservation area and what is not. She will also try to engage them in possibly doing authorized volunteer work with us.

**Photo contest.** Julie said Mellissa Gillis of the Green Team reached out and inquired about a second photo contest. The Green Team would get points toward recertification from this. Julie said if we do it, it would be next spring and limited to 1 month. She said getting Debbie Mix and possible Dave Coates involved would be helpful.

**Donation.** At the beginning of this evening's meeting Peter Speth handed the WEC a check for \$1000 as a donation. After discussion, the WEC agreed that accepting that money in light of Dr. Speth's strong opposition to the GCL and his attempt to enlist the WEC in that cause, would be inappropriate. It was agreed to return the check. Rich will do so along with a letter of explanation to Dr. Speth.

(Motion: Conway, Second: Ream, AIF)

**Follow up to GCL comments.** It is the policy for the WEC not to "take sides", make public statements or resolutions on the proposed rail line. Rather, we wish to work with Mayor and Council as an advisory body and assist them as requested. It was suggested we reach out to other EC's to see how they are approaching this issue. Also it was agreed that we inform the Borough of the nature of tonight's public portion. Scott agreed to approach the Borough so we may meet with the Mayor or council persons to discuss how best we can assist as the Borough regarding this issue.

**Clean Communities grant.** Rich noted the WEC will receive \$400 for our participation in the most recent Clean Communities Day.

**Trail Guides to Woman's Club.** The Woman's Club has requested 30 trail guides to be included in welcome packets to new Borough residents. Rich will see the Woman's Club gets them.

**WEC budget.** Rich reported on the current status of our budget:

2021 budget	\$7,500.00
Expenditures	\$690.00 purchase of stone. \$5,225.00 total cost of pond treatments with Princeton Hydro.
Remaining balance	<b>\$1,585.00</b>

**Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since the June 2021 meeting.**

**Deposits:** \$21.00 trail guide sales.

**Expenses:** \$200.00 student environmental awards  
\$32.98 reimbursement to Scott C. for purchase of nails.

**Current balance: \$4,556.80**

MEETING ADJOURNED at 10:16 PM.

(Motion: Ream, Second: Conway, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Rich Dilks, Sec.