

# WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting  
Minutes  
August 11, 2021

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:34 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 (via teleconference)	
Rich Dilks (Sec.)	X	
Julia Horn	X (via teleconference)	
Dave Kreck		X
Julie Ream (V. Chair.)	X	

**Associate Members Present:** none.

**Public Guests Present:** none.

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

**Statement of the WEC's Position on the Glassboro-Camden Line.** Chairman Scott Barnes issued a statement on behalf of the entire Commission regarding how the WEC will approach the issue of the GCL.

## **Statement:**

At the July 14th WEC meeting, several individuals urged the Commission to issue a resolution in opposition to the proposed Glassboro-Camden Line light rail project. The Commission will not be taking such an action, and I will explain why.

The WEC was established by Borough Council to first and foremost maintain the woods and trails. The WEC does not issue proclamations or resolutions as doing so is not within the scope of our authority granted by Council. If you are unsatisfied with WEC's position on this matter, Council would be the appropriate place to express your concerns.

There has been speculation on social media that WEC knows things about GCL that we are not disclosing. This allegation is absolutely false. We have never been contacted by anyone involved with the rail project.

While WEC will not be taking an official position on the rail project, that does not mean we are uninterested in its effects on the Conservation Area. Shortly after I was first elected chair in 2014, I added a permanent item on our agenda to track the progress of the GCL. Whenever I learned reliable, official information about the project, I made sure the committee and anyone else at our meeting heard that information.

Going forward, if the GCL moves into a detailed engineering phase, WEC stands ready to assist Borough Council to make sure the project is conducted with minimum harm to our Conservation Area and trail system.

**One final note regarding the last meeting:** a donation check was very publicly presented to us by one of the audience members. As is noted in our official minutes, the committee voted later during that meeting to refuse that donation.

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

### Near Term Projects

**Clay Hill Project and ACE/SJ Grant.** Sharon reported that she is meeting with ACE at Clay Hill on Aug. 12. She said the video team will arrive about 8:30 AM to begin filming. Sharon plans to meet with the ACE representative there at 1:30 PM for her interview. Julie pointed out that due to a typo, the temporary plaque had the word "Sustainability" rather than "Sustainable" on it. She said the corrected permanent plaque should ship from Fossil on Aug. 24. Julie also said that Clay Hill looked in good shape and the plantings are doing well. Sharon said she has printed out the forms for the required Sustainable Jersey report. The report is to be filed online and Sharon plans to write out all the text and gather the other information before uploading it all. She said she needs to upload photos, an Excel spreadsheet for the budget and copies of all receipts. She said any variation from the original proposal also needs to be noted. She said the only actual variations were in some of the materials used, not the basic design. She also said the budget had to be revised due to the increased cost of items such as the RR ties. She said both Dave and Pat had done preliminary budgets but that she has put together the final budget. Sharon said a certification from Karen Sweeney as Borough Clerk must be submitted. The certification will confirm the project was completed in good order and all monies were properly spent. We will also need to report how we promoted the project, using venues such as the newsletter and the Farmers Market information table. Sharon said she also has to include a "Lessons Learned" section. Scott C. said he could assist with that, noting such things as the building of the retaining wall to prevent erosion. For the Future Plans section, it was agreed we would want to apply for additional Grants for trail improvements. The report is due Sept. 30, 2021.

### Trail Maintenance.

**Comey's Lake.** Scott B. reported the new owners of the house at Comey's Lake, Matt and Jamie, have expressed an interest in working with the WEC. He said they would be interested in someone coming out to familiarize them with the property boundaries and with the history and operations of the fountain. Julie noted things looked normal at the Tea House.

**Bog Walk.** Scott C. reported he has purchased the wooden planks for the Bog Walk restoration and also sufficient planks to upgrade the bridge at the east end of the island on MCT. The costs were submitted for payment out of our budget. Scott C. also bought 2 boxes of bolts and screws for those projects. Sharon said when Scott C. determines how many volunteers and what kind of assistance he will need, she will seek out individuals to help. Scott C. said he will need to experiment with how he can actually work at the bog walk and whether it is possible or practical to do so wearing chest waders. It was suggested perhaps boards or a tarp could be laced under the water, but Scott C. said he will just have to see how deep the mud is and to what degree he can move around in it. It was also suggested it would be helpful if we could bring material to the site from the Anyzek property. Julie said she could contact him when we're ready. Scott C. noted he had one pair of the WEC chest waders. The other pair is in the shed.

**Break Back Run Trail.** It was noted that Borough plans at some point to put in curbing on a small section of N. Jefferson Ave to stop street runoff from increasing the erosion into the gully on the BBR Trail. There has been no new information on this.

**Trail erosion at S. Marion.** Dave reported by email that street runoff at S. Marion is causing some erosion on the trail there. He has asked the Borough to rebuild the berm there to prevent the street runoff from going down the trail and washing it out. The hope was also expressed that Dave could continue to be a resource for us as Borough Engineer when he steps down from the WEC in Dec.

**The Pool on the Garden Trail.** Sharon said the water in the pool was largely stagnant and a mosquito breeder. She suggested perhaps we could fill in in and make it a planter. Rich and Scott C. Said with the high water table and the seepage in the area that may turn any fill to mud. Scott C. said the water is not free flowing but rather stagnant and the existing drainage hole is now above the level of the water. It was decided we would have a meeting at the pool in the fall to come up with options for improvements there.

**Unauthorized trail.** Julie reported she met with the two young men, Sean and Vincent, and invited them to attend our meeting. She also told them that chances were slim we would be approving any new trails. She also made it clear that any additional unauthorized trail building is a violation of Borough Code and subject to a fine. She also said we are always looking for volunteers willing to help out. To our knowledge, there has been no recent activity on the unauthorized trail.

**Newsletter.** Scott B. said the fall newsletter deadline is Aug. 15. He said he plans to announce our new and revised web site which will be complete with a PayPal function for donations. It was agreed that mail in donations by check should go to Rich and people will be told to mail them to his address. Scott B. will also mention the very successful Clay Hill project. He will also include in the Newsletter that we are looking for trail maintenance volunteers, particularly those with construction skills. Sharon noted we need to recruit a maintenance team and the newsletter could be helpful. Scott B. said he will also mention the upcoming Bog Walk project and will say donations are welcome to defer the proposed \$2100 cost. Scott B. will also announce the Mad Hatters Tree Party in the newsletter.

**Mad Hatters Tree Party.** Scott B. announced the nature club plans to hold the tree party again this year on the Eldridge Trail and at the Tea House. It will be on Sunday, Oct. 24 from 1 to 3 PM. As in the past the WEC will be need to make sure the trails are in good shape and assist with set up and take down. Scott said we will need to take covid concerns into consideration this year. Julia said she has the list of possible volunteers without construction skills. This would be a good opportunity for them to help out.

**Recruiting a new WEC member.** With Dave Kreck leaving in Dec we need seek a replacement member. It was suggested perhaps Dave Coats could come back on the WEC. Sharon said if we have an additional prospective new member, she would step down to be an Associate Member. Julie said she would reach out to Dave Coates.

**Green Team.** Sharon Asked to meet with Scott B. to discuss what additional items the Green Team can come up with to advance the S.J. recertification process.

**EIS question.** Scott C. asked if we knew where the approximately 1.6 acres of conservation area that would be lost if the GCL is built would be. Scott B. said it likely would be along the "Wenonah Ravine" south of Wenonah or in the area north of Maple St. He said he would check his notes and that we may need further clarification.

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

**Deposits:**           **\$400.00** Clean Communities grant.  
                          **\$50.00** donation.

**Expenses:**       **\$592.00** to Julie Ream for the cost of the Clay Hill sign.

**Current balance: \$4,414.80**

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:37 PM.  
(Motion: Dilks, Second: Ream, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Rich Dilks, Sec.