

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting
Minutes
January 12, 2022

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:32 P. M. in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act. 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 Coates | X | |
| Julie Ream (V. Chair.) | X | |

Associate Members Present: none.

Public Guests Present: none.

The minutes of the December 2021 meeting were approved as standing, with one typo correction.

(Motion: Ream, Second: Ceravolo, AIF)

Annual Reorganization

The floor was opened for nomination for all officers. All currently serving officers were renominated for their respective positions. All Each nomination was made and approved by a separate motion.

Planning board rep. Scott Barnes was nominated and approved.

(Motion: Ream, Second: Horn, AIF)

Secretary. Rich Dilks was nominated and approved.

(Motion: Barnes, Second: Conway, AIF)

Vice chair. Julie Ream was nominated and approved.

(Motion: Ceravolo, Second: Conway, AIF)

Chairman. Scott Barnes was nominated and approved.

(Motion: Ceravolo, Second: Horn, AIF)

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Near Term Projects

Trail Maintenance

Eldridge Trail. Julie noted the cut log circles placed along a portion of the trail were a bit unstable and could be a hazard, particularly for night hikers on the Moonlight Hike. Scott C. agreed they were a hazard. Julie said she would remove them from the trail prior to the hike.

Glen Trail. Scott B. noted the Glen Trail was cleared by volunteers from the American Legion on Dec. 31. The WEC thanks them for an outstanding job clearing the trail. Scott B. then shared photos of the Glen Trail area, which was devastated by the tornado. He noted the back yard of the home at 100 W. Cedar is now completely cleared of all vegetation right up to the trail with no separation or buffer. Scott B. said the trail needed to be marked out by logs in the short term and that a buffer of trees or shrubs, such as arborvitae, need to be planted to separate the trail and conservation land from the 100 W. Cedar property. It would be a valid use of Borough resources or the Wenonah Planting GOFundMe to accomplish this. It was also noted we would need to know the location of the property line between 100 W. Cedar and conservation land to do the plantings. It was suggested we contact the homeowners, Jean Claude and Helen Ledu, to see if they have a survey. We could also check with Dave Kreck, who recently looked into the drainage pipe location that projected from the property. It was further agreed we would want to work with the homeowner on any plan to plant near their property as they install new landscaping on their property. It was agreed that Sharon and Rich would draft a letter to the property owners. It was also noted that the bench by the stone dam was damaged and moved from its posts.

Mantua Creek Trail. Sharon reported she was on site when the contractor (Lewis Tree Service) from ACE cleared the leaning and hazardous trees from MCT just east of the RR. She said a great many tree trunks and limbs had to be cut and much wood remains on the ground there. She praised the crew for an excellent job. Sharon also took photos of the crew at work. She plans to write a letter from the WEC thanking ACE for their assistance. Sharon also noted that she had received an email from Jake Sneed of ACE asking that the WEC publicly thank Ace for its efforts through social media, a local paper or newsletter. It was agreed we would give a public thank you on our Facebook page and website. Sharon said she would write a thank you article for the borough newsletter. Julie offered to post photos and info on the ACE assistance in the lake kiosk.

Wenonah Lake Loop Trail. Scott B. said he and Julie went out to open up the dams at the north head of the lake in Dec. to help control the flooding, but that the beavers had repaired the dams and re-flooded the area in a matter of a couple of weeks. One solution to restore the loop for now would be to install a by-pass bridge upstream from the flooded area while we work on a long term solution. Scott C. suggested installing one or more 4" pipes in the dams to lower the water level and drain the flooded trail areas. It was also suggested we could raise the trail slightly by adding crushed stone and mulch. Scott C. said he wants to go inspect the area before attempting to put together any plans. Julie said she would put a notice in the kiosk, letting people know the trail at that section is flooded.

Camels Back Loop Trail. It was noted that Bob B. had sent out an email reporting the arch bridge is badly deteriorated and in need of major repair or removal. Scott B. shared photos that Bob had sent him. The bridge is missing planks and the supports are rotting and falling apart. Scott C. noted that last year he saw the wood was soft and rotting. The bridge, at present is a safety hazard. Sharon suggested perhaps we could remove the bridge and make the area a reflecting spot, rather than a loop trail. It was noted this is perhaps the least used trail in the conservation area, largely because it is not part of the connected trail system. Scott C. said at this point the bridge should be removed, as it is beyond repair. It was agreed we would consult with Bob before making any decisions or plans for the area. Scott C said he would reach out to Bob. Bob said in his email that he plans to attend the Feb. meeting.

Moonlight Hike, scheduled for Jan. 16, is cancelled. Recalling that the last moonlight hike drew over 100 people, WEC members expressed concern that with the current prevalence of the highly contagious omicron variant, we would have difficulty having people maintain social distance, particularly on Pine St and at the Tea House. It was generally agreed that we should avoid having large crowds congregate, even outdoors. Scott B. said that there is also a forecast for a possible snowstorm on Jan 16. It was discussed whether we could reschedule, possibly for March. Scott B. said that in the warmer month with later sunset times, we would need to

schedule the hike later in the evening. It was agreed the hike for Jan 16 would be cancelled. The possibility of a reschedule date was left for future consideration.

(Motion: Conway, Second: Coates, AIF)

Five Mile Hike, Feb. 12. As of now, this hike is still on. It was noted that it was easier to have people maintain social distance on this hike and that usually the hikers stretch out into a long line on the trails. Since the hike occurs after of Feb. meeting, we can leave any final decision until then.

Recruiting new members. It was suggested that reaching out to the volunteers who have express an interest in helping with projects and trail work would be a good start. It was also suggested we could invite them to a WEC meeting in person, once we resume in person meetings, with the hope of getting more people actively involved. Dave noted there are a lot of new residents, who could also be a source of new volunteers.

Recognition and honoring of long serving member on retirement. Scott B. noted Dave Kreck had served on the WEC for over 20 years and that Bob had served for many years as well. It was suggested we make some gesture to recognize and show our appreciation for their long service on the WEC. One suggestion was a plaque to be placed in the community center with brass name plates to which names could be added for retiring WEC member who have made significant contributions to our mission. Julie said she would work on a design for this. Rich said once we have a concrete proposal, we should approach the Borough for permission. A ceremony of appreciation for retiring members could also be done.

Sustainable Jersey Grant. Sharon reported that the Borough still has not received the final \$2500 of the Clay Hill Restoration Project Grant. She said we were told all of our paperwork was in order. Sharon will follow up with SJ to resolve this.

Tree painting on Eldridge Trail. Julie said she and her son had been painting some trees on the Eldridge Trail to protect them from beavers. Beavers had been going after some trees near the raised boardwalk. She said she painted some trees where beavers had also been gnawing in the back yard of a neighbor that backs up to Monongahela Br.

Comey's Lake Fountain still running. Julie noted the homeowners at Comey's Lake are still running the fountain in winter. It was noted this would likely prevent the lake from freezing, at least in the vicinity of the fountain.

Wenonah Planting GoFundMe. Scott B. noted the fundraising effort is nearing its goal, having already raised over \$22,000. Scott B. sad the donation from the Corner Press t-shirt sales went to the GoFundMe.

Wenonah Park Committee. Scott B. said that Bartlett Tree Experts is doing an assessment of the park, including noting any hazard tree still there and a plan for replanting and landscaping, and will be issuing a report.

Web site. Scott B. said he is continuing to work on the redesign.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since the November 2021 meeting.

Deposits:

- \$30.00 Trail guide sales from library**
- \$275.00 Hiker Babes of South Jersey donation**
- \$50.00 Bog Walk donation from Neil & Kelly Young**
- \$100.00 Bog walk donation from Debra Cline**

\$750.00 Bog walk donation from John House
\$336.99 Clean Communities grant

Total Deposits: \$1,541.99

Expenses: \$ None

Current Balance: \$6,583.09

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:50 PM.
(Motion: Conway, Second Ceravolo:, AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.