

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting
Minutes
February 9, 2022

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:30 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: Alex Pozza

The minutes of the January 2022 meeting were approved as standing.
(Motion: Ream, Second: Coates, AIF)

Alex Pozza spoke briefly, saying he looking for way to possibly connect various community groups in Wenonah.

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Near Term Projects

Trail Maintenance

Comey's Lake. Julie reported someone has been trimming the shrubs and branches on the trail near Comey's Lake. She said the trimming has done no serious damage.

Bog Walk. Scott Conway said due to winter weather, he has not had the opportunity to further inspect or draw up plans for the Bog Walk restoration, but will do so when conditions are more favorable.

Garden Trail. Julie noted the gaps are increasing on the small RR tie bridges. They will need attention at some point.

Glen Trail. Bob B. has placed a trail sign at the intersection of the Glen and Mantua Creek Trail, pointing out the newly opened Glen Trail. Rich reported he received a phone call from Mr. Leduc of 100 W. Cedar, in response to our letter concerning his property line and WEC plans to plant a vegetative buffer along portions of the Glen Trail near his property. He was very enthusiastic about working with us on this project. He said he had corner in ground property markers at the boundary with conservation land but they have been buried or destroyed by the heavy equipment clearing his land. He said he knows their locations and can show us. He said he also has a survey. Mr. Leduc said he is planning to plant about 30 native trees in the cleared areas of his property and is working with a landscaper on that. He also said he was planning to put up a screen of arborvitae along the portion of his property that borders the Glen Trail. He said he is fine with us putting in buffer plantings along the trail and even said he had no objection if some of our plantings go onto his property. He has offered us financial help, if needed, and has given us permission to use his property and driveway to bring materials to

where we would be planting. Mr. Leduc said he is happy to work with us. Rich said the next step would be to have WEC members meet with Mr. Leduc on the trail to determine the property boundary line and discuss the plantings. Rich will contact Mr. Leduc to set up a date and time to meet.

Mantua Creek Trail. Scott C. said he has repaired and realigned the boardwalk on the east end of the island. He also cut away the obstructing fallen trees that had blocked the trail, forcing people to cross a muddy spot to go around them. He said the trail is now at its former location on the crushed stone path. Scott C. noted there is a problem at the small bridge just downstream from the island. Large trees had fallen blocking the old channel and water flow at the small stream there, creating a muddy area. Scott C. said the best solution would be to extend the bridge over the muddy area, rather than attempt to alter the hydrology. Scott C. also noted the section of the island trail near the east bridge is being washed out by water due to altered water flow patterns caused by downed trees there. Additional gravel fill may stabilize the trail there.

Break Back Run Trail. Scott C. and Dave both confirmed they recently walked the BBRT and there were no problems.

Wenonah Lake. Scott C. did an inspection of the north end the lake where there is an ongoing flooding issue. He said he would like to observe the area during a rain event to see exactly how the flooding occurs. He said the old dam above the footbridge is not affecting water flow. However, the problem is blockages between the bridge and where the stream enters the lake. The blockages (or small beaver dams?) are in an area where water flows through a very narrow channel, partly blocked by a dirt island. Woody debris continues to collect there. Scott C. recommended clearing some debris and removing the dirt island should improve drainage. The problem is that there is very little elevation change in the area and a small rise in water level can cause a fairly large area to flood. He said the use of flow pipes would be ineffective here. He pointed out that the bulkhead at the foot bridge is also a problem. The stream is silting up there and the bulkhead forces the water into a narrow channel that can't contain it. He said the best solution is to extend the bridge 14' to 16' and let the water flow under it, working with nature rather than fighting it.

Wenonah Lake party spot #3. Scott C. also said he noticed one of the planks on a puncheon near the loop trail entrance was missing. He noted that puncheon plank had been loose, but now was gone. He stated looking around the area. He noticed something blue north of the Eggert Trail entrance and east of the old RR bed. Waling up to it he found a dugout party spot covered with a blue tarp and pole roof. Inside was our puncheon plank. He confiscated the tarp and returned plank to the puncheon and then secured it and the other planks firmly in place to deter future thefts.

Trail maintenance survey walk. Scott C. noted that last year we did a survey walk of the trails instead of the 5 mile public hike. He suggested doing another survey walk this year would be useful. We could then compare current conditions to last year's and update the list of trail issues. Scott. B. said the survey walk should be done prior to the spring work party on March 26.

Camels Back Run Trail bridge. Scott C. said he spoke with Bob about the deteriorating arched bridge. Bob agrees the bridge is a hazard, unrepairable and should be removed. A question arose about the labor to remove the bridge and possibly seeking help from the Lions Club. It was suggested we might need a dumpster and may need to rent one or determine if the Borough could provide one. The access route for any work at the bridge site would be off Glass. Rd. Bob said he would like to see a new bridge built to replace it, either using steel I-beams or wood. Scott C. said Bob has been discussing these possibilities with Charlie Price.

The 5 Mile Hike. The hike is scheduled for Feb. 12 at 1 PM. It was agreed the trail around the north end of Wenonah Lake was not suitable. The alternate route will go from the lake parking lot up the Eggert Trail then south on the old RR bed to the parking lot. Otherwise the trail route will be as in previous years. Scott C. said we should caution people that some trails are muddy

and hiking boots are recommended. Julia will include that on our Facebook announcement and Scott B. will do the same on the email and website announcements.

Wenonah Park. Scott B. said the arborist with Bartlett Tree Experts has marked and surveyed all standing trees. The next step will be for the arborist to present his recommendations to the Park Committee.

Wenonah Planting GoFundMe. Scott. B reported the fund has raised over \$27,000 to date and has now set its goal at \$30,000.

Go Pro video project. Scott B. said he plans to use the Go Pro camera to record the effects of the tornado on the conservation area and also over time to record the changes to the area as it recovers. He said it is important to begin filming now while the devastation can be clearly seen before new vegetative growth begins in the spring. He said the WHS is documenting the tornado damage and recovery in town and our footage can be included in that project.

Mullica Hill Women's Triathlon. The group is planning a run/walk on Wenonah's trails on 9/22 and will be charging a fee to participate. Scott B. said he checked the Borough Code and that there is mention of the Borough issuing permits but that there is no clear criteria for how or when it is done. Since the group has not communicated with us we don't know any details of the 9/22 event; the number of participants, the run/walk trail route, how this may affect other trail users that day, parking, where the lunch is held and if they will want to mark the trails. It was agreed our first step will be to contact the Borough to discuss these issues. Julie agreed to contact Karen Sweeney. After we consult with the Borough, it might be valuable to reach out to the triathlon group to discuss concerns. Scott B. said it would be advisable for us to look at possible revisions to the conservation area chapter of the Borough Code to make it more clearly applicable to such things as event permits and explicit prohibition of unauthorized trails.

Thank You letter to ACE. Rich reported that Sharon has sent a thank you letter on behalf of the WEC and Borough to Jacob Sneed, Region Vice President, Atlantic City Electric, for ACE's assistance in clearing trees on the tornado damaged section of the trail.

Newsletter. Scott B. reported the deadline is Feb. 15 for the next Borough newsletter. He plans to mention the spring work party and Bird Quest. It was decided not to include a fund raising appeal at this time. We had received a number of donations with the Bog Walk appeal and it was felt we should show the public some results from that effort before asking for additional donations.

Girl Scout Troop offers cleanup and plantings. The Wenonah-Mantua troop of K-4 girls had offered to a trail cleanup and flower plantings. Scott. B. replied to the troop leader, Nicole Lepo, that there is not enough trail trash to make a cleanup worthwhile and we are not planning a substantial plantings in the conservation area. It was suggested that perhaps a more appropriate activity would be a guided nature walk for the scouts and some sprucing up of the area around the Tea House combined with putting in some native plantings there. Rich agreed to reach, out to the scout leader Nicole Lepo to discuss possibilities.

WEC Service Recognition Plaque. Julie mentioned the suggestion brought up at last month's meeting of a plaque with brass nameplates in the Community Center to honor retiring long serving WEC members. She said we need to determine the criteria for honorees, whether this would retroactively include past members, and how many name spaces there should be.

Beaver Gnawing on Clay Hill bench. Scott C. reported that a beaver has been gnawing on the cedar (lower) bench at Clay Hill and has done serious damage to one end. Dave said

perhaps we could protect the bench with copper sheathing on the sides. Scott said he will look into a possible repellent that can be put on the bench without detracting from the esthetic of the wood.

GCL Line. Scott B. noted the Woodbury Hts. Borough Council passed a resolution opposing the GCL, and that Joseph Hetzel, a GCL opponent, spoke at the council meeting.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since the January 2022 meeting.

Total Deposits: none

Expenses: none

Current Balance: \$6,583.09

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:50 PM.
(Motion: Ream, Second Coates: AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.