

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting
Minutes
March 9, 2022

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:33 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	
Scott Conway		X
Rich Dilks (Sec.) (via teleconference)	X	
Julia Horn (via teleconference)	X	
Dave Coates	X	
Julie Ream (V. Chair.)	X	

Associate Members Present: none.

Public Guests Present: none.

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

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Review

5 Mile Hike. Scott B. estimated that approximately 40 people participated, although not all the hikers completed the full route to the Tea House. It was a very successful event.

Near Term Projects

Spring work party, Sat March 26. Several possible tasks were suggested: 1. Working at the north head of Wenonah Lake to improve water flow, removing a sand bar in the stream. Scott C. had previously proposed the bridge there be extended to cover the muddy areas. 2. On the Eldridge Trail, removing some puncheons and laying down layers of stone covered by mulch in the muddy section. We would need to calculate how much stone was needed and have it delivered to the trail head at E. Pine St. 3. A possible trash cleanup along Bark Bridge Rd. We will promote the work party on social media. Sharon will reach out to Melissa Epstein for possible volunteers.

Trail Maintenance

Camels Back Run area & bridge. Sharon suggested the former Synnott's Pond area be used as a reflection area rather than maintaining the bridges needed for the loop trail. She said there is a lot of vegetative debris that needs to be cleaned out. That could be a scout project. The ideas of having some group adopted the area to maintain it or getting neighbors involved were discussed. The badly deteriorated arched bridge is still in place but will be removed. It was noted that Bob favors replacing the bridge and has been looking into the design and materials for a new bridge at the site. We will need to have further discussions before any decisions are made.

Bog Walk. With the weather moderating, Scott C. will explore options and plans for the restoration and repair.

Glen Trail. Rich has spoken with Mr. Ledu of 100 W. Cedar St. who said he is happy to cooperate with us in installing screening planting along the trail near his property line. Rich said

the next step is to meet with Mr. Ledu on site so he can show us where his property boundary is located and then we can discuss what shrubs to plant and where. Mr. Ledu had told Rich that the WEC can suggest a date and time for the meeting. It was decided to meet at the site on Sun. March 20 as a part of the 5 mile trail survey. Rich will confirm the date with Mr. Ledu and ask him for a convenient time.

Mantua Creek Trail. Scott B. reported he has taken the first GoPro video of the tornado damaged sections of the trail to record the status of the area before spring growth occurs. This and subsequent videos will document the conservation area damage and regrowth. The video will also become a part of the tornado history project of the WHS. Rich said Scott C. had told him he was looking into the problem of the beaver gnawing the cedar bench at Clay Hill. Scott C. said that beavers are attracted to cedar wood. He said the best solution would be to remove the cedar plank and replace it with one of a wood beavers are not likely to gnaw. The cedar plank can be repaired and used elsewhere. He said he would be able to cut, finish and install the new plank on the Clay Hill bench.

5 Mile Hike Trail Survey. Following up last year's trail survey walk, we will again take inventory of trail issues on Sun. March 20. We will focus on the Wenonah Lake trail. MCT and the Bog Walk area.

Wenonah Park Committee. Scott B. reported on the progress of the WPC. He said he has a copy of the tree survey document, prepared by Bartletts Tree Service, that evaluated the approximately 100 still standing trees in the park and noted what issues needed to be dealt with for them. Scott B. noted the very tall tulip poplar will be used for lightning protection and will have sort of lightning rod installed on it. The document also calls for new plantings at about 50 locations in the park. It was also mentioned that Exley's Nursery has donated a number of eastern white pine and pin oak for the park.

Wenonah Park Cleanup, April 2. (8:30 to noon). Scott B. said the cleanup will be similar to a Clean Communities event with volunteers signing up as members of community groups.

Trail Maintenance Team. We have been looking for volunteers with building skills. We made an appeal for skilled volunteers last year and need to continue the effort. We need skilled volunteers that can do the work based on the designs and specs we create. It was noted that often times volunteers are unable to commit to a full day on a project but some may be able to volunteer a few hours. Dave suggested we try to reach potential volunteers by personal contact. It was agreed we would do that and also seek volunteers through publicity and social media. We could put an appeal in the summer newsletter and use Facebook. Sharon agreed to reach out to potential volunteers. Julia will send her the list of people who responded to our volunteer appeal last year.

Wenonah Planting GoFundMe. Scot B. said the fund has raised its goal to \$35,000.

Mullica Hill Women's Triathlon walk/run. Julie reported that she had spoken to Karen Sweeney. Karen has told the group they will need to apply for a permit and forwarded the pertinent ordinance that states that. There are still unanswered questions about the numbers that would be involved, parking and the provide lunch. It was also noted the Hiker Babes of South Jersey are holding weekly hikes in the conservation area on Tuesdays.

Borough Code revisions. Scott cited the need to update the Borough code on events and permits regarding the conservation area The present code refers to the Wenonah Playground Committee, a long defunct organization. Also how is an "event" defined? We would also seek specific language prohibiting the construction of unauthorized trails. It was noted that it has been a decade since the last revisions to the relevant ordinances and that trail use has greatly

increased since then. Scott suggested we wait until after the issues concerning Wenonah Lake are all resolved so council could focus better on our suggestions Our requests would go to Jonathan Barbato as Chair for Public Buildings and Grounds.

Planning Board. Scott B. noted there was one variance application for an oversized solar panel. The variance was granted.

Woodbury Hts. town resolution opposing the GCL. Scott B. read portions of the resolution passed by the borough council. It particularly objected to the adverse effects of the track widening and the construction of a maintenance yard in the borough.

Girl Scout troop nature walk and plantings. Rich reported he has been in touch with Nicole Lepo, scout leader, and she has suggested Sat. April 23 for the event. The WEC agreed to the date. Rich will now get back in touch with Nicole and confirm. We will need to set a time. The walk to the Tea House and the planting should take 1.5 to 2 hours total. We will also need to know the number of scouts participating since that will determine how many plants (likely native ferns or small shrubs) need to be purchased. The Tea House area will need to be scouted to determine where the plantings will go and to clear and prepare the ground. The scout troop has offered to share the cost of the plants with us.

Duckweed/Algae control for Comey's Lake. Rich reported he has received a proposal and contract from Princeton Hydro for Comey's Lake. PH is offering a 1 or 2 (2022-2023) year contract, with the same price locked in for both years. The cost would be \$3530 for Comey's Lake for each year. By comparison, the cost for Comey's Lake last year was \$3255. This proposal represents an approximately 6% increase in cost over last year. The \$150 fee for the 2 year DEP permit is now included in the overall fee. After discussion, the WEC voted to agree to the 2 year contract. Dilks Pond is currently in the second year of a 2 year contract with PH for the cost of \$1970. No action is needed for Dilks Pond at present.

(Motion: Ream, Second: Ceravolo, AIF)

Archival material donated by Bob B. Rich reported Bob has given us a box containing materials from WEC projects and several display boards. The items are from WEC projects going back 20 years or more, including the Tea House restoration, Synnott's Pond project, Comey's Lake fountain and others. Rich will bring the items to the April meeting so we can discuss what will be done with the materials. The WEC does have a storage cabinet at the Borough hall where our records can be archived in a publically accessible space.

WEC Volunteer Recognition Plaque. Scott noted there is very little available space on the Comm. Center walls but likely enough to accommodate our plaque. Julie indicated the most important thing to be resolved is the criteria for honoring an individual. Would the person have to serve on the WEC a given number of years? Would a volunteer or assoc. member be eligible? Would the recognition be retroactive to past members or only current and future ones? It was noted the WEC was established in 1975 with Chuck Forsman as the first chairman. Prior to that was the Woodlands Council.

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

Total Deposits: none

Expenses: none

Current Balance: \$6,583.09

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:56 PM.
(Motion: Ream, Second Coates: AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.