

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting
Minutes
January 11, 2023

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

Associate Members Present: none.

Public Guests: Alex Pozza, Rachel Raggio, Liz Raggio.

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

Reorganization.

The following serving officers were chosen by the WEC to remain in office serving for 2023:

Chairman: Scott Barnes

Vice Chairman: Julie Ream

Secretary: Rich Dilks.

Planning Board Rep. Scott Barnes

For each position the serving officer was the only nomination made and in all cases each position was confirmed by a motion with a unanimous AIF vote.

Public Guest Comments.

Update on Wenonah Lake playground Renovations by Alex Pozza. Alex reported the Lake Grounds Committee is now considering a less comprehensive grant from the county rather than the state grant. The county grant would go towards upgrades for the bathrooms to make them ADA compliant. Alex said the major concern for the playground was the soggy ground, seeping water and flooding. He asked if any WEC member had any expertise in dealing with these issues. Sharon suggested that the Gloucester County Parks Dept. has a person available that may be able to offer advice. Alex said one possible measure would be to move the playground equipment to drier sites. He suggested the volley ball court might be converted to pickle ball. The creation of rain gardens is also being considered. Alex said there are no plans to remove trees and he feels the grounds should be left as natural as possible. Scott C. said that Dave Kreck had been involved with a previous project to control the hydrology on the lake grounds and could offer some insight. Alex said Dave is also currently serving on the Lake Grounds Committee.

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

The Moonlight Hike, Jan. 6 at 8 pm. Scott B. said the sky was mostly cloudy but otherwise the weather was pleasant. He said approximately 30 people participated, including numerous young people and members of the Hiker Babes group. It was generally agreed that people had no trouble navigating the trails. It was also noted the route was likely too short. The route was from the Glen Trail entrance at W. Cedar to Clay Hill with the exit at S. Jackson. It was thought the walk could have continued to Mantua Ave. The other downside was the hike was not a loop and involved a long walk back to their cars for most hikers.

Trail Maintenance

Comey's Lake Dam. Scott B. said he spoke briefly with Dave Kreck about the dam at Borough reorganization. The dam clearly has problems and it is not clear what action can be taken to correct them. The use of any grant money to repair or rebuild the dam would require state permits, which may be difficult or impossible to obtain. Scott C. said the primary leveler is not functioning properly and the level of the lake is now being maintained by the overflow leveler, which is partially blocked. We will need to confer with Dave K. and Bob to determine available options.

Comey's Lake Loop. Julie reported that large stones have been installed at the Lenape Trail access trail to control erosion there. Scott C. asked if we should put additional gravel in that area to increase erosion resistance. It was agreed we would wait and see how the larger stone works first.

Monongahela Brook Trail. Julie indicated there is one short stretch of trail that needs to have a trail rail installed. That section of trail could also be leveled by shifting dirt from its inner edge. Julie indicated there has been considerable beaver activity between the Bog Walk and S. Marion, as well as on the nearby property of Elaine Goodman. Julie said she saw what appeared to be a dead beaver in the stream there. It has since been washed away.

Mantua Creek Trail. Scott C. reported he has cut the very large downed tree blocking the trail west of the RR near the trestle. He also cut and cleared a tree that fell on the boardwalk on the island. That tree had damaged the boardwalk and driven the supports deeper into the ground, lowering the walk as well. Scott C. said he made the repairs to the boardwalk and supports. He also cleared a recently fallen tree on the trail west of the Mullens property.

Wenonah Lake Loop. Scott C. said he checked the party spots near the trail and all were clean with no signs of recent activity. He said Public Works had picked up the pallets he had earlier removed from the spots. He said there is a step over tree down on the east side of the lake which will be left in place. Scott B. said that he removed a pallet that had been causing flooding from the stream north of the lake. He said the water in the stream is now flowing freely.

Wenonah Lake Kiosk. Julie said she sanded the wood of the paint vandalized kiosk and it looks better. She said the acrylic window of the kiosk is badly scratched and needs to be replaced. Julie also said wants the replacement window panel to be redesigned so it is easier to open when adding and removing materials. She and Scott C. will discuss options.

Break Back Run Trail. Scott C. reported he cut into sections the fallen tree that was just below the boardwalk in one of the ravines and was causing flooding and silt back up. He also dug out some of the silt to improve water flow there and raised the board walk with logs. Scott B. noted the small bridge near the Hayes Ave. was very low to the water and is at times flooded. Scott C. agreed the bridge should be raised. Sharon noted the BBRT can be difficult for some to traverse but that the addition of stairs or hand rails was not practical.

Boy Scout Island. Scott B. reported there has been no recent human activity but that the beavers have been active. He said the large tree they had been gnawing was now fully ringed.

The 5 Mile Hike Feb. 11 at 1 PM. Scott B. noted the north section Break Back Run Trail can be challenging to some hike participants with its steep slopes and ravines. He suggested for that section of the walk we divide into 2 groups with one walking the full length of BBRT from Maple St to Hayes Ave. and a second group detouring from Maple St. along S. Jefferson Ave. and W. Elm St to the Elm St access trail near Rich's house.

Camel's Back Loop Trail adoption. Sharon said she needs to meet with Chris Better, who teaches construction classes at Gateway. She said Chris is enthusiastic about a Gateway student adoption of the trail and suggested the students could build benches and bird houses, trim vegetation and spread mulch.

Education article. Julia had informed us she is planning a January article on the environmental impacts of salting to clear driveways of snow.

Conservation Area Sign. Julie announced the replacement sign at S. Marion is now up and secured very tightly with bolts to the brackets.

Letter to Conservation Area Neighbors. The final draft of the front page of the letter is now complete. We plan to put a map on the back page showing the location of conservation lands in the Borough. Julie will look into locating a suitable one page map, possibly color or B&W. Scott B. said he is hoping the Borough will cover some of the printing and mailing costs.

Interactive Mapping Project of Conservation Area. The WEC had earlier decided that to possibly take advantage of future Stewart Estate maintenance grants, we would need to document which parcels in the conservation area were purchased with Stewart Estate funds. Tonight, Scott B. gave a demonstration of an interactive map of Wenonah that contains color coded data layers that indicate 4 categories of land status:

Blue- conservation land not purchased with Stewart estate funds.

Yellow- conservation land purchased with Stewart estate funds.

Red- other public lands such as the park and school.

Green- privately owned lots within the Borough.

With this tool the WEC can quickly and easily reference which conservation lands are Stewart Estate related. Scott B. Said he placed a link to the map in DropBox.

Planning Board. Scot B. reported there was a request for a line change at 102 E. Pine and a request for a variance for solar panels by a homeowner on S. Jefferson. The variance request for 204 W. Willow was not on the agenda.

Rules of the Trail signs. Julie had some mock ups of the mini signs to be placed at the poster shelters. She will email them to us for inspection.

Sycamore for Dilks Pond. Scott C. inquired of the status of the potted sycamore that Gary has that was not used for the Glen Trail. The WEC had suggested it be planted at Dilks pond. It was understood that Pat Ream has spoken to Gary about that.

Debris from dugout fort. Sharon noted she informed Brian at PW last month the debris was at the Maple St trail head to be picked up. It apparently is still there.

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

Expenses

\$90.50 to Sharon for cedar tree for Glen Trail.

Deposits

\$615.50 from Wenonah Planting Fund for trees for Glen Trail (6 trees from Exley's and 1 from Sharon).

\$380.00- Clean Communities Grant.

\$995.50- total deposits

Current Balance: \$5,820.74

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:52 PM.

(Motion: Ream, Second Coates: AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.