

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting
Minutes
February 8, 2023

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:30 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: none.

The minutes of the January 2023 meeting were approved as standing.
(Motion: Ceravolo, Second: Conway, AIF)

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Trail Maintenance

Comey's Lake. Julie will empty the trash can at the Tea House in advance of the 5 Mile Hike on Saturday. Scott C. said he walked the trails from MCT to the Tea House and found no issues with the route.

Comey's Lake Dam. Scott C. said Bob had spoken with Dave Kreck about the dam and said the dam is still functioning, even though the water level is about a foot lower than normal. He said it would be up to the Borough and Public Works to come up with a plan for the long term future of the dam and lake.

Break Back Run Trail. Sharon said one of the bridges on the trail is sinking but is still usable for now. Scott Conway said that was the bridge he tried to raise up with logs recently. Sharon also noted some of the boards on the trail, not far from the new raised boardwalk, are loose and out of place. They will need to be reset or replaced

Wenonah Lake. Scott C. noted there is a tree down on the trail on the east side of the lake.

Wenonah Lake kiosk. Julie said she and Scott C. were looking at the kiosk and at how to proceed with the damaged acrylic. Julie said she would like a model that opened more easily from the sides or the bottom and that would be designed so the acrylic could easily be replaced. She said she looked on line at a number of models but they were designed so the acrylic could not be removed. Scott. C suggested that was done to ensure the cabinets are water tight. So in those designs, the entire unit would need to be replaced at considerable cost. It was suggested that the Gateway students who built the kiosk could help with a new design. Sharon suggested we could simply remove the acrylic and leave the bulletin board open to the elements. Julie agreed it was worth trying and that all postings would need to be laminated. Scott C. said he would look at the kiosk and determine how to remove the acrylic. Scott C. said

Brian of Public Works is working on getting a camera mounted in the lake parking lot for security.

Monongahela Brook Trail. Scott C. reported he repaired the trail rails on a short section of the trail.

Clay Hill. Scott C. said there is a problem with sink holes at Clay Hill. The creek is undercutting the bulkhead and eroding material from the bottom. He said he earlier repaired one sink hole with cement. To fix the current problem, the bulkhead must be made water tight. This could be done by driving additional vertical boards into the area or by pushing the existing horizontal boards down so they would prevent undercutting by the creek. He will look into the best solution.

Monongahela Loop Trail. Scott C. said he met up with Bob on the trail. Scott walked the lower section of the loop. He said it is walkable but there is a muddy section near the Rt. 553 bridge. Scott C. suggested that if we move the trail a short distance (20-30 Ft.) the muddy area would only be about 10 ft. wide and could be bridged by puncheons. It was also noted that this little used trail can be quite difficult to hike in summer because of the thick growth of annual vegetation.

Mantua Creek Trail. Scott C. noted there is a beech tree about 14" in diameter that the beavers have been gnawing but have not yet ringed. The tree is still viable if it is painted or wired. Julie noted the W. Cherry St. access trail (Near Dave Kreck's) has area where walking is difficult. She said Dave will flag the trail off for now. Julie said a modest rerouting of the trail and some brush cutting could fix the problem.

Garden Trail. Julie reported the beavers have been very active in this area. She also noted there is a trail camera mounted on a low tree trunk on the Monongahela Brook Trail near the Garden Trail bridge over the Monongahela Branch. She said the camera is pointed directly at where the beavers have been gnawing a tree. It was noted that the unauthorized camera was technically a violation of the Borough Code but it was decided we would take no action as its presence is likely temporary. Julie said she will protect some trees on the Garden Trail and the beech tree on the MCT.

5 Mile Hike, Sat. Feb. 11 at 1 PM. Sharon walked Break Back Run Trail and suggested the detour for those challenged by the terrain of the north end of BBR Trail could reenter the trail from N. Jefferson at the Stewart Estate marker near Buttonwood St. Alternatively it was suggested that the detour could follow N. Jefferson from Maple St then down W. Elm St to reenter BBR Trail. As this route bypasses all the ravines, it was chosen as the best route. Scott B. noted Julia was away and no promotional notices about the hike have yet been sent out. He said he will get a social media post out on our Facebook page.

Camel's Back Loop Adopt-A Trail project with Gateway. Sharon said she had spoken with Chris Better, who was enthusiastic about the project. He suggested a new sign for the E. Elm St. entrance, and having the students construct benches and bird houses. This could be coordinated with the student's Volunteer Day in June, where they could also spread mulch on the trail and cut back vegetation. It was noted there are a significant number of larger stones (from the gabion cages) at the old dam site. The students could gather these up to help the flow of the stream. We would then keep the stones for future projects. Chris said we may be asked to cover the cost for wood for the benches. It was agreed the WEC would ask to see the designs for the benches and sign as well as costs estimates for any material we would purchase before giving approval to these projects. Sharon suggested Rich could help with selecting some native plants the students could plant as part of the project.

Invitation for WEC display at dinner. Scott B. noted the WEC was invited to have a display at the American Legion sponsored Dinner With Friends event on Feb.11. It was decided we did not have sufficient materials to put together a display at this time.

Letter to Conservation Area neighbors. Scott B. reported that Julie had provided him with a black and white trail map for the back of the letter. The full letter is now in pdf format. Scott B. said he had spoken to the Borough and provided the Borough with the block and lot numbers for the 93 lots (91 of which are residences) that border the conservation area. He said the Borough can mark off these lots for future mailings as well. Scott B. said Karen at the Borough will run off the letter copies and mailing labels. We would need to purchase envelopes, pay the postage (\$63.00) and provide a return address for the envelopes. We would also need to do the folding and stuffing of the envelopes. A motion was made to allocate \$100.00 for postage and supplies.

(Motion: Ream, Second: Conway, AIF)

Educational articles. It was noted that Julia plans to do an article on native plants in the garden and landscaping. It was also noted that the newly formed Wenonah Garden Club will meet at the Community Center on Feb. 11. It will focus on using native plants on both public and private spaces. Sharon plans to attend. Sharon noted their activities could be helpful to the Green Team. She also mentioned Dave Kreck's rain barrel workshop.

Newsletter article due Feb. 14. Scott B. said he will be mentioning upcoming events, including the GCNC Bird Quest on May 6. The theme will be Birds On The Move and the gathering will again be at Wheelabrator. The WEC is a sponsor each year. Sharon said she will contact the West Deptford EC about sponsoring as well. For the newsletter, Scott B. will also mention the Spring Work Party on March 25, note the beaver activity at the Garden Trail and include some of the reminders in the conservation area neighbors' letter about what is permitted and prohibited in the conservation area.

Planning Board. Scott B. reported a variance has been granted to the owners of the former Lentz property. They will be removing asphalt from part of the property and installing a pool, deck and pergola. A second variance request for a S. Jefferson Ave. homeowner to install solar panels was not acted on.

Rules of the Trail signs. Julie will continue to look into these small signs that can be mounted on the poster shelters.

Duckweed/algae treatment proposal for Dilks Pond. Rich reported that Princeton Hydro (PH) has sent him a proposal for the continuing treatment of Dilks Pond. PH has been treating Dilks Pond since 2013. Rich said we are in the 2nd year of a two year contract with PH to treat Comey's Lake for \$3530 per annum. The previous two year contract for Dilks Pond for 2021-22 was for \$1970 per annum. PH's current proposal for Dilks Pond is for \$3200, an increase of \$330 or 16.75%. The contract offer was for one year only. It was suggested we could refrain from having Dilks Pond treated this year to see to what extent duckweed and algae growth occurs without chemical suppression. It was agreed to undertake this experiment then assess the need for chemical treatment at the end of the season. It was also discussed that floating plant islands are a possible tool for improving water quality and reducing nitrogen and phosphorus in the water.

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since the January 2023 meeting.

Expenses

\$56.35 to Scott Conway for bolts.

Deposits

None.

Current Balance: \$5,764.39

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:59 PM.
(Motion: Ream, Second Conway: AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.