

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting

Minutes

May 10, 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	
Dan McCue	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: Heidi Congalton, Mike Fallon, Mary Newcomb

The minutes of the April 2023 meeting were approved as standing.

(Motion: Ream, Second: Coates, AIF)

Public Guests comments

Mike Fallon. Mike Fallon stated he would be happy to help coordinate the planting of memorial trees in remembrance of Jaime Fallon in the stone pool garden area. Requests to plant memorial trees have come from Julie Cassidy and Monique Collins (Mike's sisters). The possibility of erecting signage as a memorial in the conservation area was also brought up. This could be an interpretive sign at the Bog Walk of a sign on watersheds. Mike said the contributions the WEC has received in memory of Jaime could be used as the WEC saw fit. The species and size of the memorial trees still have to be determined. They would have to be trees that are suited to the area with damp soils and some shade. Scott C. said there was an area there, near a beaver felled tree, that could be suitable. It was decided that WEC members and Mike would meet at the stone pool garden this coming Sunday at 1 PM to evaluate the planting sites. Rich reported that to date 28 donations have been received by the WEC in memory of Jaime for a total of \$2,559.14. Rich presented a list of the donors to Mike.

Heidi Congalton. Heidi said the Wenonah Native Plant Garden Club hopes to form a committee to take on the plantings and landscaping restoration of the stone pool garden area. She said a committee could be formed only if at least 5 members agree to serve. She said there are invasives in the garden that should be removed. There are a number of native ferns now growing in the area, as well as a polemonum and Virginia bluebell from previous plantings, but there are areas that are in need of additional native herbaceous plants. Plugs would likely be used there. The WEC expressed a willingness to cover the cost of the new plants. Julie will act as liaison between the WNP GC committee and the WEC for this project. Heidi also noted there is an oily skim on the stone pond water. This is likely caused by street runoff.

Mary Newcomb. Mary is also with the WNP GC and has taken on coordinating garden and planting projects at Wenonah Lake for the WNP GC. This includes 3 small pollinator gardens. The WEC has filed for an ANJEC grant to fund the gardens. Mary said one area has proven to be too wet and has standing water after rains, so suitable sites are still to be determined. Other improvements are the removal of invasive Japanese honeysuckle along the fence and at its SE corner and at the snack bar area. Sunflowers will be planted along the fence at Maple St. and

should attract pollinators. Native coral honeysuckle will also be planted. The daylilies in the front beds will be replaced by native species as well. Mary said she has a special concern for the wooded area at the north end of the lake enclosure. She said that area has two short trails and two bridges and is used as an adventure area by younger children. The area has long been neglected. Currently there are downed and leaning trees and places where trees have fallen on and damaged the fence. There is also a 50 gal. metal drum in the small pond there. These could raise liability issues. Mary said she wants to keep the area as natural as possible and make sure the trails are well maintained. Mary asked the WEC to help her identify the native plants there and any invasives present. The WEC could also make recommendations on general conditions of the area. Rich and Dave C. will meet with Mary and inspect the site next Monday at 10 AM. Mary said there seems to be some ambiguity about who is the overall authority at the lake that she and the WNPGC will need to work with. The Lake Association seems largely concerned with activities at the lake rather than landscaping issues. The lake is owned by the Borough and so final authority rests there. It was suggested that Mary go before Council with her concerns, but first attempt to meet with the Council members responsible for Wenonah Lake including Dan Cox, Chair of Public Works/Public Buildings & Grounds, and Jonathan Barbato. It was noted that issues such as removing the 50 gal. drum or repairing the fence would fall on the Borough and Public Works. Mary said the implementation of the County grant will be delayed until after the One Night of Song event in Sept. and will push back the schedule for landscaping projects as well.

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Review:

Sycamore planted at Dilks Pond. Julie reported the potted sycamore that Gary Odenbrett had previously offered us for the Glen Trail was planted at Dilks Pond by Pat and her son.

Bird Quest, May 6. Scott B., coordinator of the event for the GCNC, reported a very successful Bird Quest with over 100 participants and 41 teams. The gathering was held at Wheelabrator where participants revived the BQ t-shirts, lunch and door prizes. Rich reported the WEC team had 5 members, Rich, Scott B., Domenic Lanciano, Gwendolynne Foster and Milena Foster. The team birded at Tall Pines and on the Wenonah trails, and spotted 52 bird species.

New WEC member. The WEC welcomes its newest member, Dan McCue, who took his seat on the commission at this meeting. Dan still needs to be formally sworn in. He replaces Sharon Ceravolo, who is stepping down. Welcome, Dan.

Trail Maintenance

Tea House. Scott C. said he removed the chalk graffiti at the Tea House and there have been no further incidents do date.

Kiosk. Julie said she had the trail map laminated and has posted it in the kiosk. For the present all notices posted there will be laminated.

Tree clearing. Scott C. said he has been clearing fallen trees that block trails by cutting an approximately 1 foot slice from the tree. This is wide enough for foot traffic to pass but blocks motorcycles and dirt bikes.

Garden Trail. Scott C. said the new bridges are all holding up well. He said there is still a lot of water and soggy condition in the area north of the bench even after we installed the drainage channels. The bench area itself with the gravel laid down is dry as is the main trail. He said Bob's stepping stone make the approach to the pool dry and walkable.

Clay Hill. Scott C. said he has made repairs by inserting boards at the back side of the bulkhead to block the areas where water was entering and creating the sink holes. The sink holes have been filled in and the area seems stable for now. Also at Clay Hill, Scott C. noted the junipers next to the stairs are being covered and smothered with leaves (one juniper is completely gone). He suggested that they should be replaced by higher, more erect shrubs.

Boy Scout Island. Scott C. recently discovered the party site has been active. Currently there are a table and chairs, a Lowe's cart and fire pit blocks at the site.

Clean Communities Day, May 13. It was decided that a small group (Scott B., Scott C., Dave and Dan) will go out to BSI and remove the items there. Scott C. said he would like to get someone with a truck so the items can be hauled to Public Works. Other WEC volunteers can do trash cleanup at the west side of Wenonah Lake or along the RR tracks. Rich will bring grabbers and trash bags.

5 mile trail survey. A survey walk along the trails at Wenonah Lake and Break Back Run Trail was scheduled for Sat., May 20 at 9AM.

Hazardous tree inquiry, Bryan Preston, 502 W. Mantua Ave. Rich went out to talk to Mr. Preston and inspect the tree. It is a fairly large dead tree on Borough property just west of the homeowner's property and close to the street and power lines. The tree may be on conservation land or in the clear space. Rich advised Mr. Preston to contact Atlantic City Electric to remove or trim the tree since it poses a potential hazard to the power lines. Rich also was in touch with Gary Odenbrett, who came out to the site and spoke with the homeowner. Gary also recommended the homeowner contact Atlantic City Electric. Gary will also contact ACE on the homeowner's behalf. If ACE does not act on the request, it would be up to the Borough to remove the tree.

Monthly education articles. Julia said this month she posted a list of NJ native plants suitable for gardening and landscaping. She is now looking for a topic for next month.

Gateway Service Day, June 2. Julie reported that Melissa Eckstein informed her that there will be 10 students available on June 2 to work on the Wenonah Trails. It was suggested they could lay mulch at Camel's Back Loop Trail. We would need to have mulch delivered. Julie and Dave will attend the work party. The status of the proposal for a Gateway Adopt-A-Trail program there is uncertain.

4th of July hike. The Lions Club has asked for the hike route for this year. It was decided we would begin at the Eldridge Trail head (Pine St.) then take the Monongahela Brook Trail across Marion Ave., then cross the Bog Walk and exit on the Garden Trail. This would highlight the new Bog Walk and the work being done on the Garden Trail and at the stone pool.

Newsletter. Scott B. said the summer newsletter deadline is 5/16. Scott B. will mention the 4th of July hike and the renovations on the garden Trail and at the stone pool.

June Meeting, June 14. Scott B. reminded the WEC that the June meeting will be preceded by our annual picnic at Wenonah Lake. Dave has agreed to do the grilling. Additional details will be worked out nearer the date.

Frank Eggert Memorial Student Awards, June 16. Scott B. noted that Rich has already informed the school we will offer the awards: \$100 to each of two students chosen. A formal motion to authorize the awards was made.

(Motion: Ream, Second: Conway, AIF)

Julie moving. Julie announced that she and her family will be moving to Millville in the near future and that settlement is scheduled for later this month. The WEC thanks Julie for her outstanding service on many WEC project over the years. Good luck, Julie.

Bald Eagles in Wenonah. Scott B. reported that two bald eagles have taken up residence in a tree at the corner of S. Lincoln Ave and W. Cherry St. They seem to be engaged in nest building, although this is not eagle nesting season.

Lumber still missing. Scott C. noted the missing 4 x4's from the area near the WEC shed are still unaccounted for and are presumed stolen.

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

Deposits

\$2559.14

This represents 28 donations (21 through PayPal and 7 by check) that were made to the WEC in memory of Jaime Fallon

Expenses

None.

Current Balance: \$8,997.60

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:24 PM.
(Motion: Ream, Second Horn: AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.