

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting

Minutes

August 9, 2023

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:33 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: Rob Gerds.

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

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Review:

Trail Maintenance

Eldridge Trail. Scott B. reported there is a substantial beaver dam just upstream from the lower (2nd) bridge over the Monongahela Branch. It is backing up about 2 feet of water and water is flowing across the low area and under the raised boardwalk. The dam is not causing a problem for Eldridge Trail but is flooding a section of the lowland Monongahela Loop Trail. The upland portion of that trail is not affected. The lowland section is generally not walkable in summer due to high vegetation. It was suggested that we keep the dam area under observation but no action is currently needed. Rob Gerds suggested more trees in the area should be painted to protect them against the increased beaver activity. Scott B. noted he saw beaver gnawing on a large tree in the area.

Tea House. Scott C. reported a large tree had fallen near the amphitheater, blocking the trail there. He said the tree was covered in vines. Scott cleared the tree from the trail. Scott C. also noted he had removed the chalk graffiti from the Tea House and that as of now there is no additional graffiti at the Tea House.

Mantua Creek Trail. Scott C. said he had cleared vegetative over growth on MCT from the Mullens property to the Glen Trail and also cleared along section of the Glen Trail. He also noted there was a broken board on the island boardwalk and he replaced it.

Garden Trail. Scott C. said he noticed there were two pairs of shrubs that had pink plastic ribbons tied to them. He said he did not know who placed the ribbons there or why. It was suggested that they may be part of a survey, possibly connected to the light rail engineering study, and perhaps those shrubs were species of concern. It was decided we would leave the ribbons in place for now.

Break Back Run Trail. Scott C. said he plans to walk the BBR Trail to identify and prioritize projects needed for the trail. There are sections where a new bridge and a boardwalk extension

are needed. Scott C. said that Pat Donnelly's plans for the boardwalk have been forwarded to him. Dave said there was a leaning fallen tree that is not blocking the trail but could be a hazard.

Wenonah Lake. Dan reported the trail at the north end of Wenonah Lake has some water on it but is still walkable. It was noted that area has been targeted for new puncheons and an extension of the bridge. Dan said the rest of the trail was in good shape.

Comey's Lake. It was noted that the fountain does not seem to have been operating lately. It is unclear whether the fountain is no longer working or whether the homeowners have chosen not to run it. Scot B. will reach out to the homeowners to ascertain the situation. It was also noted that there is a film of algae on Comey's Lake. That is not unusual for late summer. Rich noted that Princeton Hydro is continuing to treat Comey's lake and that PH notifies him when treatments are done. If the algae problem continues, we can contact PH to take additional action. The most recent PH treatment was on July 25.

DropBox. Scott B. reported our DropBox account was automatically renewed for a year at the cost of \$119.88. A motion was made to approve the expenditure.

(Motion: Coates, Second: Conway, AIF)

Newsletter deadline 8/15. Scott B. said he would highlight the Mad Hatter's Tree party on Oct. 29 and include info on beavers in our newsletter article.

Sign projects. In Julie's absence no details were discussed. Dave said he is willing to help our and could possibly be able to significantly reduce the cost. Fossil had given Julie a cost estimate of approximately \$3000. It was noted that Julie is still on the WEC but that we are seeking a replacement now that Julie has moved.

Dilks Pond. Rich noted that to date this year, Dilks Pond remains essentially duckweed and algae free despite the fact that we opted not to have Dilks Pond treated this year.

Ram's head artifact. Scott C. showed the WEC the brass ram's head that Jaime Fallon had discovered in the clay layer of the stone pool on the Garden Trail. He was unable to identify its age but believes it is 19th or early 20th century, and could date back to the Greene Estate. Scott noted he did find that there was a belt buckle that used the same mold that was sold by the Bergamot Brass Co. in 1975. The back side of the buckle is significantly different from the Ram's head found in the pool. It was suggested it could be donated to the Wenonah Historical Society.

Trail camera. Scott C. also showed the WEC the trail camera he had removed from the trail near the Monongahela bridge on the Garden Trail. The camera had presumably been set up to monitor beaver activity in the area and had been abandoned. Scott C. said the camera was unusable. The antenna was missing and since the camera serial number was registered to the owner, we would not be able to use the camera. The camera contained an SD card that was blank. Scott C. will hold onto the camera for now.

School Trail dumping. Scott C. reported he discovered dumped construction materials (wall board, plywood, etc.) just off the School Trail near the Maple St. entrance. It was suggested we ask PW to remove the trash or organize a work party in the fall to haul it out.

Planning Board. Scott B. noted the owners of Hollybush, the historic Synnott home on Mantua Ave., have applied for and received a variance for the construction of a large swimming pool on the property.

Thank you letter from Avarie Parsons. Rich shared a thank you letter to the WEC from Avarie Parsons, one of the recipients of the Frank Eggert Student Awards this year.

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

Deposits

\$430.00- Clean Communities grant

Expenses

None.

Current Balance: \$10,632.40

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:30 PM.
(Motion: Coates, Second Conway: AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.