

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting

Minutes

April 10, 2024

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:30 PM in accordance with the Open Public Meeting 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
Rich Dilks (Sec.)	X	
Julia Horn		X
Dave Coates	X	
Shane Walsh		X
Matt Wood	X	

Associate Members Present: Bob Bevilacqua.

Public Guests: none.

The minutes of the March 2024 meeting were approved as standing.

(Motion: Coates, Second: Wood, AIF)

Associate Member Comments- Bob Bevelacqua: Eldridge Trail improvements.

Bob reported he has been working on improvements and repair of the trail section from Pine St. to the 1st bridge. Bob has graded and laid some crushed stone on that trail section. Scott displayed a photo on his laptop of the trail with improvements to date. Bob said he needs substantial additional stone to finish the project and requested the WEC authorize the purchase of approximately 8 tons of additional crushed stone. The purchase would consist of \$350 for large aggregate stone to be laid as a base on the trail and \$400 for 3/8" finely crushed stone for the trail surface. Total cost would be approximately \$750 for the stone. The stone could be delivered to Public Works, which could transport stone to work sites as needed. Bob plans to organize a work party with a backhoe, perhaps in May, to lay the stone on the trail section. Bob said the large hole by the bridge could be filled in with material as a part of the work party. A motion was made to authorize \$800 for the purchase of the stone.

(Motion: Coates, Second: Wood, AIF)

Chairman's Report- Scott Barnes

Review

Spring work party, March 23. Scott reported the work party successfully laid crushed stone in the trail rails on the north end of Mantua Creek Trail to alleviate a flooding problem. The original stone there had sunk and the trail rails often had standing water in them. The additional stone raised the trail level for better drainage. It was also noted that some of the wooden rails had come loose and were somewhat out of place. Another muddy section of the MCT had mulch laid down and wooden discs cut from logs were installed as "stepping stones". The sinkhole on the trail near the creek was also filled in. Matt suggested that additional brush/debris clearing in the area might help drainage there. It was also noted that there were two fallen trees on the MCT island boardwalk. The trees are walkarounds and the boardwalk is not damaged, but they need to be cleared..

Trail Maintenance

Mantua Creek Trail. Scott noted the section where the Mantua Creek Trail meets the Garden Trail and Monongahela Loop Trail has become persistently muddy and needs attention. Laying stone along that section should be considered.

Glen Trail. Scott said the trail needs clearing out of debris around the dam area and cutting back of vegetation. The top of the bench there also needs to be repainted due to graffiti.

Wenonah Lake Loop Trail. It was noted that several of the bridges on the west shore section of the trail need repair or replacement and there were muddy places near the north end of the lake where puncheons would be helpful. The area around the footbridge north of the lake may also need some improvements and possibly a bridge extension. The low trail section leading to the bridge has also deteriorated and will need upgrades. Matt noted that in the woods north of the lake and near the old Lake Opportunity there was an old broken pipe coming out of the ground. He said the pipe could likely be removed without great difficulty. It is likely the area with the pipe is technically in Deptford and outside the conservation area.

Wenonah Lake Trail within Howard Park. Scott noted that the Borough has asked us to take a look at the short wooded trail at the lake that is north of the beach but within the lake area chain link fence. There are two small bridges, one at either end on the trail. The Borough is concerned that the bridges may need repair or replacement. Rich noted that last year he and Scott Conway inspected the trail. The short trail itself was in good shape and there was no problem with invasive species there. At the time the trail was blocked by fallen limbs at the site of the old bath house ruins. Dave said he will check out the trail in the near future and take photos there. We will need to look at the two bridges and make our recommendations to the Borough.

Gateway HS Service Day proposal. Suzanne McAnally of Gateway HS has offered to have 10 Gateway students come out for a service project in the conservation area on Fri. June 7 from 9 AM to 11 AM. A project and location for the students this year has not yet been decided upon. In previous years, the students have spread mulch at Camel's Back Loop. The possibility of involving the students at the Wenonah Lake interior trail or in other locations was discussed. We will take up this issue again next month.

Bird Quest, Sat. May 4, 2024. Scott, who coordinates Bird Quest for the Gloucester County Nature Club, showed us the new promotional cards and suggested the WEC field a BQ team this year as we have done in the past. Our team birds at Tall Pines Preserve and on the Wenonah trails. Rich said he is not able to bird this year but can help with promoting the team and putting it together. He said we will need a reasonably knowledgeable birder to lead the team walks. Rich will contact a long time team member who may be able to lead the walks. Rich will also put together the text for a promotional effort to enlist participants for this year. He will organize the team and register team members. People of all ages and level of birding ability are welcome.

New WEC website "Hero" photo. Scott said he is looking for a hero shot photo for the home page of the new website. It was suggested a photo of a unique or iconic location in the conservation area, such as Clay Hill, or the Tea House might be appropriate.

Clean Communities. Scott reminded the WEC that the next Clean Communities event will be on Sat. May 11. The WEC will participate possibly by doing cleanups on the Wenonah Lake Loop Trail or at Boy Scout Island.

Conservation Area signs. Scott displayed one of two new CA signs he recently ordered from Sign Boy. These signs will be held by us as replacements for current signs as needed. The signs were funded by the encumbered 2023 budget monies and cost \$650 (\$325 each). The Borough had permitted us to make expenditures from our encumbered 2023 budget until March 31. This purchase leaves \$1821.93 left in the encumbered budget that will now revert to the Borough. The signs will be stored with Matt for now and Dave said he could take them later for long term storage.

Educational signs. Julia was unable to attend the meeting but had communicated that we have received a quote from Fossil for the 3 signs. The total cost is \$4,661.00. A deposit of \$2,797.00 is due now. There was a question where the signs should be shipped. Julia has offered to have them shipped to her home and the WEC agreed that would be best. Julia noted the quote still had Julie Ream's address on it from a previous project and requested the address be updated. Rich will pay the deposit out of the FWT account.

Comey's Lake duckweed/algae control. Rich reported that he has received the proposal and contract from Princeton Hydro for the 2024 treatments of Comey Lake. The cost would be \$4,000.00 and now includes the \$150 DEP permit fee. The contract offer from PH is for one year only. It was noted that we declined to have Dilks Pond treated in 2023 and there was no substantial duckweed or algae bloom at Dilks Pond that year. We will monitor Dilks Pond again this year to see if duckweed or algae reoccur. Matt suggested that if Dilks Pond remains duckweed and algae free again this year, we might be able to decline treatment for next year for Comey's Lake. It was agreed by motion that we would contract with PH for Comey's Lake for 2024.

(Motion: Wood, Second: Coates, AIF)

Friends of Wenonah Trails Account Activity since the March 2024 meeting.

Deposits

none

Expenses

\$100.00- to GCNC as WEC sponsor for Bird Quest.

Current Balance: \$14,014.42

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:35 PM.

(Motion: Wood, Second Coates: AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.