

WENONAH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting
Minutes
December 11, 2024

Chairman Scott Barnes called the Wenonah Environmental Commission to order at 7:31 PM in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act at the conclusion of the WEC's annual Volunteer Appreciation Night 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: none.

Public Guests: none.

The minutes of the November 2024 meeting were approved as standing.
(Motion: McCue, Second: Walsh, AIF)

Chairperson's Report- Scott Barnes

Trail Maintenance.

Wenonah Lake boardwalk and bridges project proposed. Scott reported that he met with Bob B. at Wenonah Lake to evaluate the needed improvements to the trail at the north end of Wenonah lake and along the lake's western shore. There are 4 foot bridges along the trail on the west side of the lake and Bob indicated they need to be raised and widened with new decks. He also indicated that a raised boardwalk could be built on the low area just north of the lake and connecting to the bridge that crosses the lake's feeder stream. This area is frequently muddy .It was agreed that we would seek the assistance of the Lions Club to provide volunteer labor for this project. Our contact with the Lions is Dan Ceravolo. It was also noted that we should make sure we use high quality pressure treated wood that would hold up to the elements over time. It was agreed that the width of the boardwalk and bridges be extended to the 21" used on the Bog Walk (3 board width). An accurate estimate of the cost of materials for this project would still need to be made. A very approximate estimate for now indicates that we would use 2 x 8 pressure treated wood for the 86 ft. long boardwalk and for the approximate 80-90 ft. for the 4 bridges. A possible cost of \$100 per 8 foot section was mentioned. There would be additional costs for other materials, such as bolts, screws and posts.

\$3,500 budget balance in WEC 2024 budget. The WEC had previously considered using a portion of the remaining budget to purchase additional equipment, specifically a second string trimmer and/or a hedge trimmer for vegetation growing higher than can be controlled by a string trimmer. It was noted the other alternative would be to request the \$3,500 be encumbered to fund the Wenonah Lake boardwalk/bridges project. Dan said that Wenonah Lake is a good location to do the improvements. It was noted the short trail inside the lake fence is in good shape but the downed tree on the fence is still there. It was agreed that we would not purchase any new tools at present and will request the \$3,500 in our budget be encumbered to fund the Wenonah Lake trail improvements instead. Rich will make the encumbrance request to Karen.

(Motion: McCue, Second: Coates, AIF)

Break Back Run Trail. It was determined that the kids' fort on BBR Trail behind N. Jefferson Ave. (photographed by Dave) is actually on private property. We will take no action regarding it.

Mantua Creek Trail. Scott noted the lower bench at Clay Hill has again been gnawed by beaver. The seat of the bench is made of Western red cedar, which beaver are fond of. It was suggested we could paint the bench to deter the beaver but we decided to take no action at this time as the bench is still usable. At some point the seat can be replaced with other wood less attractive to beaver. Scott also noted beaver activity in the trestle area. Dan noted there is a small down step over tree on MCT not far from Clay Hill.

Boy Scout Island. Scott noted there is no sign of current human activity in that section of the conservation area and no appreciable trash.

WEC website redesign. Scott said he is looking into the possibility of hiring an outside provider to do the redesign. He said Alex Younger, who recently did a redesign of the nature club website for a discounted price, might be a good possibility if available at a reasonable price.

FaceBook name change. The WEC will be changing the FB page name from Friends of Wenonah Trails to Wenonah Environmental Commission to maintain our brand identity. Julia had noted she was unable to make the name change. Scott, as page administrator, will do so.

50 year anniversary. Scott noted that 2025 will mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the WEC in 1975. We will develop plans to promote and celebrate this milestone.

Moonlight Hike, Sat. Jan. 11 at 8 PM. It was decided the hike will take place on the Eldridge and Comey's Lake Trails. The gathering location will be on E .Pine St. The hike will be a loop to the Tea House and back.

WEC appointments. Scott noted he has had some preliminary discussions with Mayor Doheny on additions to the WEC. He said the Mayor is interested in appointing Susan Mayer as a WEC member and Co-chair. Susan would focus more on such areas as grant applications rather than on trail maintenance. Scott said he plans to discuss this further with the Mayor in Jan. It was noted that the WEC is defined in the Borough Code as a 7 member board. Dave Coates said he was willing to step down to accommodate Susan's appointment to the WEC. Rich said he is not planning to step down in Jan. but does plan to stepdown from the WEC sometime in 2025 once a replacement member has been determined and once his duties have been reassigned to other members in a smooth transition.

Planning Board. Scott reported there were no current applications before the planning board. He said the state is now engaged in the 4th round of assigning affordable housing obligations to municipalities. He said Wenonah currently has no unfilled obligations but that within the next decade the Borough will be assigned an obligation for 29 units. He said the state is also going to be reviewing municipal master plans

WEC 2025 budget request. Rich noted the Borough has sent out its request for the WEC budget for 2025. After discussion, the WEC decided to maintain our 2025 budget request at \$7,500, the same as for 2024.

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

Deposits

None

Expenses

None.

Current Balance: \$9,911.39

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:32 PM.
(Motion: McCue, Second: Walsh: AIF)

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Rich Dilks, Sec.