

**WARREN COUNTY  
BOARD OF RECREATION COMMISSIONERS**

500 Mt. Pisgah Avenue, PO Box 179  
Oxford, NJ 07863

**January 12, 2016  
MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Helbing opened the meeting at 5:09 p.m., read the Open Public Meeting Notice, and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:** Michael Helbing, John Halmi, David Detrick, Charles Fineran, Matthew Davis, William Hann, Jr.

**Members Absent:** Raymond Tobaygo

**Guests:** Elizabeth Roy

**Staff:** Corey Tierney, Christina Roberts

**NOMINATIONS:**

Board Chairperson - Charles Fineran made a motion, seconded by Bill Hann to nominate Michael Helbing as Chairperson. Motion carried.

Vice Chairperson - Dave Detrick made a motion, seconded by Charles Fineran to nominate Matthew Davis as Vice Chairperson. Motion carried.

Board Secretary - Bill Hann made a motion, seconded by Charles Fineran to nominate David Detrick as Board Secretary. Motion carried.

**MINUTES:** The December 8, 2015 minutes were reviewed. Charlie Fineran made a motion, seconded by John Halmi to approve the minutes as presented, with Bill Hann abstaining. Motion carried.

**REPORT OF COMMITTEES**

**Morris Canal Committee**

- The QR coding project for Morris Canal sites is moving along. Funding sources have been identified and the subcommittee will be meeting in February to develop a consistent format to be used at the sites.
- The 400-plus page survey of the Morris Canal done in the 80s was scanned and uploaded to the NJTPA website under Warren County plans and studies. It was suggested that updates to the survey be done as addendums to not alter the original document.
- Mr. Detrick and Mr. Davis did some more clearing between the top of the inclined plane and the powerhouse at Plane 6 (Handlos property). There is an orange fence around the powerhouse pit to help prevent people from accidentally falling in. Mr. Detrick suggested a split rail fence be put in around the pit. There is still several feet of tires and debris inside the chamber that needs to be cleared. Public access and safety were discussed. It was determined that public access to the tunnel should be avoided, unless on a guided tour, for safety/liability reasons.

- **Stewarts Hunt** - There was discussion regarding legal passage of the Stewart's Hunt easement. Mr. Detrick noted that it would make sense to wait until the section from Route 22 to Bread Lock Park is connected and established before revisiting the Stewart's Hunt development for connection of the missing section.
- **Freise Property** - Progress is being made on the rehabilitation of the Blacksmith Shop at Meadowbreeze Park (an MCCTFC grant funded project).
- **Mr. Helbing** has two 9/11 Memorial Trail Hikes planned for the first and second hikes this year. The third and fourth hikes he is doing as loops in conjunction with the 9/11 Trail and Morris Canal Greenway Trail. Once the trails break away from each other, he will do two separate hikes per month if there is enough interest - one 9/11 Memorial Trail hike and one Morris Canal Greenway Hike.

## **Trails**

**Warren Highlands Trail** - Mr. Helbing marked the trails all the way to Merrill Creek. The posts and kiosk are installed at Fox Farm Road. When it is warm enough, he will finish painting the blazes. Mr. Helbing scouted a section from Route 519 into the fields, onto a woods-road, up to the crest on Ridge Road to connect the trail with Hoff-Vannatta. He will forward a map of the proposed trail to Ms. Roberts to distribute.

NY/NJ Trails Conference cleared a large portion of canal towpath from Saxton Falls, down past the house. They recently had a follow-up trip to clear to Rockport Pheasant Farm. Once they are finished with those portions, they will go back and clear the causeway at Saxton Lake. Mr. Helbing noted that the canal markers are still getting stolen. He plans to paint yellow blazes underneath when he replaces markers, so if they get stolen, the canal trail will still be marked.

Mr. Fineran will plan a meeting with the Panther Valley Board in Allamuchy Township to discuss a formal agreement regarding the Warren Highlands Trail. Mr. Tierney suggested that preferably a trail easement (and if not an easement, then a trail license) be granted to the township or the state for this section, since the county doesn't own any land in the area. Mr. Tierney also noted that if there is a trail easement, the landowner will be covered under the Landowner Liability Act in the event of an injury on the trail.

## **PUBLIC AWARENESS**

**National Geographic Geotourism Meeting** - The meeting was well-attended. MCCTFC grant recipients and local businesses were invited to attend. All of the county parkland and museums are continuing to be added/nominated. Mr. Fineran suggested MCCTFC grant recipients register on the website to promote tourism to their sites. Mr. Tierney stated that the MCCTFC grant rules may be revisited to ensure historic sites/churches are sufficiently open to the public. In the past two years, the Freeholders have taken a more active stance on some of the award recommendations to balance out the historic preservation/restoration projects to the open space awards.

**Port Murray Preserve** - Ms. Roy received a verbal report from the Municipal Engineer regarding the parking lot plans; she expects a formal response soon.

**Warren Highland Trail** - Mr. Helbing suggested having an event for the Warren Highlands Trail from Marble Hill to Hoff-Vannatta on National Trails Day this year. It is approximately eight miles and could be broken up into two sections, if necessary. It was suggested that one of the county-owned, 15-passenger vans could be used if there is a large enough crowd.

Preservation Day - This year's event will be held on Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Ramsaysburg Homestead. An on-site planning meeting is being held this Friday at 10 a.m.

Florence Kuipers - An official grand opening for the loop trail can be held this summer, as well. The remaining outbuildings have been torn down, so the gate will be fixed and a new lock will be put on.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Acquisition Updates**

Crouse - The landowners have verbally agreed to the condition to except-out two acres around the Morris Canal from their farmland preservation application. Their attorney is currently reviewing the agreement. The application is on the Freeholder agenda for the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Hills at Independence - The Hills at Independence is located next to the Independence Land Holdings property that our office recently closed on. Mr. Tierney requested the Board's approval to purchase a trail easement in the amount of \$27,650.00, which is the appraised value. Mr. Hann made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fineran to approve the purchase of a trail easement with the Hills at Independence in the amount of \$27,650.00. Motion carried.

There was discussion regarding safe crossing over Route 46 for people walking from Florence Kuipers Park to Mount Rascal. Eventually there will be a Roosevelt Street parking area.

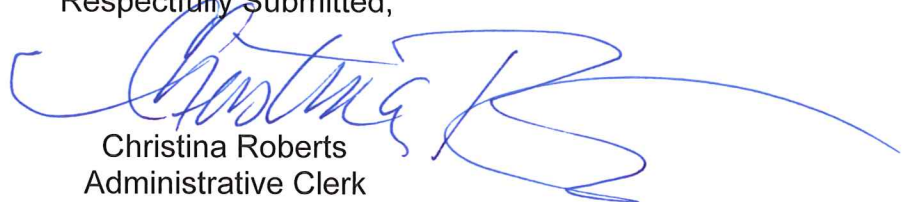
### **Maintenance**

Port Warren/Plane 9 Vegetative Buffer Plan - A copy of the plan, prepared by Wild Ridge Plants, was distributed for the Board's review and discussion at the February meeting. The plan enhance the beauty of the park and also reduce mowing and maintenance hours.

**NEXT MEETING** - The next meeting will be held on February 9, 2016.

**ADJOURNMENT** - There being no further business, Mr. Fineran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Christina Roberts  
Administrative Clerk