

**WARREN COUNTY  
BOARD OF RECREATION COMMISSIONERS**

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

**February 9, 2016  
MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Helbing opened the meeting at 5:05 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., Raymond Tobaygo

**Guests:** Elizabeth Roy

**Staff:** Corey Tierney, Christina Roberts

**MINUTES:** The January 12, 2016 minutes were reviewed. Charlie Fineran made a motion, seconded by William Hann to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**REPORT OF COMMITTEES**

**Morris Canal Committee**

- Meadowbreeze Park - Mr. Detrick distributed photos of the progress on the Blacksmith Shop (an MCCTFC grant funded project).
- QR Code Project - A meeting will be held Thursday with the IT Director to ensure compatibility of the QR codes among the Parks website, the new Canal-hosting website, and a new potential web platform for tourism. After that meeting, Liz, Nick Cosimano, and Eric Caskey will meet to begin working on what they need to do to move forward with the QR code project.
- Town of Phillipsburg - The town ordered a boat replica, two mules, and a walker silhouette from Highlands Project, Inc. for them to install near the stream on South Main Street.

**Trails**

- 9/11 Memorial Trail Hike - Mr. Helbing kicked off the first hike for the Memorial Trail last weekend. The hikes will make their way to Warren County in September. The hike was well-attended; Mr. Helbing anticipates increased attendance at future hikes.
- Warren Highlands Trail - There are some issues with the Allamuchy section that will need to be worked out regarding access over a potential buyer's driveway. Mr. Helbing will also have to GPS all of the proposed routes going to Land Management Review. It will make the approval process take a little longer.
- Warren Highlands Trail Logo - Mr. Helbing suggested that a logo/brand be designed for trail markers at trailheads and road crossings to identify the trail. Jane Bullis requested more prominent signage for the section of trail that crosses through Merrill Creek property. Mr. Tierney said he will look into options once a design is agreed-upon. Mr. Tierney noted that the Board should designate how much funding they want to spend on this project. He also suggested that once approved by the Board, the property managers could purchase the trail markers from the designated vendor for their respective properties. Mr. Helbing will also look into grant funding for to pay for trail markers or other trail improvement items.

- National Trails Day - Mr. Helbing said Merrill Creek would be happy to be part of the Trails Day event. He still has to contact Hoff-Vannatta. A property along the Warren Highlands trail is owned by Phillipsburg Riverfront Organization. Mr. Tierney will reach out to them to ask if they will voluntarily participate with the trail going through their property, with possibly an overlook spur.
- Mr. Davis is putting together a Warren Highlands Trail Guide. Once complete, Mr. Tierney can upload or link this to the Warren Parks website.
- Mr. Tobaygo inquired how many miles of trails are in Warren County and the State of New Jersey. It was estimated that there are approximately 10-15 miles on County-owned property, with approximately 120-125 miles collectively with the Warren Highlands trail, the Morris Canal Greenway trail, and the Paulinskill Valley trail. Mr. Helbing noted that the State's estimation of 5,000 miles of trails was incorrect and didn't include non-state managed properties. More miles will be added once trails are formalized and marked at Oxford Mountain.
- O'Dowd - Closing is anticipated to be in early March for the open space portion and two out of the three farms. Funding has been designated for meadow restoration, trail clearing and improvements, and signage. The long-term plan is to work with the Town to get approval to cross Merrill Creek with a bridge that will come right out to the canal.
- Sigler - After O'Dowd closes, this property may be looked into again for possible fee simple acquisition.
- Farm near Meadows at Mansfield - Mr. Davis noted that some demolition work is being done on the farm and that we should keep our eye out for any damage, drainage issues, or dumping near Hart's Lane.

## **PUBLIC AWARENESS**

### **Administrator's Report Updates**

Website - The Parks website is approximately 85% complete. Content, pictures, and media have been added to the home page, parks pages, Morris Canal, Warren Highlands Trail, News, Calendar, and "About" sections. There are still some content gaps, both narrative and pictures. Also still updating maps/brochures. Some format changes are also needed from the designer.

National Geographic Scenic Wild Delaware River - Nominations completed and posted for Bread Lock, Florence Kuipers and White Lake. Nominations completed and pending for Port Warren, Port Murray, Marble Hill, and Shippen Manor. Nominations still needed for Oxford Mountain, the Morris Canal Greenway, and the Warren Highlands Trail.

Appalachian Trail Community Meeting - The first outreach meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Main Library Headquarters. Letters will be sent out soon.

Warren County Parks Foundation - An outreach meeting is scheduled on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Main Library Headquarters. Letters have been sent out to target organizations and individuals.

Preservation Day - The press release for this year's event at Ramsaysburg Homestead was distributed.

Mr. Tierney noted that there was an excellent article in Skylands magazine regarding the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the Copper Mine Inn on Old Mine Road. Link to the article: <http://www.njskylands.com/parks-delaware-water-gap-national-recreation-area>. There was discussion regarding the need for repair of Old Mine Road and possibly having it designated as a scenic byway.

Water Quality Report - Mr. Helbing stated a recent study was done on the water quality in New Jersey, whether it is safe to drink or swim in. Much of the water in the state is in poor condition, but the Musconetcong and Paulinskill rivers both fared well. The contamination in the Pequest is mostly due to farmland runoff.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Acquisition Updates**

Svenningsen - The property was under contract with a private buyer, but the deal fell through. The landowner accepted the county's verbal offer. The contract was sent to their attorney and is still under review and negotiation.

Maffenbeier - Appraisals have been received; RVC to setup meeting with the neighbor to discuss acquisition of a portion of the property or a conservation easement. They are interested in an old house on one of the lots. Various options are being looked into.

O'Dowd - There are still some issues that need to be resolved with environmental concerns, an encroachment, and the tenant having enough time to move out, but they are all moving forward. The agriculture leases will be continued on the west and east farms, but will terminate on the north property to begin meadow restoration with the Audubon Society. The trail easements have already been recorded by the solar farm next door for the North Central Realco property.

Jonestown Road - The surveyor is finishing up the field work. Once complete, it will be sent to Green Acres.

Terhune - The survey resolved the mortgage issue with the bank. Mr. Terhune's attorney is reviewing the contract. The environmental assessment will then be ordered. It is possible it could close in March or April.

Crouse - Various offers have been made; landowners inquired about reconfiguring the SADC application to leave the house and a wooded lot out of the farmland application, include a severable exception north of the canal, and a non-severable exception south of the canal.

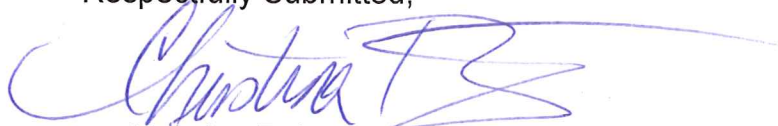
### **Permit Requests**

Wild Ridge Plants - Mr. Rosenbaum has requested permission to hold a botany class at White Lake as part of its "Wild Edibles" course through Duke Farms. An insurance certificate will be requested prior to the class. Mr. Fineran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hann to approve the permit request for Wild Ridge Plants at White Lake. Motion carried.

**NEXT MEETING** - The next meeting will be held on March 8, 2016.

**ADJOURNMENT** - There being no further business, Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fineran to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Christina Roberts  
Administrative Clerk