

**WARREN COUNTY
BOARD OF RECREATION COMMISSIONERS**

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

**March 8, 2016
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Helbing opened the meeting at 5:00 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, Raymond Tobaygo

Guests: Elizabeth Roy, William Lovett

Staff: Corey Tierney, Christina Roberts

MINUTES: The February 9, 2016 minutes were reviewed. Mr. Fineran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Halmi to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

William Lovett, a neighbor of Port Murray Preserve, attended the meeting to let the Board know there has been illegal hunting at the Preserve. He said it has become dangerous to walk in the Preserve and that he and his wife were confronted by a hunter on a Saturday, in early February and was told to leave the property. He also noted that there are several tree stands on neighboring properties that face directly into the Preserve. Mr. Lovett also noted that the property lines should also be posted more clearly. Mr. Tierney stated that he would contact Mansfield Twp. police to notify them of this issue and that hunting is not permitted at the Port Murray Preserve. He will also compose a letter regarding no-hunting, trespassing, and prosecution, which we will send out to the neighbors. Mr. Tierney will also ask the NJ Youth Corps or Ridge & Valley Conservancy to inspect and post boundary signs where necessary.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Department received a letter from an applicant to the Independence Township Land Use Board regarding an application to construct a detached structure on their property. Mr. Tierney said that he could contact the municipal engineer, but as long as the structure adheres to the required set-back from their property-line then it should not be a concern.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES

Morris Canal Committee

- Mr. Detrick noted that existing projects are continuing to move along.
- Meadowbreeze Park - Mr. Detrick distributed more photos of the progress at the Freise property (an MCCTFC grant funded project). He also discussed the plans to fill in the old pool for safety purposes, but keep still the "footprint".
- Jacob Franke has been continuing to clear Warren County sections of the canal trail from Bilby Road to the old park police house. Mr. Franke and Tune Ott from Metrotrails cleared another section going out onto the causeway at Saxton Falls that was badly overgrown.

Trails

- 9/11 Memorial Trail Hikes - Mr. Helbing stated that the next hike in this series is a loop hike in Jersey City, scheduled for March 20th. The hikes will make their way to Warren County by fall.

- Mr. Helbing said he is working on compiling volunteer application packets that include all necessary forms for site-specific locations, so when someone wants to do volunteer work on a certain portion of a trail, he would have packets ready for them to complete. The packets would include any relevant volunteer application forms from the county, state, NJCF, or Metrotrails. Whoever is overseeing that project would make sure copies would get filed with the appropriate office.
- Mr. Helbing updated the Board on some work he has done at Marble Hill and on the Geiger Tract. He noted that someone is painting over his blazes with a brownish/grey paint, so he has been in the process of reblazing them. Mr. Tierney said that the Department can order paint/supplies for him to use for trails on County-owned properties.
- Warren Highlands Trail Logo - The logo/brand for the Warren Highlands trail markers at trailheads was discussed. The design should be simple and inexpensive so property managers could purchase from a designated vendor for their respective properties. The Department would purchase trail markers for County-owned properties. It would be ideal to have trail markers at all road crossings for identification purposes. Mr. Tierney said he will look into options once a design is proposed and agreed-upon.
- Mr. Helbing reported on an incident where a volunteer was confronted on state land by several hunters on ATVs and told to stay off the property.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Website - The Parks website is nearing completion and is approximately 90-95% done. Official launch on or before March 20th.

Appalachian Trail Community Meeting - Scheduled on Wednesday, March 23rd from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Main Library Headquarters.

Warren County Parks Foundation Outreach Meeting - Scheduled for Saturday, April 30th from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Main Library Headquarters.

Preservation Day - The event is Saturday, May 21st at Ramsaysburg Homestead.

The Parks Foundation Project Day - Scheduled for Saturday, June 11th at White Lake to install a footbridge, connecting the Ridge & Valley Trail to the Paulinskill Valley Trail.

Parking/Horse Trailer Parking at White Lake - A turnaround loop by the boat launch and a better location for horse trailer parking were discussed and several options were suggested. If we acquire the Maffenbeier property, there may also be an option for parking there.

Administrator's Report Updates

Acquisition Updates

Santini/Strykers Road - One of the appraisals needs to be revised.

O'Dowd - There are still some environmental soil contamination issues that need to be resolved prior to closing, which is scheduled for Friday this week. Beryllium was found in grey clay, several feet below the surface, possibly from the clay liner when the canal was built. Further tests were ordered and should be completed Thursday.

The trail easements have already been recorded by the solar farm next door.

Crouse - Met with the Crouse's and their attorney; they reconfigured the farmland preservation area, but it does not impact the canal exception areas.

Jonestown Road - To simplify things, the town is doing an administrative subdivision at their March 16th meeting; after that, closing can be scheduled.

Maffenbeier - Appraisals have been sent to Green Acres. Landowner is undecided as to whether to include the house in the sale to the County. If included, it shouldn't affect the appraisal value much.

Lock Street Associates - The property behind the Phillipsburg Mall, formerly owned by Lock Street Associates, was purchased by Robert Santini last year. He is amenable to having us appraise the portion of land adjacent to the Lopatcong Creek. Mr. Tierney requested the Board's approval to authorize appraisals. Mr. Fineran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tobaygo to authorize appraisals of the portion of Mr. Santini's property adjacent to the Lopatcong Creek. Motion carried.

Stryker's Road - NJCF, NJRC&D, Trout Unlimited, Lopatcong Creek Initiative met onsite to discuss a grant application to help acquire the property, reforestation, and stream restoration (a map from NJCF was provided).

Stowaway Self-Storage - The landowner agreed to let us appraise the corner section of the lot - it would be an important connecting piece along the Lopatcong Creek. Mr. Tierney requested the Board's approval to authorize appraisals. Mr. Detrick made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tobaygo to authorize appraisals of the corner section of the lot, along the Lopatcong Creek. Motion carried.

There was a discussion regarding the establishment of a road crossing over/under Route 22 to connect with Lock Street. There is no immediate solution, but the County would need to own the properties on both sides before a connection would be feasible.

Pool - Mr. Tierney requested an updated appraisal for the property. If the value of the land is enough to satisfy the landowners, the board may consider purchasing the property for the land and donating the house to Habitat for Humanity. There are several options that could be considered.

Vegetative Buffer/Park Enhancement Plan - Mr. Tierney asked if the Board had any questions or concerns regarding the plan submitted by Wild Ridge Plants. He is also requesting a similar plan for Bread Lock Park.

Permit Requests - OK4WD submitted a special event permit request for Saturday, May 14th to use the field at Bread Lock Park for overflow parking. Mr. Tobaygo made a motion, seconded by Mr. Halmi to approve the permit request for OK4WD's May event. Motion carried.

Economic Development Grant - Mr. Tierney, Freeholder Smith, and Kenesha Reynolds-Allie met with Highlands staff to discuss applying for a sustainable economic development grant, which would assist parks and recreation.

NEXT MEETING - The next meeting will be held on April 12, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business, Mr. Tobaygo made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fineran to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,


Christina Roberts
Administrative Clerk