

**WARREN COUNTY
BOARD OF RECREATION COMMISSIONERS**

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

**September 11, 2018
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER: Michael Helbing opened the meeting at 5:06 p.m., read the Open Public Meeting Notice, and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: David Detrick, Charles Fineran, Raymond Tobaygo, Matthew Davis, Michael Helbing, John Halmi

Guests: Elizabeth Roy, Kenneth & Rosemary Leonardis

Staff: Corey Tierney, Christina Roberts

MINUTES: The August 14, 2018 minutes were reviewed. Mr. Fineran motioned, seconded by Mr. Tobaygo to approve the minutes, as presented with Mr. Halmi abstaining. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT - Kenneth & Rosemary Leonardis from Curtis Court in Stewartville, NJ attended the meeting to request permission for the swing set to remain in place that they unknowingly constructed within the County's conservation easement area. Mr. Tierney presented several photos of the swing set and the adjacent area for reference.

Mr. Leonardis explained that the area where the swing set was installed is the only level ground on their property. To install it elsewhere would require the construction of a retaining wall, which would be very costly. The property owners supplied a letter from the Township in support of their request, since the swing set is not considered a permanent structure.

The vegetative buffer, in consultation with the Park Enhancement Plan prepared by Wild Ridge Plants, will still be installed to provide a visual barrier between the Leonardis's yard and Port Warren Park / Plane 9 Museum.

Mr. Tobaygo motioned, seconded by Mr. Fineran to not enforce the conservation easement on the Leonardis property and to allow the swing set to remain, subject to review by County Counsel, for the following reasons: (1) the swing set cannot be located elsewhere on the property due to steep slopes without creating a hardship to the landowner; (2) the swing set is not a permanent structure, has no footings or foundation, and it can be easily removed in the future without causing significant disturbance to the area; and (3) allowing the swing set to be placed within the easement area will not prevent the installation of a vegetative buffer to provide privacy between the park and neighboring residents, which is the primary purpose of the easement. Motion carried.

Mr. Leonardis thanked the Board for their understanding, explained that he and his wife regularly watch their young grandson, who battled cancer as a baby, and that they look forward to seeing him be able to enjoy playing on this new swing set.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES

Morris Canal Committee

- Bilby Road - Temporary bridge is in bad shape. Mr. Dech submitted the request to SHPO to install the pillars. The rest of the permitting can be done through a "permit by rule" process.

- Bus Tour - The fall bus tour will include a walking portion - scheduled for Saturday, October 27th. Invitations were sent to the Morris Canal Committee, Board of Recreation Commissioners, and Parks Foundation.
- Plane 9/Port Warren - Ms. Roy has been working with the electrical engineer to replace the wiring in the turbine chamber. Once completed, an RFP will be issued for the work. The SHPO application is almost complete for the bulk of the work in the turbine chamber.
- Port Colden - Two sets of stairs have been installed and railings are in place. A decision will need to be made on how to secure the powerhouse foundation. Either a wooden frame with a grate similar to the one at Plane 9/Port Warren can be installed (but hinged for access), or a fence with a gate can be installed around the perimeter so that people can still view it.
- Meixsell Property - Mr. Helbing spoke with Ms. Meixsell regarding her property. She is not planning to sell the property, but is planning to leave it to her son. She would like to deed the dam on the property (which is in need of repair) to the municipality if they are willing to accept it.
- Handlos - Neighbor of the Handlos property has become very interested in helping in the area. He proposed if the dead trees back there are removed that he would keep the area mowed.
- Bread Lock Park Trail to Stewartsville - Mr. Helbing said new trail section is already getting overgrown. Mr. Tierney will check with local landscapers on the cost for spraying that section annually. Mr. Davis suggested finding sponsors/volunteers, such as local landscaping companies, to help maintain sections of the trail in that area. A small sign can be installed to advertise their business and recognize their work in maintaining it.

Trails

Warren Highlands Trail - Mr. Helbing plans to lead a Warren Highlands Trail hike from Preservation Day on September 15th.

Mr. Helbing would like to proceed with the development of the trail from Roaring Rock to Oxford. Mr. Tierney noted that some of the existing trails aren't being maintained and expressed concern that Mr. Helbing be careful not to divert limited volunteer resources from other projects. Mr. Helbing agreed that is a concern, but believes this new project will also draw new volunteers from that area. Once details on project dates and times are determined, Ms. Roberts can send an outreach email seeking interested volunteers. Mr. Davis has new neighbors that may be interested in helping with maintenance of the proposed new section of the Warren Highlands Trail once it is completed.

Geiger Tract - Mr. Helbing would like to improve the Geiger Tract. Once the farm lease is up for renewal, Mr. Tierney will look at including terms for the farmer to be responsible for maintaining the trail along the fields. Another option is to seek volunteers from local landscaping companies to help keep it clear.

Mr. Helbing commented that he would like to see the section along the Belvidere Road ROW become a paved path, perhaps using a State Trails Grant. Mr. Tierney asked, if that project were done, whether the grant might also cover paving the trail across Geiger. Mr. Helbing replied possibly. Mr. Tierney will follow up with Mr. Dech and Ms. Roy to make sure there are no issues with the trail and county right of ways. Mr. Fineran inquired if it could include a portion of Allamuchy where it connects with the Warren Highlands Trail.

Mr. Helbing did an interview today on the Liberty Water Gap Trail with PBS 23 out of Stroudsburg. It was filmed at the footbridge between Columbia and Portland. He discussed the history of the trail and the Delaware Water Gap Rock Fall Berm, a 120' high fence proposed installation to prevent rock fall onto Route 80. Rescue efforts would be extremely dangerous, if not impossible. Mr. Helbing suggested to them that a tunnel be installed like on Route 29 in Trenton, with a trail on top of the tunnel. There have not been many, if any rock fall incidents on Route 80 and this is an unnecessary, unsightly, and costly project.

NEW BUSINESS

Logothetis - The acquisition resolution for both lots is going on next Freeholder agenda. Green Acres was not interested in the state purchasing the lot that does not contain the canal. Mr. Tierney looked into and is

simultaneously pursuing farmland preservation. However, the SADC will not honor the Green Acres appraisal, so if the property is reappraised, there is the risk of the appraisal coming in at a lower amount.

Stowaway Self Storage - Appraised 2.5 acre section between the creek and the canal. Offered to purchase in fee or have a conservation and access easement. Seller is having issues with easement language; did not want to give up development rights, even though it is in a non-developable area.

Albulescu - Moving ahead; issues are being resolved.

Singley - Negotiations with seller's attorney. Seller asked if county would maintain driveway. Frontage of the property is on Halfway House Road. The intention is to exclude Singley Lane completely from acquisition so driveway maintenance would not be County's responsibility.

Cacciapaglia - Total Purchase Price - \$220,000 for 18.8 acres along the Paulinskill River. Funding breakdown: Green Acres - \$110,000; Warren County - \$75,000; Nature Conservancy - \$35,000.

Executive Session

Mr. Fineran motioned, seconded by Mr. Tobaygo to enter Executive Session at 6:25 pm to discuss the True property. Motion carried.

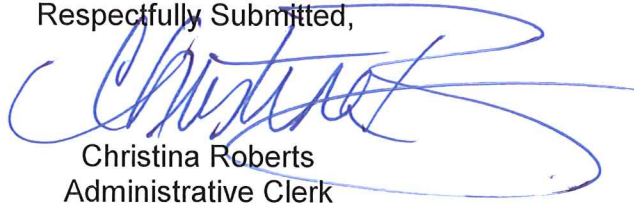
Mr. Tobaygo motioned, seconded by Mr. Davis to exit Executive Session at 6:32 pm. Motion carried.

Preservation Day - Saturday, September 15th from 10 am to 4 pm at Roseberry House.

NEXT MEETING - The next meeting is scheduled for October 9, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business, Mr. Tobaygo motioned, seconded by Mr. Fineran to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Christina Roberts
Administrative Clerk