

**WARREN COUNTY
BOARD OF RECREATION COMMISSIONERS**

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

**October 13, 2015
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, William Hann, Jr., John Halmi, David Detrick, Charles Fineran

Members Absent: Matthew Davis, Raymond Tobaygo

Guests: Bob Canace, Savannah Dix, Joel McGreen, Gregg Hudis

Staff: Corey Tierney, Christina Roberts

MINUTES: The September 8, 2015 minutes were reviewed. Charlie Fineran made a motion, seconded by Bill Hann to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES

Morris Canal Committee

- Members of the Canal Committee and Planning Department have been involved in exploratory digs being done to locate the sewer pipe at the entrance to the new development on Lock Street.
- The posts are in the ground for the new pavilion at Bread Lock Park. The structure will be completed before winter and the trusses will be completed in the spring.
- The Morris Canal Bus Tour on October 10th was successful and well-attended.
- The erosion problem at Strykers Road is being examined by the Planning Department and Engineers Office to determine what type of riprap to use. There are three separate areas of concern with erosion issues.

Trails

Port Murray - Matt Davis and Mike Helbing completed the trail at Port Murray; everything is cleared and marked. The stairway and the bridge crossing the first stream are installed and look great. Mr. Helbing put in a plank bridge over the stream and constructed a short section of puncheon. There was also a downed tree off Hart's Lane, which was cleared. Mr. Helbing installed a pedestrian use path sign by the trail head. The old private no trespassing signs can be removed from the site and the red "End of Public Access" signs will be installed at the end of Hart's Lane. Neighbors will be contacted to inform them that they can put no trespassing signs on their property to deter the public from private property.

Warren Highlands Trail - Mr. Helbing received permission to clear and mark trails from Harkers Hollow to Merrill Creek and expects to have it finished by next week. The state will be putting in a parking area and kiosks. Mr. Tierney noted that they need to determine which trail will be the principle route and which ones will be spurs. Mr. Helbing suggested that the Board visit the site to help decide on the main route. All of the trails will then need to be traced and mapped. A formal opening of this section will be held at a later date.

PRESENTATION - White Lake Update: The Ridge & Valley Conservancy took over management of White Lake Natural Resource Area on September 7th. Savannah Dix, an SCA intern, is the Lead Preserve Manager and lives on-site.

Savannah Dix and Bob Canace reported on the following activities at White Lake:

- Kayaks have been donated for public use. RVC is fixing up an old trailer to transport the kayaks down to the waterfront. A folding dock will be installed for kayak/boat launching without disrupting the sensitive shoreline.
- RVC will be working with the Ridge and Valley Charter School for environmental service learning projects.
- Diane Speer is actively involved in holistic health and may offer yoga at the site.
- RVC will be moving some of the existing rope fencing and installing split rail wood fence to prevent people from entering ecologically sensitive areas.
- Beginning in 2016, RVC will be taking over the mowing at White Lake and reevaluating the areas being mowed to lessen the burden.
- A gate is being installed after the main parking lot that will be closed between sunset and sunrise to deter people from loitering after-hours. A receptacle with dog waste disposal bags will also be installed.
- RVC will be closing off some of the unofficial trails, rerouting some of the existing trails, and looking into creating some loop trails for people who want to come out for a short hike.
- EQIP Grant - RVC, as a non-profit organization, is eligible to receive the federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program grant for environmental remediation and protection of White Lake NRA. The program provides financial and technical assistance through a contract, to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns and for opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland, for a maximum term of ten years.
- Horses have become a problem in some areas at the lake, especially near the water's edge where the ground is soft. Mr. Canace suggested that horses not be allowed at White Lake because of the damage being done, safety concerns, and lack of adequate parking for horse trailers. There is also the issue with horse farms trailering horses in and charging a fee, which is not permitted.
- Marlworks - Mr. Canace suggested that the top of the Marlworks be leveled and capped with galvanized steel to prevent further erosion and to stabilize the structure. Signage also needs to be installed, informing people of the danger around the structure.
- Autumn Olive - RVC has long-term plans to eradicate all Autumn Olive from the Natural Resource Area.
- White Lake Rules Sign - A draft sign, prepared by RVC, was distributed for review. The Board will table the approval of the sign until they can visit the site and decide what activities should be allowed and what should be restricted at White Lake.
- Hunting - Hunting is currently allowed at White Lake, Marble Hill, and Oxford Mountain by permit only. It is not clear what types of hunting are allowed at White Lake and what isn't. Permits are currently obtained through the Sheriff's Office. Mr. Tierney suggested that permits be issued by the Department of Land Preservation so the office can track how many are issued and for what locations. He also suggested that the Board needs to get a basic policy in place and adjust the rules as needed. The Board decided to table the decision so they have time to review the proposed hunting policy and signage prior to voting on them.
- Horse and Boat Trailers - Horse and boat trailers are taking up too much space in the parking areas and are unsafe when exiting the White Lake barn parking area. Charlie Fineran made a motion, seconded by Dave Detrick to disallow boat and horse trailer use in both parking lots at White Lake. Motion carried.
- White Lake Site Visit - Mr. Canace suggested the Board visit White Lake to look at some areas of concern before making decisions. Mr. Canace will propose some dates to see what works best for the Board members.

OLD BUSINESS

Acquisition Updates

Svenningson - The property was appraised at \$163,000.00 in 2014; much lower than the owner paid in 2005 (\$295,000.00), at the height of the market. The property is for sale now and there is another interested party from Florida. The Board discussed the importance of acquiring this piece of land, which connects to White Lake and the possibility that this opportunity may not present itself again. Mr. Tierney noted that the County has paid above the appraisal value for properties of interest in the past. Mr. Tierney sought the Board's approval to make an offer on the Svenningson property, in which the County would pay \$163,000.00; Ridge and Valley Conservancy \$81,500.00; and \$25,000.00 from a private donor, and perhaps \$25,500 from the township for a total of \$295,000.00. Bill Hann made a motion, seconded by Charlie Fineran to support the acquisition of the Svenningson property in the amount not to exceed \$295,000.00 and with the county's contribution not to exceed \$163,000. Motion carried.

O'Dowd - Mr. Tierney noted that there was an error in the Administrator's Report; the property is under contract. Mr. Hann inquired about a proposed road next to the O'Dowd property. Mr. Tierney will look into it and report back to the Board.

Maintenance - The NJ Youth Corps finished clearing the Rockport WMA Trail at Florence Kuipers Park. They still need to install directional signs and clean up the parking area.

Warren County Parks Foundation - Mr. Tierney requested the Board's approval for the Department of Land Preservation to purchase kiosks and picnic tables from the Parks Foundation which have been built by the Highlands Project. The Foundation will reimburse the Highlands Project for the cost of supplies and the balance would be donated to the Parks Foundation for additional projects on county parkland. The purpose of the Foundation is to assist the Board and the Freeholders in improving and maintaining County Parkland. Bill Hann made a motion, seconded by Charlie Fineran to approve the Department purchase kiosks and picnic tables from the Parks Foundation; Dave Detrick abstained. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held on November 10, 2015.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Mr. Fineran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hann to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Christina Roberts
Administrative Clerk