

**WARREN COUNTY
BOARD OF RECREATION COMMISSIONERS**

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

**November 10, 2015
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Helbing opened the meeting at 5:03 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
Matthew Davis

Members Absent: Raymond Tobaygo

Guests: Elizabeth Roy

Staff: Corey Tierney, Christina Roberts

MINUTES: The October 13, 2015 minutes were reviewed. Charlie Fineran made a motion, seconded by John Halmi to approve the minutes as presented, with Matthew Davis abstaining. Motion carried.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES

Morris Canal Committee

The Lee Museum is now closed for the season.

- Bread Lock Park had 182 visitors this year, so far.
- Mr. Detrick met a group of people at Bread Lock Park doing a new variety of geocaching for historic sites; people are given coordinates and they have to locate the sites, based on the coordinates. Mr. Helbing said that was something the Warren County Community College started.
- A meeting is scheduled for November 20th to discuss the website and QR codes for Morris Canal sites.
- 2015 funds were designated for 10-12 new canal signs for the kiosks; the rest of them will be done with 2016 funding.
- Turbine Chamber Restoration Project - Short-term and long-term restoration repairs were identified. Mr. Tierney requested the Board's approval to address the short-term projects, which include: replacement of timbers, gutters, and turbine arm. The estimate was approximately \$39,000. Ms. Roy noted that all of the work will need SHPO approval. Mr. Fineran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hann to authorize the restoration of the timbers, gutters, and turbine arm, not to exceed \$40,000. Motion carried.

Trails

Port Murray - Mr. Helbing suggested that a post be installed at the end of Hart's Lane to direct public and an "End of Public Access" sign be installed. Neighbors were sent letters, informing them that they can put no trespassing signs on their property to deter the public from private property. Ms. Roy will follow up with the Engineer's Office to find out the status of the parking lot.

Mr. Davis will try to get Home Depot or another lumber supplier to donate flawed posts, which would be sufficient for trail markers and signs. If unable to obtain donations, the County has a contract with Blue Ridge Lumber and can purchase posts, if needed.

Warren Highlands Trail - Mr. Helbing cleared and marked trails from Harkers Hollow to Merrill Creek. He noted that he need several posts to mark the trail along the field, as there aren't any trees in that section to put the trail markers on.

Mr. Helbing requested the Board's permission to blaze the Warren Highlands Trail down to Hoff-Vannatta, with Ragged Ridge as one of the points of interest. Mr. Tierney suggested that Mr. Helbing provide the proposed routes, mapped out with notable sites to the Board for review prior to the next meeting. All of the trails will then need to be traced and mapped. Mr. Hann suggested the existing road walk section of the trail still be utilized - possibly as an alternate route or loop trail. Mr. Tierney suggested naming it the "Montana Mountain Bypass".

Marble Hill - Mr. Helbing cleared three fallen trees. He also noted that someone painted over the red trail markers on the Lopatcong Park spur with green paint. The Department will contact the Youth Corps to see if they can repaint the red blazes.

Geiger Tract - Mr. Helbing would like to speak to Mr. Santini (the farmer) to discuss the trail around the field, so he can mark the new section.

White Lake - There is a bridge needed to connect the Ridge & Valley Trail to the Paulinskill Valley Trail, near Primrose Lane. The Department is in the process of obtaining measurements from Bob Canace so the Highlands Project, Inc. can work on building the bridge over the winter.

Business Cards - The request for business cards for Board of Recreation Commissioners members was discussed. It would be useful to have cards with the Board member's names on them while doing volunteer work on County Parkland, to identify them in an official capacity.

State Parks - Steve Ellis won the election for Mayor of Phillipsburg and will be retiring from State Parks on December 31, 2015. No one is slated to take his position; instead, the superintendents will act as a consortium.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Perimeter Hike - An article about Mr. Helbing's State of NJ Perimeter Hike was distributed. His efforts were congratulated.

National Parks Conservation Association Roundtable Meeting - A meeting was held at the Vass House in October to discuss Warren County's ties to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

Appalachian Trail Conservancy - The ATC approached Warren County about becoming an Appalachian Trail community. To become an AT community, an advisory board needs to be established and an application must be submitted for their review and approval. Mr. Tierney invited Board members to be involved. Mr. Tierney will send an outreach letter to municipalities surrounding the AT and potential members.

National Geographic Geotourism Meeting - The NPCA held a meeting at the Inn at Millrace Pond regarding a grant they received from National Geographic to promote geotourism along the Delaware River. Content and photos will need to be developed for the website.

Community Health Network Grant - The Health Department applied for a grant to purchase equipment and promotional materials to target members of the community that wouldn't normally go out and do something active. They plan to purchase kayaks for public use at White Lake and will partner with Ridge and Valley Conservancy to provide free beginner kayak lessons and yoga classes.

OLD BUSINESS

Acquisition Updates

O'Dowd - A meeting was held with the attorneys, DEP, SADC, etc. to discuss any environmental concerns, but is moving ahead as planned. The environmental assessment and survey will be done soon.

Crouse - Landowner is not willing to negotiate a trail easement on the canal. Once the property is under farmland preservation, the Department is unlikely to ever obtain an easement on that portion of the canal. The only other possibility is if the Freeholders put a condition in the agreement that the farmland preservation will not proceed unless the County is granted trail access. The Board requested that Mr. Tierney present the case objectively to the Freeholders and see what their standpoint is.

Woo - Contract is still under review. Mr. Tierney spoke with the landowner's attorney and their main concern was the location of the pedestrian crossing.

Hills of Independence - Their Board had several questions regarding the easement, but overall seemed amenable to the proposal. Mr. Tierney is awaiting their response.

Svenningson - The resolution approving the acquisition of the property is on the Freeholder agenda for tonight's meeting. Still awaiting a response from the landowner regarding the joint offer made.

Maintenance

Port Warren Park - After the farming season, the farmer is going to push back the perimeter of the field to allow more room for the trails. The Youth Corps can then blaze the trails.

Mr. Tierney reviewed the letter he received from Mr. Dragun regarding security measures along the Morris Canal and truck traffic.

White Lake - Several Board members visited White Lake to see some of the improvements RVC intends to make to the park. The Board should review and approve the official trail maps when they are completed. Safer options for horse trailer parking are being looked into.

Florence Kuipers Park - The new sign was installed along Grand Ave. and Youth Corps will be installing the brochure holder on the kiosk. A "Danger Active Railway - Keep Off Tracks" sign was also ordered to help deter people from walking on the railroad tracks.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held on December 8, 2015.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Mr. Fineran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis to adjourn the meeting at 6:42 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,


Christina Roberts
Administrative Clerk