

**WARREN COUNTY
BOARD OF RECREATION COMMISSIONERS**

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

**April 11, 2023
Meeting Minutes**

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Helbing opened the meeting at 5:01 p.m., and read the Open Public Meeting Notice.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Michael Helbing, Charles Fineran, William Hann Jr.(arrived at 5:30), John Halmi, Ray Tobaygo

Staff: Corey Tierney, Elizabeth Roy, Jennifer Kruegel

Public: Holly Luberto

MINUTES: The March 14, 2023 minutes were reviewed. Mr. Halmi motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Fineran seconded. Mr. Trontis abstained. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Ms. Luberto introduced herself as an employee with Warren County who has worked for nearly 20 years. She wanted to address the changes to the time that Merrill Creek is going to be open to the public. She understand that it is private property so we have no legal authority over the changes being made. Commissioner Kern sent a letter to Merrill Creek addressing public concerns and requesting that he have a meeting with administrators. Ms. Luberto further noted that there was a large turnout for the Harmony Township meeting about the situation. Mr. Trontis knows the Merrill Creek steward, John Parke, but is unsure of the-reasoning for the change in their open hours. He suspects safety issues for the upcoming closure of a portion of the Warren Highlands Trail through Merrill Creek related to an upcoming construction project at that site. Mr. Tierney will inquire with planning to see if they have a copy of the agreement Merrill Creek has regarding public access.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

REPORT OF COMMITTEES:

Morris Canal Committee/Warren Heritage Scenic Byway

Morris Canal –

Ms. Roy reported that the Canal Committee rescheduled their meeting to meet next week, April 17, 2023.

Warren Heritage Scenic Byway-

Mr. Trontis reported that the byway initially ran along Rt. 57 from its intersection with Rt 519 in Lopatcong to Mountain Ave. 124 in Hackettstown. They have received approval from both Warren and Sussex Counties and the townships north and south of the byway and the DOT to extended the trail byway; north, via Mountain Ave., Willow Grove Rd. and Waterloo Rd. to Waterloo Village, and south, via Rt. 519 to the river in Phillipsburg. Approval was also received to create a southern loop over multiple roads to reach the Musconetcong River, and then heading north along the Delaware

River to return to Phillipsburg, through Alpha and Pohatcong Townships. The Corridor Management Plan will need to be amended and the plan is to post the entire route. Wednesday, May 3 is the next meeting. Mr. Trontis offered to serve as a liaison for the board.

Trail Committee:

Mr. Helbing reported that he observed some dumping at the Marble Hill lot. Ms. Roy already coordinated with the Youth Corps who picked it up.

The Warren Highlands Trail meeting was held on March 24. Further discussion needs to be made in the reroute along the Merrill Creek property. Mr. Helbing will be meeting with the new superintendent of properties this week regarding the WH Trail. The next meeting will be held in October 16, 2023 at the Central Region office near Round Valley off of Route 22, 10-12 PM.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Tierney reviewed the administrative report and was happy to report that the county closed on the Pereira and Pear Tree properties in Franklin. They were both trail easements along the Morris Canal and a one-acre open space parcel.

An update was provided on the Mount Rascal project. Mr. Tierney reported that he joined HMUA at the Independence Land use board hearing. They received their site plan approvals to relocate their water tank, so that project is moving forward as planned.

SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT REQUESTS

Mr. Tierney provided information on one permit request made through the Office of Land Preservation from OK4WD for a Spring Truck and Coffee event this Saturday, April 15. They have had events at Bread Lock before with no issues. Mr. Tobaygo to motion accept the permit request. Mr. Trontis seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

NEXT MEETING - The next meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business, Mr. Tobaygo motioned, seconded by Mr. Halmi, to adjourn the meeting at 5:34 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Correa-Kruegel
Community Service Aide

