

**WARREN COUNTY  
BOARD OF RECREATION COMMISSIONERS**

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

**May 9, 2023  
Meeting Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mr. Fineran opened the meeting at 5:02 p.m., and read the Open Public Meeting Notice.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Staff:** Corey Tierney, Jennifer Kruegel

**Public:** Claire Arcaro

**MINUTES:** The April 11, 2023 minutes were reviewed. Mr. Trontis motioned to approve the minutes with corrections as requested. Mr. Halmi seconded. Mr. Hann abstained. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

None

**REPORT OF COMMITTEES:**

**Morris Canal Committee/Warren Heritage Scenic Byway**

Morris Canal –

Mr. Fineran reported that the Morris Canal Committee meeting was held last night. They reviewed several signs that will be put up and discussed the Canal and History Day on June 10 at Bread Lock Park 10-4 PM.

Mr. Fineran inquired when the siding of the barn at Bread Lock Park would be completed. Mr. Tierney explained that the night-time temperatures had to be consistently above 45 degrees and that there was discussion regarding what color to paint the barn.

Mr. Fineran said that they are having an event at Waterloo called Canal Day, June 24 and that he would be present with a table with information from the various boards he is involved with.

The Lees discussed swapping out photos in the museum. Ms. Roy will be setting up a workshop to learn how to properly clean paintings. Mr. Tierney agreed and said his department is willing to support it. They will work on coordinating the details.

Warren Heritage Scenic Byway-

Mr. Trontis reported that the meeting was supposed to be held on Wednesday, May 3 but was postponed and is now virtual for Monday, May 15, 2023.

### Trail Committee:

Mr. Trontis is concerned with the Warren Highlands Trail going through Merrill Creek and the construction that is going to be done there along the pipeline.

Mr. Tierney noted that there were no easements or licenses with Merrill Creek so they are not under obligation to allow the County or others to take the trail through Merrill Creek. If it needs to be rerouted it won't be a huge burden on the Warren Highland hikers.

Mr. Trontis suggested an access agreement with Merrill Creek once the trail is done. He has an example that can be shared with the committee. Mr. Tierney felt it needed some more consideration as to what agency would take the lead on that agreement.

Mr. Tierney reported that a surveyor completed marking a section along Brass Castle Road. There's a sliver of land from the municipal lot that is about 100 feet wide. The surveyor flagged the lot lines and Mr. Lizzi will post the boundaries. Additional boundary posting is needed, but there is about 600 acres of county land there so it may take some work to get it done.

National Trails Day is June 3 and there will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony and hike at 10 AM at Oxford Mountain off Academy St. and across from the rescue squad building. The Board of Recreation is formally invited.

### **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Tierney discussed some items Ms. Roy wanted to report on but she couldn't be here tonight. Some Warren County maintenance items:

#### Port Colden:

- Driveway widened on County property
- Area around powerhouse regraded for safe access
- Now the entire access is on county property

#### Port Murray

- No overnight parking sign installed.
- Interpretive and site control signage anticipated to be designed this year (2023)
- Working on updating the maps

#### White Lake

- Fence has been installed around Marl Works; an interpretive sign installed
- Youth Corps installed a new gate at the Primrose Road trailhead
- Youth Corps installed a new gate at the Thomas Carling entrance to the Port Warren Park

### **ACQUISITIONS**

Mr. Tierney reported on the admin report. The Blazek Property is about 9 acres on the top of Oxford Mountain and will be closed tomorrow. Following that will be the True Property in Oxford Twp. which is 112 acres and will be closing on that in about a month.

The Gesner property is also on Oxford Mountain which is about 14 acres and runs along the Lannings Trail. This backs up against the Terhune property. The landowner is receptive to the offer at the appraised value of \$128, 000, but requested that the county cover her closing costs which will be

her attorney's fees. Mr. Hann motioned that they approve the payment of the landowner's attorney's fee up to an amount at Mr. Tierney's discretion. Mr. Halmi seconded. All in favor.

Mr. Tierney provided handouts for the Sigler Farm which is about 175 acres in Franklin Township and they are looking to preserve the property as a combination of farmland and open space. There was a verbal agreement reached but there are some tax considerations that need to be addressed so it is not yet under contract. The farm includes two lots with the larger lot being lot 23 where the canal goes through. The other lot is about 1.3 acres with a stone gristmill and farmhouse. The landowners asked if the county would be willing to purchase just the lot with the mill and save the farmland acquisition for later. The lots were appraised separately and the mill lot was appraised for \$280,000. The Board discussed purchasing the open space portion if it included the canal. Mr. Trontis inquired as to who would be responsible for the maintenance of the buildings on that property. Mr. Tierney said that is to be determined. The county might be interested in preserving and restoring it. Possibly opening it up for tours.

Mr. Hann motioned that we attempt to acquire the Sigler Property 1.3 acre lot in Franklin Township along the canal and gristmill and house along with an easement. Mr. Trontis seconded. All in favor.

Mr. Tierney proposed horse trailer parking on Primrose Road. Local residents requested dedicated space for horse trailers. Would need to meet municipal access standards.

Mr. Hann motioned to develop a more formal plan for horse trailers in the area of White Lake. Mr. Trontis seconded. All in favor.

## **SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT REQUESTS**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Claire Arcaro attended the meeting as a Liaison of the Warren County Environmental Advisory Committee and two weeks ago they had a presentation with the University of Delaware that might be related to the Board of Recreation. They stated that Warren County has the second-highest revenue in the State of NJ from the use of our use of waterways and open space at about \$858 million.

She inquired if Warren County was tracking people using our parks and the environmental considerations for creating things like a new horse trailer parking lot. She suggested possibly enlisting the assistance of Rutgers to use different sustainable options for the horse trailer parking. Mr. Tierney noted they typically use gravel, but agreed to look into other options. The board agreed that tracking visitation was important but noted that it was very difficult without an entrance fee. There are other methods but might be costly and complicated.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**NEXT MEETING** - The next meeting is scheduled for June 13, 2023.

**ADJOURNMENT** - There being no further business, Mr. Hann motioned, seconded by Mr. Halmi, to adjourn the meeting at 6:17p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

