

WARREN COUNTY
BOARD OF RECREATION COMMISSIONERS
500 Mt. Pisgah Avenue, PO Box 179
Oxford, NJ 07863
August 8, 2023
Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER:

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

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mike Helbing, John Trontis, Charles Fineran, William Hann Jr., John Halmi, Ray Tobaygo

Staff: Corey Tierney, Jennifer Kruegel

Public: Claire Arcaro

MINUTES: The May 9, 2023 minutes were reviewed. Mr. Hann motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Fineran seconded. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

REPORT OF COMMITTEES:

Morris Canal Committee/Warren Heritage Scenic Byway

Morris Canal –

Ms. Roy reported the Port Colden interpretative panels have been completed, fabricated and will be installed soon. This will raise the question regarding public access as it has continued to be limited due to constraints for vehicle access. There are also interpretative panels for Port Murray being proposed. She requested the committee limit the panels to solely interpretive panels and not way finding panels. Ms. Roy reviewed the ideas for the panels and where they intend to place them.

An Eagle Scout will be completing a project at Bread Lock Park on Saturday August 12 with the unveiling ceremony on August 13 which the board is invited to attend. It is a “What is your wing span?” display. There is another Eagle Scout project in the works of “How far can you leap?” A third Eagle Scout is interested in doing a project at Bread Lock Park.

The NJ Geological Association would like to visit various Warren County sites in late October. Consideration needs to be taken on how to accommodate them as there will be about 75 participants and 2 coach busses which makes it complicated.

Mr. Helbing inquired as to when we will begin to promote Plane 5 and Port Murray and show people where to go. Mr. Tierney said that trail maps were being worked on at the planning department where they will be printed out and then placed in the kiosks. The map is on hold due to focusing on storm damage in the area but it is coming together.

Mr. Helbing inquired about access to Plane 9. Mr. Tierney explained that there is no public access right now. There is not adequate parking in the area across the bridge. We are able to get the Lees and Mr. Miller in and out through the emergency access at the top, but that cannot be used for general public access. The county hired additional, professional engineers to assist in the disaster response and they are assessing the damage. It was requested that the Plane 9 bridge be included in their plans.

Mr. Helbing questioned the accuracy of the surveys at Plane 9 along the towpath. Mr. Tierney said there are no plans to resurvey right now.

Mr. Helbing inquired about Bilby Road and it was reported to be in good shape.

Warren Heritage Scenic Byway-

Mr. Trontis reported on the following:

My involvement:

- I've been a member of the Byway Committee representing my prior agencies until I retired from NJDEP in June of 2018.
- I represented the WC Parks Foundation from June of 2018 until February of 2023, when I was named to the Board of Recreation Commissioners in February of 2023. Per my conversation with Chairman Helbing, I now represent this Board on the Byway Committee.
- I did so when the Byway Committee last met in a virtual meeting on May 3rd.

WH Scenic Byway Background:

- The Warren Heritage Scenic Byway, initially known as the Route 57 Scenic Byway, originally ran from just short of the Lopatcong Township line along Route 57, and ran east to its terminus at Mountain Avenue in Hackettstown.
- The Byway Committee had proposed a northern extension over county roads to what would be a significant northern terminus at historic Waterloo Village in Byram. We also had proposed a very large southern loop, turning south at the intersection of Rt. 57 and Rt. 519, heading south over county and local roads to the Musconetcong River in Pohatcong, then west to the Delaware River, north to the center of Phillipsburg, and finally east and back to Rt. 519.
- Both extensions will now include multiple additional historic sites, park areas, scenic vistas, river access, restaurants and shopping opportunities.
- All municipalities and both Warren & Sussex Counties along the original and extended route have approved the route and either have or soon will assign a representative to the Byway Committee.

- The best news is that both the northern and southern extensions have been approved to be added to the Byway by NJDOT!

Next Steps:

- The Byway Committee, with substantial help from the Warren County Planning Department will need to update the Byway Corridor Management Plan (via RFP & contract by the County). We will also need to assess the need for signage along the Byway extensions and upgrade the signage along the original route. Grant funding will be needed for this, as there is no funding currently available from NJDOT.

Trail Committee:

Mr. Helbing reported that there was more trash dumped at Marble Hill that needs to be cleaned up along the road going up hill from the lot. He did chainsaw work along the trail. The yellow trail with red dot still needs to be worked on. He also put additional signage up near the private boundary that is adjacent to county and state property.

The next Warren Highlands Trail meeting is October 27.

Discussion was had regarding the Merrill Creek access for trails.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Tierney reported that they filled the Clerk position and she will be starting this Thursday. Her name is Kim Barnes. She has a background in science, education, and clerical work.

SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT REQUESTS

There is a request to continuing research at White Lake. It has been approved before. Mr. Trontis motioned to approve the project. Mr. Fineran seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

Summary of flood damage was reported from multiple storms and photos were provided.

Ms. Roy reported that Samantha Matthews of Propagate Studios is a local business owner and would like to host an artisan market at Bread Lock Park in Fall. This would be a large scale event at Bread Lock. It was suggested to put her in touch with the Parks Foundation to co-sponsor an event. It was concluded that they are open to the idea but more details are needed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

NEXT MEETING - The next meeting is scheduled for September 12, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business, Mr. Tobaygo motioned, seconded by Mr. Hann, to adjourn the meeting at 6:11p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Correa-Kruegel
Park Naturalist