

WARREN COUNTY MORRIS CANAL COMMITTEE
c/o Warren County Department of Land Preservation
500 Mt. Pisgah Avenue, PO Box 179
Oxford, NJ 07863

September 11, 2023

MINUTES

Call to Order: Mr. Lee III opened the meeting at 5:32 PM.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Tim Roth, Charles Fineran, James Lee Jr, James Lee III, Paul Tarlowe, David Detrick

Staff Present: Elizabeth Roy, Jennifer Correa-Kruegel

Minutes: Mr. Fineran motioned to approve the 8/14/23 meeting minutes. Mr. Roth seconded. All in favor. Motion passed, minutes accepted.

Public Comment: None

Correspondence: None

Communication and Bills: None

Budget: After factoring in the cost of the Port Murray panels, approx. funds available for the rest of the year = \$1,977. Balance must be spent before the end of the year. Suggestions on what to spend it on include hiring someone to help with website & completing the updates to and printing of the Greenway brochures.

Land Preservation Project Updates:

Phillipsburg:

Nothing to report. Ms. Roy went to Pohatcong Town Hall and met the clerk, Wanda. Wanda sent another email to the administrator and the mayor, copying Ms. Roy, to get help as to where to place kiosk.

Lock Street/Plane 10:

Mr. Lee Jr met with the Youth Corps/Mike Muckle. Wants the brush cut before a possible Lock Street tour. The area along the incline plan will be done first. The mound where the turbine chamber is located is a bigger project. Mr. Detrick, in cooperation with the WC Parks Foundation, suggested that the tour be held in the spring.

Mr. Lee would like to get Plane 10 cleaned up and walkable in conjunction with Lock St. Ms. Roy said Mike is going to need more time, than less time to get the brush cutting done as some of the work should be done after a hard frost. Mr. Lee Jr stated any tour

at Plane 10 would have to be late November. The decision about the date of the tour will be made at a later date.

Mr. Roth asked Mr. Detrick what the extent of the Lock St tour would be - start at Green Bridge and go all the way to 22? Mr. Detrick responded saying Jim had put together a great brochure of Lock St and the tour might follow that. The details have not yet been planned.

Strykers Road:

Ms. Roy said she spoke with Mike about reestablishing the loop trail and getting a switchback cut in where you drop off the towpath trail down to the field level. It is on his agenda but no date yet, other than it being this season.

Mr. Lee III asked if anyone checked the waste weir between Strykers and the bottom of Plane 9 for storm damage. Mr. Roth was at that location a few weeks ago and did not see any storm damage. He said a footbridge just west of Rt 519 shifted a bit. It was agreed to have the Parks Foundation take a look at it.

Port Warren/Plane 9 West:

Ms. Roy just found out today that the County's consultant engineering firm inspected the bridge at Plane 9 and recommended repairs be done before reopening. She did not know the extent of the repairs recommended at this time. Ms. Roy noted there is debris piled up on the piling again. She left a message for the bridge department, but they may not be able to work on this site. It is unlikely the bridge will be open for the two big tours (geological and society tour and history trail).

Colliers Engineering's concept design for the headwall and wing wall repairs was approved so Ms. Roy expects to be hearing from them. Last month, the roof was replaced on the porch and over the museum at the Jim and Mary Lee Museum. We are also getting the roof replaced on the Youth Corps house across the road because it has been leaking.

The gate at Thomas Carling Drive will be locked open to allow free access to the two residences using the driveway. Mr. Lee Jr said a fence post is needed on the left side. Mr. Lee III asked for an update on the RFP for the timber. Ms. Roy is waiting on that to come back from Colliers.

Bread Lock Park:

Mr. Tierney will be presenting the plan for a new Nature Center at BLP at tomorrow's Board of Recreation Commissioners meeting and invites the MCC board to attend.

Mr. Lee III asked for an update on the damage to a footbridge at BLP. Ms. Roy stated the Youth Corps had pulled away the worst of the debris after the storms. Mr. Detrick and the new volunteer, Jim, went out, moved the bridge, and put the bridge back on its footings. Mr. Detrick said they put in four new pillars to make it sturdier.

Ms. Roy stated the residing of the barn is coming along very well and is almost finished. She shared photos of the progress. Everyone agreed it looks good. Ms. Roy also shared a photo of the exercise station that is roped off due to a deeply eroded bank of the creek. That station needs to be moved. Mr. Detrick said that is something that can be done on a Saturday morning if he can get additional help.

Mr. Detrick stated there were zero attendees for the museum tours yesterday.

Ms. Roy mentioned the wildflower meadow that was planted in June (the triangular field behind the museum) took nicely even with the bad weather we had. Jared Rosenbaum is going to assess it and will let us know if it can stay as it is or if we should mow and/or reseed. Mike has the first meandered path through it. By next year, the walkway should be really nice for the public to enjoy it.

Mr. Detrick mentioned he was not sure of the condition of the yellow trail from BLP to Richline Rd. Ms. Roy started at North Main St and got as far as the culvert under the railroad. She was going to try to finish checking for storm damage tomorrow. The workers repairing the barn have their equipment blocking the tractor, so although it needs to be mowed, the tractor is blocked and cannot be used. The Youth Corps did go and cut and trim the trail, which was much appreciated. Ms. Roy stated the Youth Corps was at BLP today. A tree had come down in the prism and they already had it cleared. Mike was working on a couple others. There are several dead ash trees on the prism to the left of the museum. Ms. Roy is calling Tree King to cut and remove the trees and grind the stumps. This will make maintenance of the slopes much easier.

Mr. Detrick also reported that the recladding work on the barn is being done to a very high standard.

Port Colden:

The Port Colden panels were delivered and are installed. Mr. Detrick said it has been mowed and is in good shape. We need to wait for the Board of Rec. and/or Dept of Land Preservation to make the judgement call to open it up to the public. Mr. Lee Jr suggested we get some type of counter to measure the usage of the trail because it is so remote. Mr. Tarlowe said no one would know it is there unless someone who had previously been there, took you there. Mr. Detrick said one neighbor put up a "no trespassing" sign to deter people, but there is an opportunity to post some directional signs on the right side of the towpath going back. The neighbor who owns that property has given permission. Mr. Lee Jr thinks we should have at least a logbook for people to say they were there and to leave comments like those that they have in the Adirondacks. Mr. Lee III suggested we do that at all the parks. Ms. Roy said counters are a challenge because animals would also set it off. Mr. Detrick suggests that this group ask the Board of Recreation Commissioners reconsider this subject.

Ms. Roy wanted to discuss the cleanup of the area. She was questioned about getting rid of the stockpile of tires that are back there (probably over 100 and at least 20 still on

the rim). She had contacted the Mosquito Commission in early summer. Most of the tires are on rims, which need to be removed to take the tires to recycling. She postponed that subject because of the July storm cleanup. The PCFA can take tires up to 50" but they have to be cleaned inside & out, same as with the Mosquito Commission. This creates a challenge to remove the tires. Mr. Detrick reported that he and Bruce, another volunteer, tried using a sawzall to remove tires from rims but the process was too laborious and time consuming to be practical. There was a discussion about possible options to address this issue.

Port Murray:

Joe's proposal for the 6 interpretive signs was discussed at last month's meeting (1 for the bottom of the incline plane, 2 by the power house, 1 on the road going toward the farm lane to interpret the brickyard, 1 to interpret the trolley line, and 1 on Hart's Lane as a general overview of the property). Mr. Detrick reported he met Joe at the site and Joe is in the process of working on it. Mr. Tarlowe will be the main contact for Joe. There will be 2 review periods and beyond the 2 will have extra hourly costs.

Mr. Lee III asked about the damage at the Port Murray boat basin that was discussed last month. Ms. Roy said the Youth Corps helped with the cleanup from the boardwalk up to Cherry Tree Bend. It appears the mowing is being done, but not sure who is doing it. The Greenway panel near Cherry Tree Bend needs to be replaced and there are several at the shop.

Florence Kuipers:

Mr. Detrick did not yet put the bench up. Mr. Roth stated he was at Kuipers today and said it looked pretty good but there was a small tree down between Harvey St and Roosevelt. He will ask Corey to have the Youth Corps remove it.

Bilby Road:

Mr. Roth stated he and Beth have been there taking care of it between the footbridge (West of it, Youth Corps takes care of East) and Waterloo Village. With all the rain, things have been growing like crazy.

Report of Officers and Committees:

Projects:

Mr. Lee III has not yet contacted the webmaster to review what can be done with the current website (exploremorriscanal.org) for the Myra Snook tribute.

Ms. Roy reported a workshop with Gary McGowan to learn how to clean and care for paintings has been scheduled for 9/28, probably from 1pm-4pm and probably at BLP. We have about 5 people who will attend. The goal is for those attendees to learn and then share their knowledge with others.

Mr. Fineran said there are a couple projects in Allamuchy that, while not directly affecting our trails, will be a nice connector once completed. They are taking the Lehigh and Hudson River Railroad right of way through the town. The plan is for bulldozers to go through the trail in Allamuchy to make it 12ft wide if possible this winter. Green Township has their trail of that railroad already done and covered.

Mr. Fineran also shared that the Deer Park entrance to Allamuchy Mountain State Park is no longer there. The road was sold and it has been closed off. The alternative is to enter Allamuchy Mountain State Park across from Panther Valley Mall. This will be the new entrance but there are some issues with bridges/creeks.

Events/Education/Public Awareness:

Tours at Bread Lock Park Museum continue all year (2nd Sunday of each month). The Jim and Mary Lee Museum will likely be closed for the remainder of the year.

The NJ Geological Association tour is on 10/28 (organizer is Pierre). They have 2 coach buses, reportedly with 75 people. Mr. Lee III stated they were informed they cannot cross the Plane 9 bridge with the busses and they said they are fine with walking up the hill. Firm planning needs to begin. Mr. Lee III thinks we should have 5 or 6 stations where people can rotate and visit the site. Ms. Roy sent an email to the Parks Foundation trustees asking for help with the event. She stated since there are multiple sites for this tour, BLP might not need a lot of extra help, as we will also need help at Oxford and Plane 9. Ms. Roy suggested that the video be shown on the busses. Mr. Lee III will coordinate details with Pierre.) Mr. Roth and Mr. Detrick will follow up with getting Parks Foundation volunteers. Mr. Fineran is not available on the day of the tour. Mr. Detrick suggested he and Mr. Roth could help at BLP with tours and then go to Plane 9 to help there if that is the schedule of the tour. Mr. Roth mentioned again the option of having one group go to BLP and one go to Plane 9 and then swap due to the number of visitors. Mr. Lee III will check with Pierre, but it would require more people.

The Warren County History Trail is the following weekend 11/4-11/5. BLP will be open, but Plane 9 probably will not be. Ms. Roy said we could get a sign made that says the site is closed.

Meeting Schedule: Next meeting will be held virtually on October 16 at 5:30 PM (Oct 9 is Columbus Day).

Adjournment: There being no further business, Mr. Fineran, seconded by Mr. Roth, motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:28 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Barnes

Staff Representative