

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

October 16, 2023

MINUTES

Call to Order: Mr. Lee III opened the meeting at 5:34 PM.

Roll Call:

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

Staff Present: Elizabeth Roy, Kim Barnes

Minutes: Mr. Fineran motioned to approve the 9/11/23 meeting minutes as is. Mr. Roth seconded. Mr. Piazza abstained. All other members were in favor. Motion passed, minutes accepted.

Public Comment: Melanie Thiel, Executive Director of Washington Borough BID and a member of the Warren County Economic Development Committee, has applied for funds for a sign noting the crossing of the Morris Canal from the Warren County Bicentennial Cultural and Heritage History Marker Grant Program. She does not want the marker going on private property. At the corner of Route 31 and Myrtle Ave is a small lot owned by Washington Borough. The Borough is in favor of having the proposed sign on this lot. Currently an older brown Morris Canal marker from the 1980's is located there which is not in good condition. Ms. Thiel would like the new aluminum marker installed closer to Myrtle Ave. Since it is regarding the Morris Canal, she wanted to get permission from this committee on location and verbiage. The committee members agreed the old sign should be replaced and were in favor of a second sign. Mr. Detrick said they have a replacement brown sign stored at Bread Lock Park and he and Mr. Tarlowe could replace it. Ms. Thiel had reached out to Mr. Detrick for suggestions on the text for the sign. She will be using Frank Blanche Signs in Washington to make it. Mr. Lee III asked her to share the design and text of the sign with the committee before it goes to production and they'll vote on it at that time. The Committee agreed they support this sign.

Patricia Benton is the President of the Campbell Cultural Heritage House (CCHH) and a great-great granddaughter of Captain James Campbell. Ms. Benton's cousin, Robert Swint, usually attends the local historical events on their organization's behalf as she lives out of state. Their group has been meeting since 2003/2004. The CCHH has been working on restoring the Campbell House. They have two new board members, Ina Walls and Diana Tyson, who bring a wealth of information about the area as they have lived in the area their entire lives. The group has been taking inventory of the items in

the house that have been bagged up. Ms. Benton met with Gina Rosseland at Shippen Manor and contacted Gary McGowan for help on cleaning and storing the items properly. Ms. Benton also spoke with Wendi Blewett at the National Canal Museum in Easton, PA and they decided to collaborate on some things. The museum currently has an exhibit of black canalers shown on their website. The CCHH also wants to connect with Centenary University and some other groups and hope to have a website established by the end of the year.

Ms. Benton asked if anyone on the Morris Canal Committee (MCC) could recommend someone for lead abatement, as there has been lead paint in the Campbell House. Mr. Lee III said he does not know of anyone but will look into it.

Ms. Benton also asked if there is a canal boat diagram on any website that highlights both canal terms and definitions. Mr. Lee III stated there are canal boat blueprints on their website, but the terms are not well defined. He thinks Joe Macasek of the NJ Canal Society has some canal boat signs with terms and definitions and there are some posted at Bread Lock Park by the canal boat. Mr. Roth said they are also posted at Waterloo Village. Ms. Benton thinks including the terminology and definitions could help make it more interesting to those not familiar with canal boats, including the younger generation.

Mr. Detrick asked Ms. Benton about the condition of the panel at the Campbell House. She reports that the panel is in poor condition and the sun has faded the kiosk. Mr. Detrick suggested the Morris Canal Committee include replacing that panel in the budget next year, since they installed the current one. He thought perhaps even add a second one. Ms. Benton would like to see a two-sided panel, but would prefer to stick with just one on the property. Mr. Lee III said if a sign is faded that the MCC put up, it should be replaced and they will work it out either in this year's budget or next year's.

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 included hiring someone to help with website & completing the updates to and printing of the Greenway brochures. It was also suggested to get a cost for a panel for the Campbell House.

Land Preservation Project Updates:

Phillipsburg:

Ms. Roy has sent several emails to the Pohatcong Township administrator and mayor about the Lock 8 panel, but has not received a response yet as to where they can install

the panel and kiosk. Mr. Lee III is going to ask Mike Marguiles if he can help them get a response.

Lock Street/Plane 10:

Mr. Lee Jr. said it was decided to push the Parks Foundation tour off until the spring. It will be easier for the Youth Corps to cut the brush when it does not have leaves on it. Ms. Roy informed Mr. Lee Jr that Mike Muckle from the Youth Corps has his Adopt-A-Trail sign, the Lock St Tillers. When he comes to take care of the site work, he just needs to know where to install the sign and he will do it same day.

Mr. Detrick suggested thinking about next year's budget and possibly get new interpretive signs for Plane 10.

Mr. Lee Jr. asked about the washout, but Ms. Roy has not gotten a response back from the Road Dept. Mr. Lee III thinks it is getting worse. Mr. Lee Jr. suggested if they can get a machine in there, the washout can be repaired. He thinks the amount of fill in the canal bed is what is causing it to overflow.

Strykers Road:

Ms. Roy said Mike Muckle (Youth Corps) had the loop trail on his list and also to put the blazes in on posts. The lane is still washed out though. Mr. Lee III is going to try to follow up with Trout Unlimited to come in with machines to redo the lane.

Port Warren/Plane 9 West:

Ms. Roy reported that she spoke with an engineer from Colliers Engineering last week. He is finishing plans for the tail race and the regrading around the wing walls. He needed to verify we can stockpile soil on the site and Ms. Roy told him yes. Ms. Roy also received paperwork from them for the RFP for the timber replacement. They want the design engineer to sign off on what they did for the timber replacement. If the design engineer doesn't respond, they will speak with the project leader.

There are no updates on the bridge at Plane 9. It remains closed until it can be inspected. Mr. Roth said Plane 9 is still listed online for the Warren County History Trail weekend (11/4-11/5). Ms. Roy said the website does note that it is closed until further notice.

Mr. Lee III reminded the committee that the NJ Geological Association tour is on 10/28. They will be visiting Plane 9 and will be walking up the hill and the Lees will be trying to accommodate up to 75 people with tours and stations. Mr. Detrick said he and Mr. Roth would start helping when the group is at Bread Lock Park and then move to Plane 9 to help there.

Mr. Lee III reported he did a lot of pruning of trees at Plane 9 and requested the Youth Corps pick up the pile of branches.

Bread Lock Park:

Mr. Lee III thought Corey Tierney gave a good presentation last month on the plans for a new Nature Center. Mr. Detrick state that a lot has to happen before anything actually is started on the Nature Center.

Mr. Detrick thinks the work on the barn is finished. The dumpster has been removed. They may be waiting for the bats to leave before they put the panels on a couple open windows.

Approximately twelve people visited the museum at Bread Lock Park this month.

Ms. Roy reported the county fire marshal did another inspection. Well over a year ago, they failed inspection. Some of the issues have been addressed. A few outstanding issues include: some open junction boxes in the shop that need covers, an emergency light that is not working, and breakers tripped in the barn.

Port Colden:

Port Colden will remain closed to the public for now. Mr. Detrick reported that Mr. Tierney is in favor of a supervised bus tour to Port Colden in the spring.

Mr. Detrick also stated they are working on creating grates to more permanently block off the two archways under the towpath.

Mr. Tarlowe was recently at Port Colden and said a neighbor stopped and asked about having gravel or quarry process dumped at the bottom of the lane. Mr. Detrick said it has been done in the past and he will check with Mr. Tierney if it can be done again.

Port Murray:

Mr. Tarlowe emailed Joe for an update on the progress of the panels, but did not receive a response. We are still waiting on a first draft.

Mr. Roth was at Port Murray today on the boardwalk and then the Hoffman Road trail. He reports the Youth Corps has done a good job on the trail going to Brickyard Rd, but the spur trail going from Brickyard Rd to the chamber was very overgrown. The Youth Corps said they do not maintain that trail. Mr. Roth thinks we need to start having the Youth Corps maintain it or ask the Parks Foundation. Ms. Roy will discuss it with Mr. Tierney.

Mr. Tarlowe reported he and two others from the Parks Foundation put out a few more trail markers and cleared out some brush to make sure markers were clearly visible. Mr. Tarlowe also shared that he replaced the Greenway panel near Cherry Tree Bend.

Mr. Detrick said when they were at Cherry Tree Bend today, they put some new boards on the boardwalk and stabilized it. While there, Stan Cohen stopped by. He has been mowing the towpath for about thirty years, even while going through chemotherapy.

Florence Kuipers:

Mr. Detrick did put the bench up and the tree that was down last month was taken care of.

Bilby Road:

Nothing new to report. All good.

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.

The workshop with Gary McGowan to learn how to clean and care for paintings was rescheduled for 10/27. The goal is for those attendees to learn and then share their knowledge with others. He would like to have 4-6 people attend.

Events/Education/Public Awareness:

Tours at Bread Lock Park Museum continue all year (2nd Sunday of each month). The Jim and Mary Lee Museum is still closed until the bridge can be opened.

The NJ Geological Association tour is on 10/28 (organizer is Pierre). They have 2 coach buses, reportedly with 75 people.

The Warren County History Trail is the following weekend 11/4-11/5. BLP will be open on Sunday 11/5, but Plane 9 will not be. Mr. Lee III reported 99 people attended last year.

Mr. Piazza provided updates on the Morris Canal trail. He will share the maps he has with the committee.

OK 4WD is having their Trucks & Coffee event on Saturday, 10/21 from 9am-11am at Bread Lock Park. They have a special event permit from the Board of Recreation Commissioners.

Ms. Roy said some of the QR codes displayed at Lock St, Plane 9, Plane 10, and Strykers Rd are gone. They were just laminated in the office, but they definitely need freshening or to be replaced. The greenway sign at Strykers Rd could be replaced as well. Mr. Lee III was in favor of refreshing the QR codes. Ms. Roy pulled up a "QR Code Project" file on her computer. She will email it to the committee to decide if they want to make it a larger project. Mr. Roth attended an MWA round table meeting in Asbury

recently where they discussed QR codes. He said the consensus was that QR codes are good for more information, to direct people to websites. However, it relies on the ability to take a picture of the QR code and technology.

Meeting Schedule: Next meeting will be held virtually on November 13 at 5:30PM.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Mr. Tarlowe made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Roth. All in favor. Motion carried and meeting was adjourned at 7:06PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Barnes

Staff Representative