

WARREN COUNTY
BOARD OF RECREATION COMMISSIONERS
500 Mt. Pisgah Avenue, PO Box 179
Oxford, NJ 07863
October 10, 2023
Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Helbing opened the meeting at 5:02 pm.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT: Mr. Helbing read the Open Public Meeting Notice.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Mike Helbing, Charles Fineran, John Trontis, Ray Tobaygo, John Halmi

Members Not Present: Bill Hann Jr.

Staff Present: Elizabeth Roy, Kim Barnes, Jennifer Correa-Kruegel

Staff Not Present: Corey Tierney

MINUTES:

The September 12, 2023 minutes were reviewed. Mr. Trontis commented that this was the first time Kim Barnes documented the minutes and thanked her for a job well done. Mr. Tobaygo motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Halmi seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Sarah Hare, a Hope Twp resident and member of Support Roaring Rock Park who spoke at the last meeting regarding the logging and trail access at Merrill Creek, thanked the board for agreeing to write a resolution to request a meeting with Merrill Creek.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

REPORT OF COMMITTEES:

Morris Canal Committee/Warren Heritage Scenic Byway – Mr. Trontis reported that he attended the Parks Foundation luncheon this past Saturday and met a lot of nice people with the Morris Canal Committee. There has been no new progress with the Warren Heritage Scenic Byway, but the next virtual meeting of the Warren Heritage Scenic Byway Committee is 11/13.

Trail Committee – The next meeting for the Warren Highlands Trail Committee is 10/27. As was discussed in last month's meeting, there was continued discussion of the Merrill Creek property owners blocking access to the trail, which had previously been agreed upon, and the environmental impacts of their logging. Mr. Helbing and Mr. Trontis stated that we used to have seventeen cleared and marked miles of trail, but it has not been maintained as it should be due to various reasons. Right now, it is a trail in concept only because of the overgrowth. Maybe a third of the seventeen miles were developed. It is going to take a lot of work to get it back to where it was. Mr. Trontis stated the Support Roaring Rock Park group, of which four members were present at tonight's meeting, have pledged to help with the maintenance of the Warren Highlands Trail section through Roaring Rock Park.

Mr. Fineran said there is quite a bit of infrastructure to the east of these seventeen miles waiting to be incorporated into this. Allamuchy Mountain State Park has Allamuchy Trail and others that connect to

the Highlands Trail along the Musconetcong River, and in the Jenny Jump area. Allamuchy is working on a Rails to Trails with the state.

Mr. Trontis commented there is quite a bit of additional land (state, county, local, and private) waiting for the trail.

OLD BUSINESS:

Board members were presented with a draft resolution to request the Warren County Board of County Commissioners meet with Merrill Creek management about forestry activities and the Warren Highlands Trail section. Mr. Trontis made a motion to approve the resolution to be presented to the County Commissioners and Mr. Fineran seconded the motion. Roll call was taken. All voted yes. (Mr. Hann is absent.)

NEW BUSINESS:

Administrator's Report – Ms. Roy is representing Mr. Tierney in his absence.

Additional Hunting Areas – This discussion will be postponed until next month when Mr. Tierney is present.

Special Events - There is a special event permit request from OK4WD to hold their Trucks and Coffee event at Bread Lock Park on 10/21, 9am-11am. Mr. Trontis made a motion to allow the event. Mr. Fineran seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Trontis wanted to recognize the Eagle Scout "What is Your Wingspan?" project at Bread Lock Park. Ms. Roy reports there are two other Eagle Scout projects in development – "How Far Can You Jump?" and a bat box project.

Mr. Helbing noted the Plane 11 Arch in Phillipsburg, a past Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust (MCCT) grant recipient, continues to deteriorate. It is owned by the Dept. of Environmental Protection. Mr. Fineran reported the arch was brought up and recognized as a key historical structure at the MCCT meeting. Mr. Helbing also learned the Manunkachunk Tunnel is going to be blocked off. Mr. Trontis asked about access to Plane 9. The road/bridge to Plane 9 is still closed due to damage sustained during the July storms.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

NEXT MEETING: The next Board of Recreation Commissioners meeting is November 14, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Mr. Tobaygo motioned, seconded by Mr. Fineran, to adjourn the meeting at 5:36p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Barnes, Clerk
Warren County Land Preservation Dept.