

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

May 13, 2024

MINUTES

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

Roll Call:

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

Members Absent: Randy Piazza Sr.

Staff Present: Elizabeth Roy, Kim Barnes

Minutes: Mr. Fineran motioned to approve the 3/11/24 meeting minutes as is. Mr. Roth seconded. All in favor. Motion passed, minutes accepted.

Public Comment (on agenda items):

Mr. Fineran shared news of the Delaware River Sojourn. Mr. Fineran is working with Art Charlton to put on a program Monday night, 6/17. The sojourners will be camping at Worthington State Forest for three nights. The tabling event he is planning would be a great way to highlight the county and its open space to a large group (90-100 people). Mr. Fineran would like to see the MCC have a table there, along with other groups in the county. Mr. Lee III thinks it is a good idea and is willing to sit at an MCC table.

Correspondence/Communication: None

Bills & Budget: No bills. The full 2024 budget of \$5,300.00 is still available.

Reports of Officers and Committees:

Land Preservation Project Updates:

Pohatcong:

Mr. Lee Jr. and Ms. Roy met with the police chief to determine placement of the Lock 8 panel. Mr. Detrick will figure out a date to install the kiosk.

Mr. Fineran congratulated Mr. Detrick on his induction into the Hackettstown Area Senior Hall of Fame.

Lopatcong/Plane 10 West/Lock Street:

Mr. Detrick and Mr. Lee Jr. had walked around Plane 10 and discussed future signage and public use of Plane 10. Ms. Roy shared her screen showing their draft proposal. Mr. Lee III suggested a bigger pedestal in place of a kiosk so the view of the incline is not obstructed. Mr. Lee Jr. reported there are currently two trees down in that area. He is planning to cut them up himself. Mr. Lee Jr. offered to write up the text and provide pictures for the panels at this location. Mr. Fineran made a motion to accept the signage proposal, seconded by Mr. Lee III. The vote was all in favor; motion carried.

The second part of the proposal is for property right-of-ways and acquisitions, specifically two small lots along Lock Street near the plane.

Mr. Fineran said the MCC should make a recommendation to the Board of Recreation Commissioners to try to purchase the property along Lock St near the plane to utilize the bridge or at least a right-of-way. Ms. Roy said there have been past attempts to purchase this property or an easement, but the landowner has not been interested.

The draft proposal for Plane 10 West also notes general maintenance needed for the existing kiosk, picnic bench, and bridges. Mr. Detrick and Mr. Lee Jr. have been speaking with an Eagle Scout who was looking for a project.

Strykers Road:

Mr. Roth reported that Tom Lizzi hiked this area last week and it was in good shape and well taken care of. The NJ Youth Corps has been maintaining it. Mr. Lee III and Mr. Lee Jr. said they gave the Youth Corps a tour and they were a good group.

Port Warren/Plane 9 West:

Mr. Lee III was told the archaeologists would be back tomorrow. Ms. Roy said this is for the work for the new vehicular bridge. The project has been in the works for years and has been tied up at the state level.

Ms. Roy has not heard anything new regarding the existing Plane 9 bridge. There has been some progress made on the Lommason Glen Rd bridge, so hopefully when that is completed, work on the rest of the projects can start.

Ms. Roy reported they put a request for bids for the timber replacement. The request for bids was advertised and she contacted a list of contractors provided Jim Lee III. There was a pre-bid meeting where only one bidder showed up. Bid opening is this Thursday.

Mr. Lee Jr. asked about the bridge plans and what the county's agenda is for such a large bridge there. Ms. Roy explained the bridge is being designed in accordance to whatever the state mandated. It will be a two-lane bridge. Mr. Lee Jr. would like to revisit the bridge plan because he does not think such a large bridge is needed.

Ms. Roy worked on the project authorization for the headrace. If bids are not received for the timber replacement on Thursday, the project may need to be rebid to include both the timber

replacement and the headrace. Mr. Lee III suggested Ms. Roy get in touch with Margaret Hickey to see if she has any other contractor leads.

Ms. Roy said the TAP grant for the sidewalks, etc. is also in state review.

Mr. Roth wants a clear answer if the park is open to the public or not, including walking in from Thomas Carling Drive. Ms. Roy will ask Corey Tierney to give a statement to answer this.

Mr. Lee Jr. reported someone from the county put gravel at the bridge to make it safer before fishing season started.

Bread Lock Park:

Test results from the mold remediation have not yet been received, but are expected this week. Ms. Roy read a statement from Mr. Tierney on the status of the museum at Bread Lock Park. Once the basement mold remediation is complete, remediation will begin on the main level. All items on the main level need to be cleared out before that begins. The County is willing to accept many items particularly historic artifacts associated with the canal and byway area. There are remediation cost and space concerns about accepting large displays, including the trolley model, Native American model, inclined plane model, etc. The County is waiting to re-enter the building to measure display items and will work with an architect to determine feasibility of items. The County is moving forward with plans to renovate the front of the shop building. Mr. Detrick said the Warren County Parks Foundation might move all items to the Washington Twp.-owned Eckel's garage instead, so they do not end up being thrown out. The Washington Twp. council meets this Wednesday. Volunteers may be able to be trained for some of the simpler cleaning using HEPA vacuums and antimicrobial sprays.

The relocation of the museum/visitor center and the creation of a nature center was discussed.

The west wing of the barn will be re-stained this Wednesday, weather permitting.

Mr. Detrick said the Parks Foundation is planning a park clean-up day on 5/11 at Bread Lock Park (painting, repairs, clean signs, etc.).

The Warren County Bicentennial Summer Concert will be held at BLP on Saturday, 7/13.

Port Colden:

Ms. Roy still needs to recover the property corners.

Port Murray:

Mr. Tarlowe and Mr. Detrick met with Joe Macasek who is making the new interpretive panels. They shared edits with him and he has one more panel to complete (for the turbine chamber). Ms. Roy shared her screen showing the five panels. They can submit one final request for edits and then they will go to print.

Ms. Roy stated the county would probably be closing on property located at Hazen Rd and Rockport Rd within the month. She shared her screen to show a map of the property. Mr. Tierney has reached out to the Parks Foundation because clearing out the towpath would be a good project for them.

Florence Kuipers: Nothing new to report.

Bilby Road: Nothing new to report.

Phillipsburg:

The sign for Steve's Café is in progress. The location will be behind Steve's Café. The school board has approved it but want it to wait until their remediation work there is completed. Mr. Detrick will check back with them in the summer. The panel can be fabricated now.

Since the committee will be reaching out to Joe to fabricate the panel, Mr. Detrick also brought up the fabrication of a second panel at the Campbell House that was previously discussed. Ms. Roy reminded everyone that just getting a proposal does not mean it will come out of this year's budget. The panel has to be completely finished and files in hand before it can be paid for.

Projects:

Mr. Lee III stated he still has not contacted the webmaster to review what can be done with the current website (exploremorriscanal.org) for the Myra Snook tribute and other expanded virtual content.

Events/Education/Public Awareness:

The tabling portion of Shippen Manor's opening day was cancelled due to rain, so the MCC did not attend.

A date was discussed but not set for a tour of Lock Street. It will most likely be July 14 at 9am or 10am and would have to be limited to 15 people. Permission needs to be obtained for parking in a municipal lot, or at least check on athletic schedules.

Ms. Roy shared that Jennifer Correa-Kruegel is leading a Wellness Walk at Bread Lock Park this Sunday, 5/19. Also, the virtual Morris Canal Working group meeting is Wednesday, 5/22.

Public Comment: None

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held virtually on June 10, 2024 at 5:30PM.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Mr. Fineran made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Tarlowe. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:13PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Barnes

Staff Representative