

WARREN COUNTY
BOARD OF RECREATION COMMISSIONERS
500 Mt. Pisgah Avenue, PO Box 179
Oxford, NJ 07863

May 14, 2024
Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Helbing called the meeting to order at 5:07pm.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Mike Helbing, Charles Fineran (left at 6:05pm), Bill Hann, Michael Margulies

Members Not Present: John Trontis

Staff Present: Corey Tierney, Kim Barnes

MINUTES:

The April 9th meeting was canceled, so the minutes reviewed were from March 12, 2024. Mr. Margulies motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Fineran seconded the motion. All in favor, except Mr. Hann who abstained because he was not at that meeting. Minutes approved.

Mr. Hann was nominated to be the BoRC secretary during the March 12 reorganization meeting. He accepted the position.

PUBLIC COMMENT (related to agenda items): None

CORRESPONDENCE: None

REPORT OF COMMITTEES:

Morris Canal Committee – Mr. Fineran shared that it was brought up in the MCC meeting that sign panels need to be completed before paying for them. Mr. Helbing asked if there was an update on the access to Plane 9. Mr. Tierney reported that the bridge remains closed. The park itself is open, but because the bridge is closed, the main entrance, parking area, and the Jim & Mary Lee Museum remain closed. The park is open to pedestrians. There is no parking between the bridge and Rte. 519. Vehicular access from Thomas Carling Dr. is limited to emergency and official use only. Mr. Helbing asked about developing a larger parking area at the Stine farm. Mr. Tierney said the county is working on another grant application with the Planning Dept. through the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority for DOT funds (a TAP Grant). It would begin where the Stryker's Rd trail improvement project ended and would include a bridge over the waste

weir and a bridge over the Lopatcong creek, a potential parking area on the Stine farm, and a designated crosswalk to get over to Plane 9.

Warren Heritage Scenic Byway – From Mr. Trontis via e-mail as he was not able to attend the meeting: *The Byway Committee met virtually on April 15. The annual election of officers was conducted. Mr. Trontis was elected as the Chair of the Committee following the resignation of past Chair Alan Hunt, who also recently resigned from the Musconetcong Watershed Association to take a job with the National Park Service. Gary Pohorely (from Washington Borough) was elected Vice Chair, David Dech (Warren County Planning Director) was elected Treasurer and Ingrid Gray (Pohatcong Twp. Council member) was elected Secretary.*

The Committee is seeking funding to hire a firm to revise the Corridor Management Plan, to include the new northern and southern extensions. Funding and NJDOT approval will be required to upgrade signage along the Byway. Additional points of interest along the Byway will be evaluated. Planning projects are on hold for now, due to WC Planning Dept. staffing constraints.

Upcoming Byway Committee meetings will be held on July 29 and October 21, 2024.

There was discussion about the mapping of the Scenic Byway. The Planning Dept. created a story map, accessible through a link. It shows a map of the byway corridor and sites of interest can be added. Mr. Tierney will forward the link to the committee.

Warren Highlands Trail – From Mr. Trontis via e-mail as he was not able to attend the meeting: *The last Warren Highlands Trail partner agencies' meeting was held at the NJ State Park Service Central Region Office in Annandale on March 22nd. Each proposed trail section was viewed as projected via the WC Planning Dept. dataset and its status discussed (re: development/potential re-routing, recent volunteer & State Park Service maintenance efforts, vandalism/other challenges, review agency approvals required & acquisition/trail easements needed). The next WHT partners' meeting will be held at the same location on October 18th.*

Mr. Helbing reported they met with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the Warren Highlands Ragged Ridge section. It is recognized as a Native American Heritage site. If anything is found that is potentially of Native American significance, it must go through the state department.

One of the issues raised at the meeting on 3/22 was about potential liability for designating road walks and if the underlying owners (counties, municipalities, etc.) formally permitted these road walks. Mr. Tierney contacted Warren County counsel for his opinion and is awaiting his response. Mr. Tierney thinks the NJ Landowner Liability Act needs to be looked into. Does the liability extend on a trail that crosses a public roadway?

Mr. Tierney contacted Tony McBride of NJ Fish & Wildlife regarding the Oxford Mountain section of the Warren Highlands Trail. There is a Fish & Wildlife lot in the middle of our

Oxford Mountain park and there was an existing trail through it. Mr. Tierney asked for permission to continue the trail through. Mr. McBride will respond once he can get there to look.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Administrator's Reports – Mr. Tierney shared the following reports with the board: Acquisitions, Maintenance & Improvements, and Park Programs.

- **ACQUISITIONS**
 - Re-appraisal options are being investigated for property across from Bread Lock Park.
 - The potential donation of property at 444 Route 94 in Knowlton Twp is ongoing. The Nature Conservancy is trying to secure funding for it. No other updates on it at this time.
 - Mr. Tierney had asked the state to see if the two properties in White Twp. (285 and 287 Route 46) along the Lehigh & Hudson RR could be Green Acres, but they haven't replied yet.
 - The donation of the property at 19 Hess Rd near White Lake from the Land Conservancy of NJ is nearing completion.
 - The Cafaro property in Mansfield Twp (57.7 acres near the Rockport WMA with about 1,000 feet of the Morris Canal) should close in the next few weeks.
 - The Gesner property on Oxford Mountain will probably have a June or July closing.
- **MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS**
 - Bids for the turbine repair at Port Warren are due this Thursday.
 - The mold remediation at the Bread Lock Park museum continues. Mr. Tierney learned today that after cleaning, test results on samples showed mold was still present. Additional remediation will need to be done in the basement. Then, they can move on to the main level. The plan was to move the bulk of the museum items to the front of the shop building. The large models may not be able to be relocated there. Dave Detrick would like to keep the museum items together and is looking into housing the items at the Washington Twp.- owned Eckel's garage.
 - Mr. Tierney received the draft for stewardship management plan from NJ Audubon for White Lake, but it still needs to be reviewed.
- **PARK PROGRAMS**
 - Park naturalist Jennifer Correa-Kruegel has been holding various programs throughout the year. 445 people have participated so far this year. That number will probably double next week after her programs at Phillipsburg schools.

Resignation of Raymond Tobaygo – Mr. Tobaygo sent an email resigning from the BORC on 4/29/24. Mr. Hann made a motion to accept his resignation, with Mr. Fineran seconding the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Helbing suggested sending a letter of appreciation for his years of service to the board and that he will be missed.

Mr. Fineran is working with Art Charlton on the Delaware River Sojourn. The sojourners will camp at Worthington State Forest for 3 nights in June. Monday evening, 6/17, was selected for the Friends of the Delaware Water Gap to put on a program, a tabling event for county groups to share their information. (Mr. Fineran left the meeting at 6:05pm.)

Mr. Tierney shared that the county has launched a “Complete Streets” kickoff, led by the Planning Dept. It is an active transportation system, including separate pathways, like the Morris Canal Greenway and Rails to Trails.

There was a kickoff meeting spearheaded by the Nature Conservancy for a NJ Appalachian coalition. It is to develop strategies to increase the rate of open space preservation in Northwestern NJ. There is a landowner outreach workshop on 6/12 at the Northeast Branch of the library.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

NEXT MEETING: The next Board of Recreation Commissioners meeting will be on Tuesday, June 11, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Mr. Margulies motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Hann. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:13pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Barnes, Clerk
Warren County Land Preservation Dept.