

WEST SENECA ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 7:00 PM

West Seneca Community Center – 1300 Union Rd., West Seneca

CALL TO ORDER – 7:02 p.m.

I. ATTENDANCE

Evelyn Hicks (EH) Chair, Rick Rutkowski (RR) Vice-Chair, Mike Wass (MW), Lauren Masset (LM), Emily Masset (EM), Cynn timer Gaasch (CG)

Excused/Absent: Tracy Skalski (TS), Camie Jarrell (CJ)

Town Council: Bill Hanley (BH)

Guest: Jeff Meredith

II. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

1. Meeting Minutes – January 2021- approved by members
2. Financial Report – MW verifies that budget amounts are as follows:
 - 2020 WSEC Working Budget – \$1500.00
 - Town Environmental funds:
 - National Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF) - \$2,710.76
 - US Fish & Wildlife Service - \$29,000.00
 - National Grid Mitigation Fund - \$61,000.00
3. Correspondence – letter rec'd from Erie County Dept. of Env. & Planning requesting Town to appoint a representative to EC Environmental Management Council – MW volunteers for position, will attend meetings and report issues that pertain to/are relevant to Town.
4. 2015, 2018, 2019, 2020 Annual Reports – status quo (need completion, submittal to Town) – EH requests that members send any information that might be relevant for reports
5. Membership - CJ has resigned from WSEC, Jeff Meredith is interested in appointment (to complete CJ term)
6. .Development of timelines for activities – RR advises that he uses a table to keep track of his tasks and accomplishments, encourages members to do the same for each of their tasks – EH requests that he provide a template to all members

III. WSEC PROJECTS - UPDATES/DISCUSSION

1. Oxbow Wetlands (2805 Clinton St.) – RR reports seeing motor vehicle (i.e. ATV, pickup trucks) tracks in snow on the berm and in the wetland area, and reiterates his (perceived) need for proper posting of property, installation of barriers to prevent vehicle traffic from accessing the property, causing damage to trees and other vegetation that had been planted in previous years at the site – again mentions his desire to petition the WS Town Board to create the W. Seneca Nature Sanctuary at the site
2. Standing Subcommittee reports:
 - Tree Issues Subcommittee – MW spoke with Town Attorney re: possible revisions to the Town Tree Ordinance – Also, he will obtain lath (wooden markers) from Town Highway Dept. to mark locations for tree plantings which will be done this year at Town properties.
 - Creek Awareness Presentation - RR, TS will work to upgrade Creek Awareness presentation by adding new information (video depicting of “hydraulics effect” at Buffalo Creek spillway -
 - Education Subcommittee, Environmental Corner in Local Media – EM, LM to research and prepare environmental educational materials for residents, will

put information on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram) - EM will ID applicable video presentations

- Water Quality Issues Subcommittee:
 - Storm Drain Marking – no activity - RR requests that medallions be ordered – EH will facilitate
 - Rain Barrels – no activity
- 3. New Grant opportunities - NFWF grant awarded to Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper for Buffalo Creek Stream Bank Stabilization Study – to study opportunities to mitigate flooding along Buffalo Creek – (EH to send grant to members for reference)

IV. TOWN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

1. BH advises that Town is expecting 3 new proposals from developers (no plan submittals rec'd. yet).

V. ISSUES OF THE PUBLIC

1. Meyer Rd. Wetlands – Jeff Meredith reports of seeing litter/trash at site
2. Biking in W. Seneca - (see notes from TS re: 2/22/21 meeting below)**

Adjourned – 8:23 p.m.

W. Sen. Env. Comm. Mtg. Minutes –Feb 2021

**TS met with Supervisor Dickson, Councilman Bauer, grant writer Connie Miner, engineer Steve Tanner and members of the West Seneca Bike Group today to discuss further options about on and off road bike lanes/trails. Much discussion was had on the benefits associated with making WS more walkable/bikable and slowing down the traffic through town. Conversations turned to where and how to begin planning of these items. Some notes from the meeting are bulleted below:

- On-road bike path
 - The focus should be on one to two main roadways that intersect town and then plan future connections off those later
 - Union Road and Seneca Street are good starting points
 - A plan needs to be made to address all aspects of what it would take to make those roads more accessible to non-vehicular traffic
 - Erie County needs to be involved - both roads are county-owned
 - TS to try to connect WS with Erie County DPW
 - Collaboration on projects
 - Funding opportunities
 - Involvement to include GBNRTC as they have finalized the Regional Bike Master Plan
 - TS to reach out to GBNRTC informally to see if a WS focused bike plan could be an amendment to regional plan
 - Questions raised about possible inclusion in a capital improvement plan by the town
- Off-road trails - Many opportunities to connect parks, schools, residents, etc. through trail systems within town
 - Fireman and Sunshine park - making the two parks connect
 - Existing trails on DEC-owned land, was used by mountain bikers
 - DEC posted no bicycling signs on trails behind Sunshine Park

- Negative response to emails from the land manager for DEC Region 9 which covers the Cazenovia Creek Fish & Wildlife Management Area.
- Likely little to no NIMBY
- Western New York Mountain Biking Association (WNYMBA) - eager to help
 - funding
 - labor
 - events
- Asked Supervisor Dickson to reach out to DEC on this matter
- Many other opportunities around town - groups willing to map out and gather volunteers
 - WNYMBA
 - West Seneca Bikes
- Other items - Surrounding area incorporating pedestrian infrastructure - seemingly pointing to WS. These will be great connectors to communities surrounding WS.
 - Rails to trails
 - Heritage trails
 - Greenway trails
 - Riverline trail