



# Peter Barnes Wildlife Preserve Commission

216 Amboy Avenue, Metuchen NJ 08840

Meeting - May 11, 2023

Commissioners: Dorothy Rasmussen, Chair; Walter Stochel, Vice Chair; Robert Diehl, Treasurer; Ken Sammond, Secretary; Rob Bengivenga, Bob Seader.

Guests: Bruce Diamond, Peter Fairclough.

Chair Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 7:09

## Signs

Walter handed out pictures of new signs designating the preserve as the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve as replacements for the old signs. He noted that the last page images represented the signs that would be used.

Robert Diehl made a motion to accept the signs and make a payment to the vendor.

Rob B. seconded the approval.

All said aye to approve the motion.

## Comments on Master Plan

Ken listed the two recommendations concerning the master plan draft based on public input. They included 1) "all publicly owned land within the boundaries of the preserve shall be used for passive uses only" and 2) "Create a forestry plan that stipulates that no trees shall be cut, harvested, and sold by any public or private entity that owns or manages land in the preserve, nor shall it be contracted out for such purposes. Tree cutting and removal shall be restricted to forestry/ecological restoration plans approved by the Commission. Trimming and maintenance of trees for utility or trail work does not require a plan."

Discussion about the deer management plan included the ways that South Plainfield uses a coated wire fence in Highland Avenue Woods preserving an acre of land. There was consideration and questions about how deer management is conducted in the Great Swamp. Walter stated that there is a ten towns committee to help manage Great Swamp at that we should look to them for guidance

on a deer Management plan. It was concluded that the deer expert would need to be consulted to create an effective plan. Moreover, there was discussion of the fact that both Essex, Union, and Somerset Counties do hunts. What can we learn from them?

Based on this discussion, Ken added a statement to the Master Plan that the commission will "create a deer management program that uses best practices to maintain the ecological health of the Barnes Preserve."

Ken made a motion to accept the Master Plan with the inclusion of the three changes /amendments. Walter seconded the motion. All said aye to approve.

Ken will incorporate the three changes to the Master Plan and distribute copies at the next meeting

Walter will send the updated/completed Master Plan to the EPA and the state.

### **Next meeting dates**

After discussion, the commissioners decided that the meeting dates for the next eight months will be August 17, October 19, January 18.

### **Trails Update**

Walter stated that the County Parks department is building a parking lot at Coolidge St. in South Plainfield, putting down DGA stone. He also stated that Rick Lear is leaving the county parks department as of May 12, 2023, and that Eric Gehring and Julia DeRosso are the contacts now.

Walter is planning to schedule a walk on National Trails Day on the new county trail in the preserve.

### **Webpage**

Ken updated on OIT at the state of NJ. The contact at OIT stated that the Barnes Commission is not technically a state commission, but neither is it a county or local commission, but something else. Therefore, the state OIT office cannot create a webpage on the NJDEP or other state website.

### **Strike Team**

Ken updated on Strike team events, pointing out that there was a training and three events run in the preserve, starting from the Opalanie Trailhead, along the Dismal Brook, toward the Bound Brook. More than thirty individuals have participated in these events.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 PM.