

## **Reimagine Runnemedede Vision Meeting Minutes**

**DATE:** 9/16/21

**Attendees:** Ken Leap, John & Mary Jo Ranieri, Rachelle Omenson, Diane Fredrickson, David Steinberg, Eva McNally, Russell Burt, Donna Starts, Lynne Straker, Michael Consetti, Christopher Zelov, Susan Rondeau, Pete Lombardo

*Introduction and short history of our organization's formation and mission was presented by Ken Leap. Board members were announced, as well as project managers and liaisons to Town Council, social media and fund-raising.*

**Approval of last meeting minutes (June,2021):** accepted

### **UPDATES following summer break (July, August) in lieu of Executive Board Mtg**

**Finance:** John Ranieri stated we "still have money." John will check to see if we received all of the money from the grant provided by Camden County Cultural & Heritage Commission--dedicated to the Labyrinth gateway. Typically, a portion of the money is given to launch the project, with the remainder of the grant money given when a close-out report is submitted to CCC&H.

**Legal:** (Eleanor Kelly excused) Paperwork submission to the State is required for our non-profit status

**Fundraising and Donations:** (Cathy Gregory-Walker excused) \$95 was donated via the button on our website. While Ken was walking the trail live, and putting out a call to volunteers on Facebook, \$50 was donated by a woman who liked what's being done.

**General:** Trail Clean-ups have been held monthly  
Trash and recycling bins have been placed at entry points  
Our first step in restoring the trail was to show that people are using it, raise awareness  
A Thank You should be submitted to Town Council for their efforts in applying for a grant for the bridges at Runnemedede Lake Park, which resulted in a \$25K grant for that purpose. In preliminary efforts to restore the trail, we were able to re-trace the original bridge sites, and the pylons used in 1965!  
John will talk to our town engineer, Steve Bach, about the 25% "soft cost" of building bridges. Ken will be involved in that project, as well.

## **DISCUSSION OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES and SPECIAL GUESTS**

### ***Russell Burt, President of Rotary Club of Runnemede, Bellmawr and Glendora***

*Russell assisted on the last trail clean-up, bringing along his tractor to haul trash out. In addition to Rotary Club contributing \$300 to Reimagine Runnemede, Russell has been working with Ken to get additional funds for Runnemede. Lake Park. It is Rotary's mission to develop all of Timber Creek to improve public access, encourage outdoor exercise, and provide a 2.7 mile canoe trip channel, with put-in from either Green Acres or Gabriel Daveis access.*

*Russ has been in contact with a professor from Rutgers, who shares the excitement in reaching these goals. If we can engage the Rutgers Extension, they will provide the engineering and surveyor skills, and the energy of graduate students to complete necessary tasks. Rutgers Professor is involved in the "NEXUS Study," which is a multi-disciplinary task force to study everything in Timber Creek.*

*There are grants for walking paths for outdoor exercise, erosion issues, etc. Triton and Mary Volz students could interact on a recurring basis, with the necessary provision for student supervision (Mary Volz).*

*Goals include opening waterways, restoring grasslands to attract birds, fish.*

*John Ranieri suggested that Russ reach out to Jeff Nash, a freeholder, who started The Green Team in New Jersey.*

*Russell explained that Rotary is also a 501.3 C group, which has its sights on a grant called "Mayor's Wellness Initiative," which could potentially double funds by matching the \$3K initially needed. The Mayor has to endorse it, and Reimagine Runnemede would have to seed the project with \$3K. Rotary would then match that \$3K*

### ***Micheal Consetti, Owner of Cobb Fathers BBQ Take-Out***

*Michael will soon open his eatery on Clements Bridge Road, which offers pork, pulled pork, & ribs. Corn is served only at events.*

*Michael has donated to RR and is a successful businessman in Runnemede*

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Ken Leap** highlighted the following past, present, or future projects:

### **BOOK ART PROJECT**

Ken met with Tom Martin (of Haddon Township), who is involved in the "**Book Art Project.**" Small kiosks are built to house books, and are painted for distribution to Camden residents. An estimated 20 kiosks are planned; so far 3 demos have been built. Ken would like to partner with Tom on this project, using

Runnemedede and Woodbury artists. An invitation for Tom to join us in our meeting will engage our artists and encourage partnerships with other organizations.

### **FALL FESTIVAL: Runnemedede Fire Station Saturday, October 16th**

Reimagine Runnemedede will have a booth, and ASA will have an independent, but adjacent booth for coffee. Donna Starts and Lynne Strayer have volunteered to help in **RR's** booth.

If we can complete the partnership with the "**Book Ark**" project, painting of 1-3 kiosks may be an activity at our booth, which would attract attention and reinforce effective, local working partnerships.

Ken will design another **RR calendar** for sale at the festival, made to highlight features of Runnemedede Lake Park. Photographs will include the Labyrinth, etc. Rachelle found a desirable printer. Calendar sales will raise funds for the park. A link to an audio presentation of Runnemedede history will be included.

A visual display of recycling, "So You Think You're Recycling?" will tell a tale by comparing a bucket of clean contents to that of a recycling bin containing contents gathered at the trail. Recycling buckets, tipped in the wind, dump plastics and cans that land in the park and elsewhere.

**RR** would like to work with the Green Team to get lids for recycling bins to eliminate this problem.

Also suggested is a **map of the storm drains**, which could be superimposed on the township, where one could locate his/her house to storm drains.

### **TRAIL CLEAN-UPS**

Monthly trail clean-ups were held, but participation was low, probably due to the excessive heat, and summer vacations. In addition, a couple of holidays fell on the 1st Sunday dates. Closer attention to the 2022 date/time must be paid to next year's call so we don't thwart volunteer attempts to join us!

We want to capitalize on clean-ups scheduled in November and December, when the leaves and foliage lay bare the ground and make trash more visible.

The following 2 new volunteers offered more:

**Kevin Carlin (Outdoors Club of So. Jersey)** promised more assistance during winter months, And **Russell Burt (Rotary)** said there is a grant to get people to exercise outside, as in walking the trail. (refer to special guest section)

## **AUDIO HISTORY QR Code LINK**

A student of Ken's recorded an audio version of a short history of Runnemedede, which will be offered as a link via a QR code on the signs in the park.

## **FORAGER**

A bartender/forager accompanied Ken on the trail walk, where indigenous plants included sassafras (root beer flavor), mushrooms and a peppercorn, used in gumbo. He was impressed with the index of indigenous plants published in William Leap's book, and he suggested that a Rutgers grad student assist in comparing the present with the past to see what still exists, what invasive species has infiltrated, and how restoration to the natural inventory of plants could be achieved.

He also identified spoke of a native musk melon to south Jersey--the Ginny Lynn Cantelope. We could have a gathering where Ginny Lynn cocktails are served!

## **TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATION BY RR**

Eleanor confirmed that the \$25K was received for the construction of bridges. The bridge sites have been established, based on the former figures of bridges. **Ken requests that RR members attend the Town Council meetings** to help secure the funds for that purpose, and are encouraged to ask how we can help the town engineer and staff to implement this project. Meeting minutes are recorded as official business.

## **ST. TERESA'S PLAYGROUND**

Using the link to "Google Earth," you can see the whole St. Teresa playground. The paint was diminished by winter ploughing and water damage. Ken and Danielle will ask St. Teresa staff how to address the water run-off and ploughing services to prevent further deterioration of the designs RR painted.

## **BUSINESS ASSOCIATION**

Mike Consetti, of Cobb Fathers BBQ, has expressed an interest in assisting in organizing

Runnemeade's business association--a "2022 project."  
Anyone interested in this project should inform Ken.

## **PAINTED BIKE PATH**

Our original plan to paint the bike path in September has been postponed. October is the last, ideal month that such a project could take place, and the Fall Festival will be held then.

## **"MAIN STREET PROGRAM"**

Ken talked to his counterpart in Salem (formerly from Bridgeton) about the "Main Street Program," which is similar to "Heart and Soul." The "Main Street" requires a paid, full time director, but the payment is not designated, leaving a loop-hole for the amount. Perhaps, \$1 to get started. This is a possible grant money source, but further discussion must take place.

## **REIMAGINE RUNNEMEADE NEWSLETTER**

Diane composed articles for 4 editions of the newsletter, in collaboration with Cathy Gregory Walker. Cathy does the technical production and distribution via social media, and can give details on the outcome. We have received some positive feedback, and it appears to be reaching many more residents.

Our tag line is: "**Volunteering is a Feel Good Experience**"

## **ECOLOGIST WALK - RUNNEMEADE LAKE PARK**

An ecologist walked the trail with Ken and gave a basic analysis on the shrinking of Hirsch Lake (now at only 30% of what it was in 1965!). He stated that our landscape does not support lakes because it is not composed of stone, but, rather, of sand. He said the reduction is part of a natural cycle. Intervention is needed to support the Lake. The lakes here were created by a dam, and must be maintained. There is natural spring water, not just made up of run-off water. Indians living here used to trap, fish, and hunt in the forest. We want to restore plant life, pollinators, etc.

Ken made a **new map in color** to compare to the map his father, William Leap, made. which appears in his book. One can compare the 2 maps and see the evolution of the area. The big vision is to restore the trail, place bridges and eventually tackle

restoration of Hirsch Lake. An estimate of the cost of dredging the lake is \$75K. N.J. D.O.T. should participate in this restoration.

## **OTHER BUSINESS & IMPORTANT DATES:**

David Steinberg gave a summary of the creation and purpose of the Labyrinth and reminded us of the **Fall Equinox Meditation** on **Saturday, September 19th at 1 p.m.**

David is working with various groups (Veterans, Gardner's Funeral) to offer the use of our labyrinth to ease suffering from loss-- PTST, loss of a loved one, loss of a job, etc. He also has also (through Facebook) with a contact at the Labyrinth Society of Australia.

We are reminded of the need for further donations for the labyrinth:

\$500/bench

\$100/name on the donor wall

\$1000. For name on labyrinth gate

John Ranieri reminds us that a celebration of our past Mayor Vanella will be held on **Saturday, September 18th at 11 a.m.** All are encouraged to attend.

Ken informed us that the business space adjacent to him has been purchased and Will be parceled out for individuals to sublet. Ken will approach the owner about the possibility of **RR subletting a space for holiday crafts in Nov-Dec, or for a Winter Market.**

**Meeting Minutes Respectfully submitted by:**

Diane Fredrickson, Secretary

PLEASE NOTE:

The following page lists "**ACTION ITEMS**" with the task and the responsible person Noted for follow-up.

**ACTION ITEMS & ACCOUNTABILITY**  
From Vision Meeting of September 16, 2021

**JOHN RANIERI**

Check to see if we received all of the grant money (\$3K?) from Camden County Cultural & Heritage Commission for the Labyrinth Gateway

Check with engineer, Steve Bach, about the “soft cost” of building bridges at RLP

Look into getting lids for the recycling bins to prevent spilled trash going to environment

See if borough has a map of drain storms to be posted at Fall Festival

**ASA STURTEVANT**

Write and submit a “close-out” report on the Labyrinth Gateway project to insure that we receive the full grant money from CCCH Commission (due October 1st)

**DAVID STEINBERG**

Attach a list of potential, appropriate grant sources for Bach’s review

**KEN LEAP**

Will compose a “thank you” letter to the Town Council for the grant money to be used for bridge construction in RLP. DF will assist in finalizing & sending the letter

**EVERYBODY!!**

Go to the “**ALL TRAILS**” website and enter your opinion about Runnemedede Lake Park--it drives more publicity

