

Vineland Environmental Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 8, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Lisa Fleming. Present were: Lisa Fleming, Sue Fenili, Brad Giordano, Charles Valentine, David Lowenstern, John Pedersen, Christine Brown, City Liaison Diane Amico, and guest Ian Montgomery from the Pinelands Preservation Alliance. John Casadia entered the meeting at a later time.

Ian Montgomery was present on behalf of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, which is a member of the "NJ Keep It Green" coalition of 180 organizations promoting the continuation of long-term funding for open space. He thanked the Vineland Environmental Commission for its support. The Commission had a few years ago sent a Resolution in support of re-funding the Green Acres program. The Preserve NJ Act recently passed, allowing funding to be released for Green Acres projects until 2019.

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2016 meeting was made by David Lowenstern and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor.

The Methodist Church on Landis Avenue is putting in a parking lot, however, no one recalls seeing a site plan application.

Brad said he noted that the new Vineland Middle School has reduced the size of their retention pond and saved some strips of trees. The Board of Education will take over possession of the property after construction is completed in 2018 and it is hoped that they maintain these trees over time. The project is a LEED project, so there was some incentive for them.

Regarding the Landis Avenue tree planter, four volunteers worked there last Sunday pulling out red mulch and replacing with soil. John Pedersen, Christine Brown, Anthony Coffee, and one volunteer from the VDID have met Sundays at 8:30 a.m., and have remulched trees on 2 blocks of 7th Street and on Landis Avenue. They also have done some at Romano Park. Diane did a purchase order for \$100 for SJ Landscape Supply as approved at the special meeting of July 28th. The planter area is larger than we asked for, but that is good. However, we asked for three planters and got one. Lisa said the long-term plan to change planters was brought up by DJ Maillet. There was some discussion of whether plants, such as low Juniper, should be planted around the base of the trees. For now it will be filled in with mulch. The current Landis Avenue trees are 10-12 years old but have not grown much. The lindens and maples are not doing well, and although the ashes are doing well, they are threatened by the Emerald Ash Borer. All of the trees need more water, have been planted in sand, and the pits are too small. The VDID Design Committee meeting is this Thursday at 8:30 a.m. and all members of the Environmental Commission are invited.

There was discussion of underground power lines vs. above-ground, and how the decision is made for either one. Lisa will discuss with Electric Utility Distribution.

John Pedersen said that VDID is discussion planting 30 trees, but he has concerns about maintenance crews destroying the trees. Lisa passed out copies of an email from DJ Maillet regarding a section of the standard bid specs that refers to preservation of trees in a general way. Lisa told him we will try to

provide a list that they can incorporate into their bid specs. David said there is information on the Arbor Day website specifically dealing with construction that we can use.

For long term planning of trees wells, it was agreed that one should be done first to see if people like it. Another option for the edge is pavers. This cannot be done now but can be kept in mind along with what plants can be planted in the wells.

Lisa described what plants are growing at the Giampietro Park raingarden. There is a lot of grass coming up. The beautyberries have died in both sections. At the next meeting, we will discuss fall seeding and what plants to put there. Sue has some evening primrose and joe pye weed. John Pedersen is doing maintenance there this month. Brad volunteered for September. Sue also volunteered for September. John Pedersen may be able to get a sign donated by Garden State Highway, who is doing the signage for the footbridge.

Lisa said she saw a Monarch butterfly at the Romano Park milkweed area. The properties along Main Road that contain this milkweed area are going up for auction. These properties are zoned institutional. It would be good if the City could purchase them at auction.

At Willow Oak, the Maple Avenue entrance is overgrown again. The sign should be moved to in front of the fence where it can be seen and the area behind the fence can be left alone, or the fence should be moved. This should be discussed with Public Works. The location of the city's property line needs to be considered.

Regarding general park maintenance, John Pedersen had previously worked last year with volunteers who are employees of Heist Insurance who had volunteered to help with litter cleanup. John will try to set up two dates, one in August and one in September. On Wednesday at 5:30 p.m., he will be working with the other two volunteers on tree pruning, especially removing bottom-suckers, starting at Normandy Lane Park, down West Avenue to Landis, or down Cherry St. to the Boulevard. If anyone wants to help, they can get in contact with John.

Lisa attended a County meeting regarding greenway planning where the speaker was the same person who previously had done a Rails-To-Trails study. Additional areas have been added and the Pew Charitable Trust is funding up to \$40M for making connections between existing trails, especially when it connects points of interests or fosters bicycling. There is something started at Bivalve that we might possibly connect to. Lisa passed out a list of funding sources. We first need an idea or plan before seeing what funding can be used. Lisa asked members to look at the Rails-To-Trails site to get ideas. A trail from Vineland to Parvins was suggested.

Sue said along Landis Avenue to the Boulevard there were many trash cans overfilled. It was noted that the city cans are being used for residential trash.

A motion was made by Charles Valentine to purchase a 36 lb. bag of tree fertilizer from Latorre Hardware for \$22.99. Seconded by David Lowenstern. All were in favor.

A motion to adjourn was made by David Lowenstern and seconded by Sue Fenili. All were in favor.