

Vineland Environmental Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Lisa Fleming. Public notice was given for this meeting.

In attendance were: Chairperson Lisa Fleming, Planning Board Liaison John Casadia, Sue Fenili, Brad Giordano, David Lowenstern, John Pedersen, Christine Brown, and City Liaison Diane Amico.

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2016 meeting was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by John Casadia. All were in favor.

At this time, the temporary budget is showing in the system as one total, of about \$1200, all in one line item. Hopefully this will be corrected once the permanent budget is approved.

Chairperson's Report: Since the last meeting, members have built a raingarden at Giampietro Park, several attended the Ecofair at Wheaton Village, and Brad Giordano attended the rain-barrel workshsop.

Arbor Day – Sue Fenili reported that 17 trees were delivered for Arbor Day (14 to schools and 3 to the Vineland Downtown Improvement District). The trees were 6'-7' purple leaf plums. Tree bark guards were included to protect against mower damage. It was noted that some of the trees from last year's Arbor Day planting died due to mower damage. The original price of \$50 per tree was reduced by Ferrucci's to \$42 per tree. Deb Marko of the Daily Journal attended and reported on Mennies School's activities. The VDID's tree planting was featured in an article in the Grapevine. A total of \$714 was spent. Lisa said she saw that "Our Town" magazine printed an article on the benefits of trees.

Sue passed out information on single-stream recycling that she got at the Ecofair. Brad Giordano said that single-stream is not a good model, as it is creating a charge rather than making money. Paper quality has gone down due to contamination, mostly glass, in it. The cost of marketing recyclables is now rivaling landfill fees. Plastic PET is not moving; the market is flooded with it. The Vineland curbside trash collection contract has 3 years left. When the City's contract is due for re-bid, the Environmental Commission would like to be involved and give input.

Site Plan reviews – There is not much happening. LIDL supermarket may be going to Millville. The plans for the Charter School were reviewed. The Planning Board held a special meeting for this application. The property is farmland surrounded by residential, and is near Berryman's Branch. The landscape plan includes native species. However, these are on the upland side instead of where the water flows, and there is a retention basin for stormwater. Permeable surfaces and natural stormwater controls were discussed. The members agreed that the Commission should pursue opportunities for more alternative surfaces in construction (tree grates, landscaping, etc), and that these suggestions can be made during site plan review. Lisa will talk to Kathie Hicks and Steve Hawk in planning regarding initiating ordinances that address green infrastructure. It was suggested that we comment on this plan now, but Lisa said this particular application may already be too far along the process for comments to have much impact.

The Newcomb Hospital property is under redevelopment. It is unknown whether they will keep the large trees. The property in general has deteriorated and the main building will not be preserved. The new construction is to be an assisted-living home for residents with dementia.

John Pedersen said that there are drainage problems all around the City that need to be addressed. Lisa said that progress is made with people through solving a problem and giving people things that they want.

Giampietro Park Raingarden - On Sunday May 15th, at 10:00 a.m., members will meet at the park to finish moving mulch and terragrow. Brad has already picked up the unused newspaper. It was noticed that the front raingarden is o.k. but the rear area has too much water. The border logs were moved by excess water. Various methods to hold down the logs were discussed. Signage is needed. If verbage is provided, John Pedersen will work on graphics and can ask Garden State Highway Products about donation of a sign. It was noted that the Department of Corrections makes signs also. John Casadia will find out who printed the sign at Willow Oak for Petway School, as this sign was well-done. Lisa asked for suggestions for additional plantings. Discussion of a maintenance plan was deferred until the next meeting. It was suggested that members rotate shifts monthly to go to the park for maintenance. Diane is handling the thank-you letters.

Wildflower/Milkweed Areas: no report.

Maintenance at Willow Oak still has not been done, including mowing of the main road, parking areas, field perimeter, and broken fences. Lisa will follow up with Public Works.

Footbridge at Maurice River Conservation Area: John Pedersen presented a draft of signage. All were in favor of adding a 300 lb. weight limit to the sign. The sign will be positioned slightly to the side so no one hits their head on it. Diane sent a memo to the Mayor's office asking for a Proclamation or Resolution from the City to the Scout thanking him for his contribution. At a later date, it may be possible to stiffen-up the bridge with supports. The "No Hunting" signs for the entire area possibly can be erected during a field trip by members.

Willow Oak- Prescribed burning of the field will be discussed in September when the new application form comes out. The parking lot fence has been down for several months.

South Vineland Park Land – David has not received a response from the landowners.

Burnt Mill- there is open space here that may be suitable for milkweed seed dispersion.

Bennett's Mill: There is a lot of trash on the frontage of the property.

Newspaper Articles – David Lowenstern will try to get an article out. People are still over-mulching.

Volunteer Opportunities: Using "Meet Up" sites was discussed. Diane has researched this previously. There is a fee to use the site, and since the company cannot provide a NJ business license, the City cannot set them up as a vendor. David will see if our events can be posted on the S.J. Land & Water Trust Meet-up page.

Old Business: none

Green Pavilions at Giampietro need painting, cleaning, and new shingles. Lisa will talk to Public Works.

Green Infrastructure is something to be kept in mind for future projects.

Greenway planning: On City planning maps, there is an intended greenway that goes from Willow Oak all the way to Giampietro Park. How to keep these greenways intact and connected was discussed. Most of the land is wetlands.

Tree Committee - Sue Fenili, John Casadia, David Lowenstern, John Pedersen

Tree Maintenance Contracts: Money is still left on the Asplundh purchase order for stump removal. John Pedersen said there are some stumps on Northwood Drive, 7th Street, East Avenue, Wood Street, and there may be some in Landis Park. Diane needs a list of addresses to send to Asplundh, and asked if anyone can forward addresses when they see stumps.

Street Tree Cutting ordinance: it was noted that trees all over the electric lines is an issue.

City Construction Projects guidelines: Many small trees along Valley Avenue have died due to construction damage. New York City has published "Parks and Recreation Rules on Protecting Trees" which Vineland can use as a model.

CFMP goals / street tree inventories: Diane said our Community Forestry Management Plan is due for renewal next year. During this plan term, we did complete a tree inventory of another section of center city, but did not utilize the data yet.

A motion was made by John Casadia to purchase more mulch from SJ Landscaping for street trees in the amount of \$200. Seconded by David Lowenstern. All were in favor.

David is considering doing the photo contest again this year.

Lisa said the speaker at the EcoFair, Dr. Tallamy, was excellent. He emphasized the importance of using native species in landscaping.

A motion for Adjournment was made by Brad Giordano, seconded by David Lowenstern, and all were in favor.

Minutes prepared by: Diane Amico