

Vineland Environmental Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairperson Lisa Fleming. The secretary read the public notice. Present were: Lisa Fleming, John Casadia, Brad Giordano, David Lowenstern and City Liaison Diane Amico. John Pedersen entered later.

Approval of minutes was delayed until later in the meeting awaiting the arrival of John Pedersen.

Chairperson's report: Christine Brown was not present, and has indicated to the chairperson her intention to resign from the Commission due to her pending move out of Vineland. A replacement is needed for this alternate position. Suggestions can be forwarded to the chairperson.

NJ Conservation Foundation proposed land purchase: Lisa attended the City Council meeting earlier this evening. There were no objections by City Council to the purchase going through. This land is located below Hance Bridge Road at the Menantico stream. John Pedersen suggested that this might be used for one of the trails areas.

Donated land: The property at West Boulevard and West Avenue along the Blackwater Branch is being donated to the City by the Ogrens. It is wetlands and is not buildable. but is a welcome addition to Vineland's Open Space.

Vineland Chemical: There was discussion of whether it is safe to swim in the river at West Side Park. Arsenic accumulates in mud, not sand, and the area is tested regularly. There was recently a news article stating the cleanup cost \$1.5M. Lisa made contact with the EPA to get on its contact list for updates.

Vineland Middle School #2 applied for a new sewer connection in east Vineland: We received notice in the mail; there were no comments by members.

Courses: We have just used our training money, but Rutgers and others have a lot of good courses. If anyone sees something interesting, bring the information to a meeting. Brad said he spoke to 3 city employees who do mowing and who attributed tree deaths to lack of water. They may have some suggestions for better places to plant trees. We still do not know whether Public Works will send anyone to the Shade Tree Federation meeting. Watering is a big issue and maybe we can look into providing gator bags.

Volunteers: Diane put a photo of the Mormon missionaries on the Facebook page. A question of what else we can do was discussed, such as perhaps a story for the newspaper.

Newspaper articles: no report

City Administration: David has been talking to various people regarding attendance at the Shade Tree Federation meeting. It was noted that Bob Garcia is aware of the Rutgers courses, so it is not necessarily critical that they attend this conference.

Approval of Minutes: John Pedersen entered. A motion to approve of minutes of the September 12, 2016 meeting, with one correction to reflect that only Lisa reached out to the Board of Ed, was made by David Lowenstern and seconded by Brad Giordano. All were in favor.

Volunteers: The Mormon missionaries have been helping John on most Thursdays around 5:00 p.m. This Thursday work will start around 5:00 at 4th St. & Quince St. He has not been in contact with Heist Insurance. Members can put out the word to local businesses to contact John to offer volunteer help. John's schedule is flexible.

Projects: Brad has a large amount of clean sand (100-200 large truckloads) and would like to donate it to the City. It was suggested that he contact Dale Elbeuf to discuss locations. It possibly could be used at West Side Park.

Giampietro Park Raingarden: One bed is filling up with plants but the other is flooded. For the Fishing Tournament, vegetation was cut down and mulch was spread near Lincoln Ave.

Wildflower/Milkweed areas: David said there is not as much near the soccer field as in previous years.

Burnt Mill Pond area: Lisa was contacted by Brian Myers. The City is applying for a Green Acres grant for improvements that would include dredging. Members discussed creating a trail near the bridge, a nicer boat launch area, a buffer between the park and the junkyard, more plantings, wildflowers, nicer trash cans, selective clearing, and nice signage.

Maurice River Conservation area: Through research, some members have determined that nails will not kill trees, and so John still has the "No Hunting" signs that need to be put up. David offered to assist. If anyone else can help, please contact John. David offered to purchase the nails on his own.

Willow Oak: A motion was made by John Casadia that paperwork be prepared to apply for a controlled burn of the field. The motion was seconded by John Pedersen and David Lowenstern. All were in favor. Also at Willow Oak, some trees have fallen into the meadow. Brad offered to cut the trees.

Site Plans: After the last meeting, Lisa was going to forward some comments for one site plan that had been discussed, but it was approved 2 days after our meeting.

First Choice Freezers: A lot of neighbors attended the Planning Board meeting, which resulted in the applicant offering to put in more trees for screening.

Zoning Board: Scanned copies of applications were emailed to members prior to the meeting. Most of the applications were for development of less than one acre, so tree ordinances don't apply.

Lucca's Freezer: The applicant is developing all the way to the outer edge of the property. There should be a maximum of 50% impervious coverage, but they are already over that and are now going further. They are adding a huge truck operation which will bring jobs to the community.

Roadside litter: There was an illegal dumping problem on Lisa's street, where the trash contained identifying information and was reported. The City indicated that they would be following up. Diane asked about putting dashcam videos on the Commission's Facebook page with text "Don't be like this person". There were no objections.

Greenway / Trail planning: Lisa asked if any members had any locations on which to focus efforts. She would like to see somewhere visible, not back in the woods. Brad said that a lot of people are walking to work in the vicinity of Mill Road near the Industrial Park, from as far south as Chestnut Ave. The Commission needs to come up with a plan for something walkable or bikeable. We can look for more connections in that area. If there are any details for follow up, this can be discussed at the next meeting.

Municipal Gardener / Forester: Lisa researched civil service positions for Municipal Forester. Vineland currently has no one and it would be good to have someone working for the City as either a Gardener, Landscaper, or Forester.

School Trees: Lisa did not receive an answer from Wayne Weaver.

VDID tree planting: Who is the lead on the planting project was discussed. John will make a top ten priority location list, for about 10 trees. He added that on Myrtle St. between Landis Ave. and Chestnut Ave., especially near Cherry St., there are zelkova trees badly in need of pruning. A professional is needed. It was suggested we might be able to use grant money.

Shade Tree Federation conference: three people are registered to attend.

Equipment: John had previously forwarded a quote to purchase an auger that would help with getting fertilizer down. He would also like to purchase a pair of "bypass" pruners. A motion was made by John Casadia to approve \$100 for the purchase of the auger and pruners. Seconded by Brad Giordano. All were in favor.

Lisa attended a webinar regarding **utilities** and the clearing of trees. She will do more research into the regulations involving **line clearing**.

A motion to **adjourn** was made by David Lowenstern and seconded by John Casadia. All were in favor.