

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes
Regular Meeting – September 12, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Lisa Fleming. In attendance were: Chairperson Lisa Fleming, David Lowenstern, Christine Brown, John Pedersen, and Brad Giordano. Sue Fenili entered later. City Liaison Diane Amico participated via phone.

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2016 meeting, with corrections to reflect that John Pedersen has not been in touch with Heist Insurance, and one spelling correction, was made by David Lowenstern. Seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor.

A motion to approve the minutes of the special meeting of July 28, 2016 was made by John Pedersen and seconded by Christine Brown. All were in favor.

Budget: There is some money left on the purchase order for the tree well edging.

Giampietro Park: Brad would like to offer a lawn crew for maintenance, and asked what could be done if he provides the labor. The tree committee can prune trees, but it was advised that Brad consult with Dale Elbeuf before doing work in the park. Brad has equipment and mowers and said he would like to make an impact.

Sue Fenili entered the meeting.

It was suggested an impact could be made at **Willow Oak** instead, where trails are in need of clearing and there is a lot of other needed work. Brad will look at the Willow Oak entrances. Brad has been going to **Giampietro** to pick up trash. Sue said she will water the raingarden for the rest of September. Some of the plants are dying and need water. The water pump is hard to operate, but is usable. It is still planned to put in additional plants.

Willow Oak: The controlled burn is on schedule. U.S. Fish and Wildlife recommends doing this every few years, and last year they called us to say it was overdue.

Giampietro Park Raingarden: Lisa has been leaving anything green there, even if it was not intentionally planted. The coreopsis has died. The dead flowers will be left there for the birds. The hydrangea has also died. There is some space there if anyone wants to plant in that area. There was discussion of additional plant species. As far as signage, Lisa said this should be held off because the garden is not yet looking good. Christine said there should be some kind of sign there so Public Works knows not to mow.

Landis Ave. Tree Planter: John Pedersen has completed it with mulch and edging. There was discussion of recycled **rubber mats**, permeable and round, for around trees to keep mowers away and keep weeds from growing. Cost may be around \$24 for two. There are similar mats that look like mulch. John said this has not been a good year for trees. He estimates the City has lost 500 trees. The Commission has completed some small sections of **tree inventory** in center city, but not the whole city. The data needs to be input into some software such as iTree in order to make meaning from the numbers.

Shade Tree Federation Meeting: Every year someone from the Commission goes, but the City has not sent anyone else. If anyone wants to go, let Diane know via email as to which days. A motion that David write a letter to the Mayor and Public Works on behalf of the Commission to encourage them to let other City employees go to the training was made by Sue Fenili. Seconded by Brad Giordano. All were in favor.

Board of Ed trees: Lisa has reached out to schools or contacts at the Board of Education. Lisa said the Commission should first find out who is the correct person to talk to regarding maintenance at school properties.

Natural Areas: ANJEC has said that letting meadows go natural saves mowing. There are native garden tours with lots of wildlife. In some areas, this cannot be done because people are not always in favor. The raingarden at Giampietro is a way to get people used to looking at something different, and then maybe the Commission can do another area, such as a milkweed area.

Maurice River Conservation Area Footbridge sign: Lisa thanked John for obtaining and erecting the sign. Garden State Highway products provided the sign.

No Hunting Signs for Bennetts Mill: These still need to be put up. If anyone can help, please contact John Pedersen. There was discussion of whether nails hurt trees. David will look into it.

Maurice River Conservation Area: There has been a dumping there, which John noticed is under investigation.

Mowing: David is passing on information and there needs to be discussion with Dale Elbeuf again. A motion that David talk to Dale on behalf of the Commission regarding mowing was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by Christine Brown. All were in favor. John said there is a type of tree bark guard that works and is approximately \$8 for 5-6 trees. He also said it would be useful to have an auger that breaks up clay. He will get an estimate from LaTorre. He is still doing some mulching.

Litter: Pat Finley has been more responsive in enforcing complaints. But it is noted that the volume of litter has not decreased. It all comes back to education. Sue followed the recycling/trash truck and there was trash falling off the truck. In these cases, the hauler can be called so they can speak to their driver. The trash on Sherman Avenue is bad, but it is possible someone from CCIA may be cleaning there.

Trails: John had sent around some information. Millville may be doing some trails on old railroad tracks. Lisa would like to put together a project to take advantage of funding. The goal of the trails should be to make connections between points of interest or already existing trails. The Commission should identify a section somewhere on which to focus. A good starting point are the maps that John provided. There was discussion of various areas that are possibilities as connecting points. Ideas can be brought to the next meeting.

Site Plans:

First Choice Freezer: This is in the vicinity of N. Mill Road and Vine Road and is zoned industrial. They are taking out a lot of trees, so it is suggested they either comply with the tree ordinance or make a payment into the tree fund.

Del Rae Farms: Lisa will send comments to the Planning Board regarding their intention to build out to the property lines. This may be the area where rare plants have previously been sighted.

Regarding the **State School property on Main Road:** If anyone sees an opportunity to pull anything together for the trails project, bring ideas to the next meeting.

Litter: Sue called the Mayor again regarding the front of the City Hall property.

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