

Vineland Environmental Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
February 12, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. Present were: John Casadia, Sue Fenili, John Pedersen, Charles Valentine, David Lowenstern, Anthony Coffee, and guests Ellen Pedersen, Sarah Hullihen, and Cheryl Hullihen. The public notice was read into the record.

**Kids to Parks Day:** This event is scheduled for Sunday, May 20, 2018 at Giampietro Park from 12 noon to 4 p.m. Sarah Hullihen discussed the various activities she is planning. The date was changed from last year so that it will not conflict with Founder's Day. It was suggested that we clean, or ask Public Works to clean, the park prior to the event. Diane reserved Giampietro Park/pavillion through the Recreation Dept. for that day. Sarah will work on the flyer and forward to Diane.

**Approval of Minutes:** A motion to approve minutes for the January 8, 2018 meeting, with one correction to clarify in the Bennetts Mill section we also discussed the MRCA natural area, was made by John Casadia and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor.

**Maurice River Conservation Area:** John Pedersen has a map that shows the MRCA as being part of Peaslee WMA. There is also a deer-stand on city property. Diane found a map online that, when blown up, shows the property line as going around the nature area. Regarding the deer stand, it may be possible to place a sign or note on it advising the owner that this is not permitted here, and that it must be removed by a certain date, or it will be removed by the city. The "No Hunting" signs need to be installed, and John Pedersen will schedule this. Minimum 1" nails with a flat head will be used. A motion to purchase the nails was made by Charlie Valentine and seconded by Sue Fenili. There are several areas there, as well as in other natural areas, where prohibited activities are taking place. The benefits of signage and the lack of police patrols in remote areas was discussed. It would be beneficial to have the property lines marked out by Engineering, however, Diane has asked them in the past for this.

**ANJEC /Rutgers grant:** ANJEC and Rutgers will be making a presentation to Vineland City Council at their worksession on March 6, at 6 pm, for their Impervious Coverage Assessment and Stormwater Mitigation plans for Vineland. There is grant money for 2 projects in Vineland, and they are currently in discussions with the City Engineer regarding the parking lot project at the library. All Environmental Commission members are encouraged to attend the Council meeting.

**No Net Loss Grant:** We are planning to hire a landscaper in the summer or fall of 2018 to do some street tree maintenance.

**Volunteer Work Days:** John Pedersen has some volunteers who have been working pretty regularly on Fridays at 4:00. This Friday they will be working on Maple Avenue. John Lauria, a previous EC member, may be joining in on the work days.

**Education:** Founders Day is on May 19<sup>th</sup>, and several members are interested in setting up a table at the event. We will discuss at the next meeting.

**Willow Oak:** John Casadia added shingles to the roof of the birdhouses and he has additional photos. The fence at the Landis Avenue parking lot is fixed, but is missing sections so it still needs additional

work and fencing material. Sue said that her husband went there and fixed what was there. John Pedersen has some extra sections of split rail fence that possibly could be used. This would be a good project for a volunteer day. Sue said the trails need to be cleared again. There was discussion of scheduling a volunteer day soon. John Pedersen will contact a scout group that may be interested in assisting.

**Giampietro Park Raingarden:** There is nothing going on now, but soon there will be a need to go out there to see what is growing and what maintenance needs to be done.

**Wildflower/Milkweed Areas:** John and Ellen Pedersen, and Christine Brown have developed a Wildflower Preservation plan for various areas in Vineland, including parks, natural areas, and roadsides. The Plan was distributed and discussed. All Commission members were in agreement with, and in support of, John's intent to forward the plan to Public Works and other City Departments involved in mowing and maintenance of these areas. They would like to present the plan not from the Commission, but as a group of residents. John Casadia said the Lincoln Avenue side of Giampietro Park is used by fisherman, which may be a consideration in Public Works' decision whether to stop mowing there. John Pedersen would like to meet with representatives from the City. Some of the areas are on County roads, so a meeting with the County may also be beneficial in order to coordinate the effort. Diane said she has experienced difficulty scheduling meetings with Vineland Public Works because they are always on-call and going in different directions, so sometimes a meeting at the spur of the moment when someone is available works better. John knows someone at Cumberland County he can talk to. Placing signage in the areas that are intentionally not being mowed are very effective for education so people will not think the areas are being neglected.

The milkweed area on the southwest boulevard which John Pedersen previously roped off still has not been mowed, although the mowers encroached slightly into the area.

**Bamboo:** There was a question and discussion of whether it is safe to use dried bamboo for posts or plant props, when there is a chance that it will root and become invasive. Christine said there are different types of bamboo, and that it can sprout from the nodes if it is put in contact with soil, even after it has been dried.

**Shade Tree Commission:** We are still waiting for Rick Tonetta's legal review.

**ERI and Open Space map:** Diane send electronic copies of the drafts of the ERI and map to all members. There is only one printed copy of the ERI. Diane can try to print more. The large Open Space map is not really what we wanted but it can be used as a starting point to be improved on at some point. We have a copy mounted on foam board that can be used on the display table. The map was reviewed and discussed. The map is missing Bennetts Mill and MRCA. It may be easier to create our own map next time.

**Car Charging Stations:** Since the last meeting we have found out the money is coming from NJDEP from a fine, or settlement, for a penalty, and the State of NJ is in the process of determining how to distribute it. Vineland's amount was to be \$100,000, but Vineland's project hit a stumbling block when VMEU failed to submit a proposed budget for Utility work, citing numerous obstacles and a lack of direction from management. There has been no progress since last month, and we likely have missed out on the opportunity.

**Arbor Day:** Sue is looking into other vendors for purchasing the trees and is checking prices. She asked for suggestions on tree species. Bark guards will be provided with each tree.

**Sustainable Jersey:** The Green Team is applying for a grant in the amount of \$20,000 through Sustainable Jersey. The Mayor would like to have a green roof installed on the top of City Hall, and he is currently in the process of getting engineering estimates. Previously, the City had looked into this, but weight was an issue and the roof could not accommodate a green roof. It is currently being researched whether a green roof is feasible, if it is planned properly by a Landscape Architect. Nothing has been designed yet. The Sustainable Jersey grant would be used for the garden design only, not the engineering.

**Tree Seedling Giveaway:** Seedlings are available for distribution to Vineland residents, similar to what we did a few years ago. Diane asked if members can assist with distribution, in order to get a feel for whether we have enough manpower to cover the day, before she puts in the application for the seedlings. Several members indicated a willingness to assist.

**Mulch for Street trees:** A motion to purchase \$300 of mulch from South Jersey Landscape Supply was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by Anthony Coffee. All were in favor.

**Street Tree Pruning:** It was noted that the trees on Main Road have been cut in a bad way. There was discussion of the City Engineering Department's projects and lack of concern toward trees. Diane said her past discussions with engineering have led her to believe that they are waiting for an official "guideline", that is ready for handout or attachment to bid specs. We have forwarded a lot of information but it is not in a format that is ready to use for projects. John Pedersen is willing to host a committee meeting toward this goal in his office.

A motion to **adjourn** was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor.