

Vineland Environmental Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 9, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 by Chairperson Diane Amico. The Public Notice was read into the record. Present were Diane Amico, Sue Fenili, Charles Valentine, Brad Giordano, Anthony Coffee, and guest John Betz from the Cumberland County Mosquito Commission. John Casadia entered later.

A motion to approve the **minutes** of the September 10, 2018 meeting was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by Brad Giordano. All were in favor.

The current **budget** was passed around. The amount in the training line item will be used shortly when members attend the Shade Tree Federation Conference later this month.

ANJEC/ Rutgers Grant is moving along better now after a meeting with the Mayor. Rutgers knows what the next steps are. The Business Administrator has indicated he wants the grant to focus on sidewalk replacements, and the grant will include a small raingarden at one side of the block. The rooftop garden is off the table for this grant due to liability issues, but the Mayor is still looking to have that done another way. The second part of the grant may happen at a second location on the same block, if ANJEC approves this. There was discussion about the new project for the block containing the old police building and how the raingarden and porous sidewalks will be incorporated. There is concern about the use of salt on the porous sidewalks, as it is likely that salt will be used due to the proximity to City Hall.

Diane said that John Pedersen is still working with **volunteer groups** and John Lauria has been working with him pretty regularly. The small trees that were left over from the seedling giveaway are being planted several at a time at various locations. Approximately 8 were planted at Giampietro Park this past weekend. Brad said the raingarden at Giampietro is looking good. Diane has been contacted by another church group that would like to do some volunteer work. On September 29th a group including Sue, Scott, John Lauria, and John Pedersen did a cleanup at West Side Park. Diane saw the Dept of Corrections cleaning exit 32 on Rt. 55 where Giordano's Recycling used to clean. Brad said his group was moved to Delsea Drive, which is very unsafe for roadside litter cleanup.

Diane read into the record comments that were submitted by John Pedersen after last month's minutes were sent out. Last month he led 30 hours of community service. The LDS church contributed 40 hours; they mulched and maintained about 50 trees, picked up or helped pick up 50 bags of litter, and planted 8 trees, and there are plans to do more at Romano Park this coming weekend. John has been going out just about every Sunday.

The **plastic bag legislation** discussion was tabled until next meeting so David can participate. Charlie said that if we do anything, that we should just recommend alternatives rather than a ban. There was discussion of recycling efforts for various types of materials. The City is changing trash contracts starting the beginning of next year to ACUA, who will use automated service with large 96 gallon toters.

Diane said the **library display** is coming due shortly, and the boards need work. Rather than do this at the meeting, she will reach out to individuals regarding their boards. Diane suggested using the professional services budget line item for the printing of the boards. A motion to use the professional services line item up to the amount in the budget was made by Charlie Valentine and seconded by John Casadia. All were in favor.

Regarding **Willow Oak**, Diane read comments submitted by John Pedersen that he has seen drug paraphernalia, the fence is still down, and there are trees across the paths. Regarding the boy scout project, John Casadia has visited the site last Saturday during the work and they are doing a really good job. The bridge is located off the main trail. The fence around the parking lot is still half down.

The **Giampietro Park Raingarden** has some plants in bloom. Diane said Saturday some volunteers planted trees at the park. She commented that John Pedersen frequently goes out on weekends and could use some help on any of those days.

Diane said the **possible land acquisition** was referred to Citizens United and they will connect the property owner with a non-profit.

There were no **site plans** of concern on the agenda. Diane said there are plans for some kind of subdivision on the Rone property near Bennetts Mill, in case anyone sees something going on in the area. John Casadia said there is a newly constructed business on Oak Rd that is putting in nice landscaping with many trees being planted.

Regarding **Wildflower and Milkweed** areas, Diane read John Pedersen's comments into the record. The City did not cut the milkweed or wildflower areas along Lincoln Ave at Giampietro Park all year. He, Ellen and John Lauria have been maintaining the area. The County cut some areas along the Boulevard, and John has spoken to some County Freeholders, who are supportive. He and Ellen have transported about 45 Monarch caterpillars to Giampietro and Romano Park milkweed areas, and the milkweed should not be cut down for at least another month.

Three people are registered for the upcoming **Shade Tree Federation Conference**. Diane read John Pedersen's comments regarding tree maintenance into the record. There was discussion about the overuse of herbicides that kill everything, and the effect these have on the trees.

John Betz of the **Cumberland County Mosquito Commission** discussed the county's role in cleaning out streams and eliminating mosquitoes from ponds and retention basins. For volunteers, some hand cleaning of streams is permitted as long as no equipment is used and as long as the stream bed is not disturbed. Some small trees are permitted to be cut if they are blocking the water from flowing. The County Mosquito Commission also works with homeowners to eliminate mosquitoes around their houses. There was discussion of organized neighborhood pilot programs for mosquito trapping. There is some cost involved, and everyone in the neighborhood would need to be onboard. The traps are specific to container species, and would not catch woodlands or pond species. Regarding the Giampietro Park pond and stream, the County cleaned out the stream not that long ago, and it is a time-consuming process. The site would not be revisited for several years. Diane said it might be worth it for the Commission to look at how much can be done by hand. One side of the stream is kept clear by the County for access by the equipment.

A motion to adjourn was made by John Casadia and seconded by Charles Valentine. All were in favor.