

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes – Regular Meeting
September 10, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 pm by Chairperson Diane Amico. The Public Notice was read into the record. Present were: Diane Amico, Sue Fenili, Lisa Fleming, Charles Valentine, Brad Giordano, Anthony Coffee, and guest Lauren Nazario. John Casadia and David Lowenstern entered later.

A motion to approve the minutes of July 9, 2018 was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by Sue Fenili. All were in favor. There are no minutes from the August meeting, as the meeting was cancelled due to lack of quorum.

Budget report: Diane Amico passed around the current budget report and reminded the members that all requisitions for the current year will need to be entered soon. Diane did purchase the mulch that was approved at the last meeting.

Volunteers: The days with John Pederson have slowed down due to the weather and it has rained for several weekends. Diane has been contacted by several community service workers that were referred to us from Cumberland County, but the weather has hindered the ability to accommodate them. The community service workers are on a schedule to complete their hours. Diane asked that if any members are planning any work, please contact her so she can connect with a community service worker that can assist. The community service workers must be with a member at all times.

Library display: We previously had talked about doing a display with panels that had some continuity. Michele who had attended that meeting, has designed a general layout of panels for our use. The panels were done conceptually by topic and still need to be filled in with specific information. Also, it appears that the panels could also accommodate 3-dimensional items such as the recycling/trash display. This is a good start and we can continue from here. Diane will look into how to firm up the design with Michele and get the panels printed. We need to be ready for next month with what content will be on the boards.

Willow Oak: John Casadia said someone has been cutting it and the Maple Ave side doesn't look too bad. Diane has not heard from the Boy Scout yet regarding the work he wants to do there.

Giampietro Park Raingarden: Lisa visited the site. Results are varied. After the hot spell it did not look good but recently it looked better. She did some trimming. The sign that Sue provided looks good. The flowers were slow to come up. Over the summer not much was growing. Sue has some joe pye weed that can be provided. Other species that might do well there were discussed.

Wildflower/milkweed areas: David said there is a lot of milkweed at Romano Park near Maple Avenue. The monarchs are likely done with the feeding phase at this point. The milkweed areas on the Boulevard have been mowed, but seem to be coming back. It would be good to have signs to prevent mowing. For County Roads, the County wants official City Council approval to designate the no-mow areas. For both the County areas and the City areas, there needs to be marking off of the areas by signage. Diane said the effort is being led by John and Ellen Pedersen and Christine Brown to delineate the areas, meet with Mark Guglielmi, and present the list to City Council for approval. Sue said she has spoken to the owners of a field on Burns Avenue regarding leaving the milkweed to grow instead of mowing.

Diane said the City has three opportunities that appear to be not moving forward:

Land donation: Diane said that the City's administration did not respond positively toward accepting the land donation from the Mahorter family, even though the Environmental Commission recommended it. The reasons included maintenance and liability, and loss of property taxes to be collected. Diane will reach out to

Citizens United to see if they are interested or can pass it on to another non-profit. The property is mostly wetlands.

Electric Vehicle Charging stations Regarding the money available from NJDEP, the Utility has indicated that they may turn down the \$100,000, citing that it's a lot of work to do the design and the City is not set up for the chargers.

ANJEC/Rutgers Grant: (\$60,000) There has been some miscommunication between Business Administration and Rutgers, and now Rutgers has designed something that is different than what the Mayor wants to do. When Rutgers requested a concept plan for the City Hall block, the Business Administrator said that Rutgers already had everything that they need. Therefore Rutgers has begun the design without complete information. In the meantime, City Engineering drew up a concept plan, and the Rutgers plan will not work. It is important that all involved, including the Mayor be included in the next meeting. In addition, at the meeting, a raingarden at the library was discussed, and Rutgers did design one, however, the City now would like to do a green roof on City Hall instead. Rutgers is looking into whether there is enough grant money to cover the green roof. There are some hurdles to pass, but this project is still on the table. Diane is working with Jody Carrera to schedule another meeting and get everyone on the same track. If the green roof cannot be done with this grant, it may still be done somehow.

There were no site plan reviews that were critical and John Casadia did not see anything that we should discuss.

Diane asked members if anyone is interested in attending the **NJ Shade Tree Federation** conference on October 18 and 19. We need 2 people to attend for credit.

Diane gave an update on Sustainable Jersey. The Chamber of Commerce has started a **Green Business Recognition Program**. The list of actions to qualify was provided by Sustainable Jersey. Lilliston Ford and Lilliston Chrysler will be the first recipients of the award. Diane will be attending the ceremony. The business that qualify will receive a window decal for their business.

Diane asked for assistance with developing a **flyer for Willow Oak**. The community service person who was going to work on it is no longer interested. Anthony Coffee offered to help.

David asked if there was a plan to replace the street side **zelkova trees** that have died. Diane said Public Works can remove the dead ones. If anyone sees a dead tree, they can call Public Works. We do know that the trees had a disease from the nursery. It would cost more to fight the disease than to remove and replant. Public Works may possibly leave the stumps. At this time, it is too late in the season to try to get a contractor for this year to do planting.

David said the issue of a plastic bag ban has been in the news and there are towns in NJ that are passing their own legislation. We will add this to next month's agenda for discussion. Diane said in order to move forward in Vineland with this, we should have some feedback from the towns that have the ban as to whether it is working and if they like it.

Diane said the **rainbarrel workshop** went well and a total of 70 rainbarrels were constructed.

A motion to **adjourn** was made by John Casadia and seconded by David Lowenstern.