

Vineland Environmental Commission  
Minutes – Regular meeting  
August 12, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. The Public Notice was read into record. Present were Diane Amico, John Casadia, Sue Fenili, Lisa Fleming, John Pedersen, and guest John Lauria.

A motion to approve the **minutes** of the July 8, 2019 meeting was made by Lisa Fleming and seconded by John Casadia. Sue Fenili abstained; all others were in favor.

The **Budget Report** with year-to-date balances was passed around. The report included the regular budget, the No Net Loss Reforestation Grant, and the Developers Fund.

Regarding the **Raingardens** at the Annex and the Library, Diane received a message from Cheryl Reardon that Rutgers intends to come to weed and re-route the drains at both locations. John Pedersen discussed how the drains should be done. It is unknown how Rutgers will do the drains. At the Library, the outside faucet had previously been turned off on the inside, so the faucet is actually not stripped as was believed, and the key should now work. The City has received complaints about weeds in the raingardens that were actually references to the planted vegetation. Diane would like to have a list of what is planted so that some educational materials can be created. Someone sprayed herbicide around the perimeter at the Annex. Going forward there needs to be a resolution of how to do the ongoing maintenance. Public Works has indicated they will not weed, and it is not practical to think we will be able to train them for proper raingarden maintenance. There is a large workload on Public Works right now. Diane spoke to the Planning Division office about these issues when going forward with green infrastructure on city properties. Options were discussed, including hiring someone for a once or twice a year maintenance. Commission members preferred to try to do once or twice a year on a volunteer basis. Lisa said that for the long term the City should hire a gardener and tree person. Diane said there should be signage at all raingardens. If any members have an opportunity to ask a landscaper would be the charge for a one time maintenance, please get the information. NJ State is pushing for green infrastructure. Diane said our raingardens are the first on City properties, but after there are more, then the City may have to come up with a maintenance plan. The new city block around City Hall has raingardens in the plan. It is important to maintain ours for now, so that it encourages others' future decisions. Lisa did buy sprinklers and hoses and left them at the Library. Diane noticed the right side at the Annex does not drain as quickly and ponds a little after rain events.

**Volunteer work days** have continued. John has not yet called Garappo Stone for delivery but there is a partial plan of action in the works. John Casadia visited Willow Oak and the tractor will not fit in the trail. The logistics still need to be worked out. No one joined John to clean up Union Road, and he collected 10 bags of trash along the frontage of the White Cedar natural area. He collected another 10 bags along Union Road. The bus stop in front of Bennetts Mill was a mess with trash from the homeless shelter. Seven benches were painted at Giampietro Park; there are a few left to do.

Regarding **education** efforts, the recent National Night Out would have been a good event to attend. We should pay attention in the spring to catch things that are coming up. The College has invited us in the past to participate in their events.

At the **natural areas**, John Pedersen and John Lauria cleared a trail at Willow Oak and have been out at other times to clean up trash. At Bennetts Mill, John P. saw a State Trooper who monitors for dumping; there are some cameras in the woods.

At the **Giampietro Park Raingarden**, Lisa said there are some things growing. The shady area is doing well, and some things are flowering. There is one small bare patch. Any plants there need to be tolerant of wet conditions. She has been trimming the asters. There are many tall thoroughworts this year, but next year there will be fewer. Diane asked for a

list of plants. John P. made picture printouts of tree species that have been planted around the City, as an example of what we could do similarly for the raingarden. It is important to get signage at all of the raingardens. The bricks are still there, although John did use some for the steps on the Lincoln Avenue side.

The **Wildflower signs** should be ready soon. John P. said the County has mostly been staying away from the wildflower areas, so this is progress. The County plans to start spraying the guardrails, and the Commission would prefer that they did not spray. If we could manage it by cutting, it would prevent them from doing larger bushwacking or spraying. They will also be spraying around water. It would be good to know exactly what they are spraying. Lisa said we should find out what has to be done according to transportation regulations. John P. does have some contact with the County Public Works staff, so maybe can find out what they are using. Lisa said it is bad to use dicamba because it vaporizes and drifts. She has noticed some curling of leaves at the Giampietro garden, which could be a sign of dicamba contact. Diane said there is more to the spraying than regulations, such as politics and resident complaints. There is an existing NJ State Best Management Practices bulletin for roadside maintenance. John P. said the County wants the City to tell them what to do, so we need to get together with Mark Guglielmi and approach City Council with a list of locations.

Regarding **ongoing maintenance** of litter and trash, John P. would like to see a regular schedule where others show up. He usually collects a large bag of trash every 500 feet. It just keeps building up, and would go quicker with help.

Regarding the new **office space**, Diane requested help moving files and boxes. Public Works sent an email saying they are not moving any city departments, since there are too many offices moving into different buildings. Other departments are hiring movers. Diane is trying to move all of the files and boxes in hopes that if the cabinets are completely empty, there will be a better chance of getting someone to move them. It is not going very quickly, as time is limited to lunch hours, and it is a lot of trips moving one box at a time. Diane asked for approval to purchase some office supplies, such as a trash can and some cleaning supplies, for approximately \$50. Also there is a need for screws and wall anchors for the educational signage to be hung in the office, as well as a gallon of paint to repair the wall and paint the bookcase. This would also be approximately \$50. A motion to approve the expenditures was made by John Casadia and seconded by Lisa. All were in favor. Diane said John Lillie purchased for us a desk and chairs, and OEM gave us a conference table and bookshelf. Sue offered to help move the files.

**Site Plans** were divided up and reviewed. John C. will not be at the upcoming Planning Board meeting.

Lincoln shopping Center at Lincoln & Dante: It appears they plan to demolish the building where the grocery store is currently, and redevelopment is to be done in phases. John P. said we should look at this one hard, as it may have several issues. The applicant is removing the gas station on the corner and prepping it for something else. There is concern as to whether the change causes an update to stormwater.

DRK & Associates is looking for a minimal increase in parking.

Cronk/Curcio: the site is in the Industrial Park across from Gallager Drive and includes grading for a future building. The project will have several phases and is seeking variances for side yard buffers and lot coverage of 63% vs. 50% allowed. The whole project is over 5 acres that will be totally cleared. There is no reference in the plan to trees.

Lam Chun Cheng at Crystal Plaza is just doing handicap parking in the existing parking lot, so no environmental concerns.

351 Elmer, LLC is just planning to use office space differently, so no environmental concerns.

Divya Holdings is a plan for a recycling center on N. Mill Road. It was noted that the location is near the Blackwater Branch, and litter frequently comes from this type of business. The City could have a nicer vision for its Industrial

Park. They are seeking an unrestricted Class A designation for comingled recycling, which is similar to what is currently picked up curbside. Members agreed that this is the wrong place for that type of business, and it is an incompatible use next to a creek in an environmentally sensitive area. The Public Hearing will be held August 21 before the Zoning Board.

Moore: application is seeking approval of non-conforming use of an existing property, and there are no environmental concerns.

There is one proposed sale of city property on Alpha Place, and the Commission has no interest in the property.

The Purchase Order is in place for the **Library parking lot trees**. In response to concerns expressed at the last meeting regarding witch hazel along the border, Lisa and Diane did research and found that it is not necessarily restricted to wet areas. Considering the water needs and purpose (there is not a need at this location for a landscaped hedge-like wall), witch hazel is an appropriate choice. The work will be done in the fall, with oversight by Martin Geisser.

Diane received a complaint from the Disc Golf Club that plays at Giampietro. When we planted the riparian buffer a few months ago, it was noted that one disc golf basket is too close to the water. This information was forwarded to Recreation, however, Dale never passed on that information to the golf club. They had prior approval from the Recreation commission to place the basket there, in spite of regulations regarding stream beds and buffers. The new woodline perimeter is interfering with their site lines. They can resolve this by moving the basket, but may ask the Commission to purchase a new "sleeve" for the post. They did not provide a cost in time to discuss at this meeting, so this maybe can be discussed at the next meeting. There are 2 baskets affected, but if they move one, then it solves the issue with both. They would do the work and provide the concrete.

John P. put together several proposals and has **a landscape architect** that is willing to come to a meeting. However, it is unclear what services a vendor can provide, as what we need includes a member of the Commission or City employee to be involved and onsite during any planting. John Pedersen said he can work with the landscape architect and be at the project. Anyone we hire would have to provide complete oversight from start to finish. Before a landscape architect comes to a meeting, it is recommended first we need to know what we want to do as a project, although a landscape architect can come anytime to talk about the possibilities of what can be done.

A motion to adjourn was made by John Casadia. All were in favor.