

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes
Regular Meeting May 13, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were: Diane Amico, Sue Fenili, Lisa Fleming, John Pedersen, Charles Valentine, David Lowenster,n and guest John Lauria.

A motion to approve the **minutes** of the April 8, 2019 meeting was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Pedersen, with one correction: the removal of one sentence regarding no objections to the Shop Rite development application. All were in favor.

The **City Hall Annex Raingarden** is almost complete. Diane thanked Lisa, Sue, Scott, and others for helping to plant. It was noted there may be a drainage issue, as it was recently seen to be full of water. The City has agreed to take care of maintenance after completion. Rutgers will return to complete the project. All of the planting is finished except for the irises.

The **Roots for Rivers project at Giampietro Park** will be finished by the American Littoral Society. Diane did receive feedback that some of the mesh and trees were leaning over, and Emma is aware and will return with her interns to fix them. There is concern about Public Works mowing. Diane suggested a small fence or row of stakes. The American Littoral Society does not have money for fencing. Various ways to delineate were discussed, including white lines, fences, stakes, and mulch. It was decided not to purchase anything. There is mulch available on an existing open Purchase Order. The Recreation Department has expressed in the past that they do not want stakes due to liability. It might be better to ask the City what is preferred. Weedwacking or mowing with a push mower is needed between the trees. Diane has tried several times unsuccessfully to arrange a walk-through with Dale from Recreation to discuss various issues.

The **Roots for Rivers Maurice River / EPA superfund site** project begins this week. The City received half of the money up front, but there was a short hold up for the Finance Dept. to create the grant fund account, Diane temporarily used the No Net Loss account to begin making purchases because we could not wait to order plants and materials. Since then, all of the purchase orders have been changed to reflect the new account number, so no money has come out of No Net Loss. However, we have been using No Net Loss money for other tree-related items such as mulch.

This project was complicated to get everyone involved in agreement, which created time constraints. Trees were purchased from 3 different nurseries in order to get what we needed. There were delays with vendors who needed new NJ Business registrations and new vendor accounts. Tubes and stakes have been delivered to the Road Dept. and Diane has arranged for them to be brought to the site. The first plant delivery was received at the site this morning. The first planting day is this Wednesday. There is a big challenge to move plants back into the site, as there is no path, it is overgrown, and is several hundred feet from the road. There is a plan to make a path around the edge. Diane did a walk-through and it was determined a vehicle may be able to drive in about 150' which will still be a help. It may be possible to then use a lawn tractor with a cart. The planting area is huge and all of trees need to be moved. Tomorrow, Tuesday, will be only for moving materials and staging in the area. The fence contractor will visit tomorrow to see what's involved in the installation. Diane still getting quotes for the fence. There may be an overflow into the Commission's budget if the price of the fence is over the amount from the grant. The grant budget was originally different, having tubes for every tree, so when

300 trees were changed to Atlantic white-cedar, the money for tubes will now go toward the fence. The Nature Conservancy did agree to pay for some of the fence. John Pedersen, John Lauria and David Lowenstern volunteered for Saturday. Citizens United is coming Thursday; they did advertise in their newsletter, but they have several projects in progress so there may be only a few people. The condition of the soil was discussed and the use of mycorrhizae. We still need to delineate the area for the Atlantic white-cedar and determine where fence line will be. This species is supposed to be planted close together in stands, as hold each other up and protect each other from the wind. Anyone that can come out to help is invited, as lots of help is needed and we are limited by restricted access to these 5 days. There was discussion of tick control. Permethrin should be used on clothes only, not on skin.

The **Stormwater informational session** to be presented by the NJ League of Conservation Voters is scheduled for June 12 at 6:30. Diane is not able to work on anything until after the Maurice River planting, so they are looking for the venue. They need a facility with equipment, so the City facilities will not be able to accommodate, as this would involve overtime of various city departments. Carolyn Singer will look for another venue unless she can wait until Diane can do it after the Roots for Rivers projects are complete.

Volunteer work days continued with work done in the mini-parks and Romano Park where one of the recently purchased trees was planted. One also was planted in the 500 block of Landis Ave., and the last four will go to a parking lot at 6th & Wood St. Regarding the Regal Theater request, Diane said the Commission cannot give trees to private organizations for planting on private property. To plant on City property, permission is needed for a specific location and One-Call-U-Dig must be called by either the City or a contractor, so this makes it difficult for groups or residents to do this on their own. Therefore, if outside groups want to plant a tree it should be done in conjunction with the Commission. Diane tried to coordinate this request with an already-planned planting by forwarding to them the time and location, but it did not work out. John Pedersen noticed someone has been picking up trash at Garden Rd & Rt. 55.

Sue reported **Arbor Day Trees for Schools** was successful. Two Public Works staff went with her in a truck, and Supervisor Bob Garcia followed. John Pedersen will go back to each school and put stakes on the trees; he will coordinate with Sue. Trees given out were October Glory maples. John said the roots of the sycamores were impacted. Sue tried unsuccessfully to get press coverage through Deb Marko. There was one picture in the paper for one school, and Diane noted that there was an acknowledgement that the Environmental Commission donated the tree.

Education efforts will hopefully continue with the creation of 6 more boards through Michelle Ernst. She is waiting for us to write them.

The **Willow Oak** field grass is high, but the litter hasn't been as bad. There is still a lot of drug paraphernalia. Diane asked All American Fence to provide a quote to fix the split rail fence, but they have not responded.

David said the **space shuttle pine tree** is starting to look like it's growing, but the Electric Utility has put up a power line above it. There is no sign identifying the tree. David would like to wait longer before putting up a sign. However, if there is no sign, we risk someone cutting it down.

Wildflower signs can be ordered if a design is developed. This can be similar to the plaque at Romano Park designating the milkweed area. David will follow up.

Lisa said things are growing at the **Giampietro Park Rain Garden**. There are four viburnum, about a dozen milkweeds, some asters, irises, ferns, and some blue-eyed grass, sedums. She is working on the joe pyeweed and the perennials given to us from Sharon. Many of the original plants died. There are bricks there, brought over from the Annex raingarden, for our use. Lisa does not want to use these for the raingarden. We need to find another use for them. Different uses were discussed but not decided.

Site Plan Reviews: Diane sent out plans via email for last week's Planning Board meeting, as their meeting took place before ours this month. We do not know the result of those applications. Several others were reviewed for the upcoming Zoning Board meeting. Two are just minor with no concerns. The Marijuana Growth Facility proposes a decrease in impervious coverage and a raingarden. The Shop Rite applicant is asking for variances for a large wall sign, extension of zoning approval to have a commercial development in an agricultural zone, and for fewer than required parking lot trees. There is concern about stormwater drainage into Giampietro Park. John Pedersen has concerns with lights and loading docks. It was suggested the comments be limited to what is most important and environmental in nature. One or two focused comments could be better received than a long list. David and John P. will formulate a letter with comments.

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