

Vineland Environmental Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
January 13, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were: Diane Amico, Lisa Fleming, John Pedersen, Charles Valentine, and guest Nora Zielinski. John Casadia, Sue Fenili, David Lowenstern, and Anthony Coffee entered later.

A motion to approve the **minutes** of the November 18, 2019 meeting was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor.

There is no **budget** report, as all line items have zero balances until it is populated with amounts for the new year.

A motion to approve the **2020 meeting schedule** was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by Lisa Fleming. All were in favor.

Sue Fenili and John Casadia entered the meeting.

For the **2020 Tree Recovery Campaign**, Sue arranged for the YMCA for Saturday March 28, 2020, starting at 8:00 a.m. We need to be finished and out of the room by 1:00 p.m. YMCA needs an insurance certificate from the City; Diane will look into getting this. The location was changed from City Hall due to inability to keep the trees over the weekend and the decreasing interest at City Hall that resulted in leftover trees. Because of the carpeted entrance at the YMCA, the trees will be in a back room, and we will need a table with someone at the entrance to direct people to the seedlings. Given the short amount of time, much outreach should be done to ensure all trees are given out before 1 p.m. It is important to get resident signatures, as these are to be turned in after the event. Trees must be picked up in Sewell on Friday March 27<sup>th</sup>, between specific times. Diane asked if anyone could help with this. Immediately upon pickup, Diane needs to know what species we were given so she can print the handouts. We will need about 10 buckets. Sue will ask the YMCA about folding tables and about an announcement to be posted on the electronic sign outside. It might be a good idea to place a sign at City Hall advertising the giveaway.

David Lowenstern entered the meeting.

The list of potential activities and events that was discussed at the last meeting was given out for suggestions for the **planning calendar**. Some dates early in the year are on the calendar, but other items are not yet decided. Last weekend some VHS students assisted with fixing stakes and mesh on trees at Giampietro Park. John P. will look at the list to see if there is anything else to put on the calendar. February 8 is scheduled for a cleanup at Bennetts Mill and MaysLanding Road.

Anthony Coffee entered the meeting. It was noted the City Hall doors were locked.

John P. said that he and **volunteers** cleaned up West Side Park Sunday. He and John Lauria also provided lumber and fixed two benches at Willow Oak. Giampietro Park was cleaned up the week before. He noted there is graffiti at West Side Park, and he advised Bob Dickenson and Dale Elbeuf of this.

Some **educational signage** is still needed at the raingardens, at the Space Shuttle Pine, the Wildflower areas, and other areas. John P said there are newly installed very bright lights at the Library near the raingarden, which could affect insects and animals.

Lisa said there are some cracks in the sidewalks at the **Annex raingarden**. It is unknown if the damage occurred during construction. John P. will take a look at the sidewalks.

The **VHS Life Skills** teacher contacted Diane about weeding the raingardens. However, they are available only on weekdays, and only on specific days in March due to advance notice needed for permissions and bussing. It is unlikely there will be a need yet for weeding in March. It is also not advisable to have anyone weeding without someone there who can identify the plants. Sue will check to see if she can be available, and John P. said he might be able to assist for a couple of hours. Diane will suggest to them some alternate projects, like maintaining the Giampietro Park trees or a new planting project.

The **Wildflower areas** still need to be listed before signs can be erected. John P. cleared a trail along the lake at Giampietro Park.

At **Willow Oak**, the split rail fence needs replacement. It appears that cars have been running into the fence. John P. & John Lauria measured all of the trails. The stones are working well on the paths. There is a pile of mulch in the parking lot for use at other locations. The duck box at the north end of the pond is on the ground; John Casadia will look at it.

**Site plans** were discussed. There is a Wawa planned at Mill & Landis Avenues on an already-cleared lot. Some members said the amount of litter that comes from businesses could be helped by signage. It is unclear whether we can ask the Planning Board to put additional requirements on applicants beyond what is in the standards.

BDGS has proposed a site plan at Mill Rd & Forest Grove Rd. that will result in cutting down trees on 9.52 of 13 acres of trees. No tree survey was provided to us for review. There is a request for a variance. It was noted that the planned driveway indicates there may eventually be a subsequent phase of building. Based on a previous Planning Board meeting where the Commission provided comments on tree clearing, the City seems to be prioritizing the whole area near the highway as prime sites for developers and industrial.

Vasquez & Diaz Market on Block 2904 Lots 6,7, & 8 at Park Ave & N.W. Boulevard was reviewed. The landscape plan is deficient in landscaping. This application was postponed from the Planning Board meeting, so there is still time to comment. The Site Plan review committee will take the plan for further review, and will detail parts of the plan where there are comments.

Other applications had no environmental concerns. These applications were a request to convert a duplex to a triplex on Chestnut Ave., ground-mounted solar at 1167 Rae Dr., a wetlands delineation on Panther Rd., and Vineland Ventures at 215 Delsea Dr. minor site plan.

The **VDID** has asked if the Commission could pay for the \$100 purchase of the **CommUnity tree**, which is a balled and burlapped live tree to be planted. Since we did not have a quorum last month to discuss this, VDID already bought the tree, so this would be a reimbursement to them. A motion was made to pay them for the tree by John Casadia and seconded by Lisa Fleming. Roll call vote: Diane: yes, Anthony: yes, Sue: yes, Charlie: yes, John P: yes, Lisa: yes, David: no. John P. will pick up the tree and plant it. Last year's is planted in Tejas Park. It would be preferable for a permanent tree to be planted somewhere on Landis Ave for use every year, but there may be security issues. We are waiting for VDID to check with the Vineland Police on location approval.

A motion to use \$300 for an **open purchase order for Reuben's Hardware**, with expenditures split half between our budget and the tree grant budget, was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Casadia. All were in favor. Some purchases on this purchase order may be tree related, but others may not.

The **Plastics Ban** legislation has not passed yet at the State level. It was noted that Testa voted “no” to the State legislation. There was discussion on the pros and cons of bag legislation.

Diane and Sue will collaborate on the revisions to the **Arbor Day** letter.

John P. is working with **Jay Adamson** on bid specs for zelcova pruning.

John P. said he and Diane met with VDID to discuss next steps for a **center-city tree planting**. Hopefully we can have some trees in the ground by the fall. We will start with some stump removal in the tree pits.

Diane received an email advertising additional **seedlings available** for purchase from the NJ Tree Nursery. John P. will review the species available to possibly make a proposal for an expenditure at the February meeting.

John Casadia completed the **bluebird houses**. One of his swimmers assisted him and did a great job. There are 12 houses, and John C. contributed some extra materials. It was noted that the red cedar from Universal was warped, poor quality, inconsistent thickness, and chipped. It was wrapped in plastic, so was not noticed upon pickup. Paul Farrinaccio at the Vineland Board of Ed donated additional poles. Six or seven birdhouses will be installed at Pilla School. John C. offered to help put up more; if anyone knows of a potential site, let him know.

A motion to adjourn was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by Anthony Coffee. All were in favor.