

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes of Regular meeting
February 8, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:29 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. Present were: Sue Fenili (virtually), Lisa Fleming (virtually), Anthony Coffee (virtually), John Pedersen (in-person), and guest Ellen Pedersen (virtually). The public notice was read into record.

A motion to approve the **minutes** from the January 11, 2021 meeting was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor.

A printout of the **budget** report will be available as soon as the permanent budget is approved by City Council. The only expense this year so far is the purchase order for Reuben's Hardware approved at the last meeting.

Pesticide spraying was discussed with Jay Hares of Public Works at the January meeting. Members at that meeting told him we are not in favor of spraying, especially around waterways. John Pedersen said we should keep the conversation going with them about this. They have not yet told us what chemicals they are using. We need to follow up, especially since Public Works is currently trying to get more of their crew certified for spraying.

John Pedersen said he would like to get the **volunteer days** started back up again. There was good turnout for both the Giampietro Park tree work and the planting at Pilla School. February 27 was selected as our next event, to be held at Willow Oak. Diane will send out the email notice.

Regarding the fence at **Willow Oak fence**, Public Works has offered to fix the entire fence. We have \$500 set aside for some materials, but not enough for the whole fence. They did not get back to us, but we should follow up with them. John Pedersen said Jay cleared some downed trees there on his own time.

John met with Public Works at both **Willow Oak and Giampietro**, and made up a priority list for Willow Oak of what was discussed. We can use the list as a work plan. The list is also organized by season. John said there is another load of stone ready to be spread. There is a lot of flooding along the east trail. There are a lot of trees growing up in the field, which are now getting big and need to be removed. It does not appear that the field has been mowed in a couple of years, although the perimeter has been mowed. Ellen has access to a tool that we can borrow to pull out the small trees. We do not want to use chemicals.

John said Public Works received a complaint from the **Homeless Shelter** on MaysLanding Road about trash and litter near the bus stop. John Pedersen went there and said the problem was worse than it has ever been. The possibility of fencing was discussed.

Both **Rotary Club and Citizens United** are interested in doing wildflower gardens or plantings. The Rotary Club wants to plant around the flagpole at Giampietro, where they can work away from the road, and which they could use in the future as a demonstration tool for teaching. They have received some donations toward their project, and would be purchasing the plant materials. There are still drainage issues at the park. John said the City is discussing putting a fountain in the lake, as well as algacide. Citizens United has the availability of money and manpower, but cannot maintain the planted area afterwards. Diane said planting wildflowers around the flagpole, or near Landis Avenue where there is a lot of visibility, could potentially generate maintenance complaints to the City. Ellen said the Rotary's plantings around the flagpole would be done in groupings of different flowers. John will reach out to see what they need from us and hopefully Karla will advise what CU wants to do. It is still expected that Shop Rite's drainage from their new building across the street will drain into Giampietro. There is still a need to define the edge of the riparian buffer area. Ellen said Karla of CU would be willing to speak virtually about the meadow planting project they would like to do, which would be

a wider area than what Rotary is planning. The area to the east of the Landis Avenue driveway was discussed as a potential area for pollinator habitat. CU missed their grant application deadline for this year. This grant was to purchase "kits" that would cover 4000 square feet. Each kit has 1000 transplants using 2' spacing. It was noted that any place that is planted for pollinators should have signage. John will talk to Rotary Club and Diane will talk to Karla from CU.

Some open items from **last year's budget** include tree stakes to be picked up at Reuben's, an open P.O. for Lowes for fence material, an open P.O. at Market Fuel, and a sign order being reprinted at Garden State Highway Products. Diane still has to get together with Michele from Market Fuel. John said Lucia from Littoral Society said their signs are not set in concrete, only in dirt. Their signs are also printed in both English and Spanish.

Planning and Zoning applications:

M & O Freezer has already cleared 30 acres of trees Oak & Mill Rds. There was a special Planning/Zoning board meeting, for this application, that fell in between our meetings. The applicant proposed no landscape plan.

Foundry Service has made application to NJ DEP for Flood Hazard delineation at the beginning of the stream on their Sherman Ave property, upstream of Berryman's Branch. This stream flows directly into a Wellhead Protection area. Diane displayed a map of the Block/Lot. It is not known yet what they plan to do. They are just asking for the buffer zone to be delineated. We should look out for an application to come in the future.

Kuzmicz requested a wetlands delineation on Garden Road from DEP.

Bertoia Auctions is a minor plan with no environmental concerns.

Grant Ave resubdivision is just an application to move lot lines on a series of properties owned by the Galetto family, so there are no environmental concerns.

Diane said the application for 1000 free tree seedlings for our **2021 Tree Seedling giveaway** has been signed by the Mayor and has been sent in to NJ Div. of Forestry. John & Ellen Pedersen have offered to let us use their parking lot again. The event date will be April 24, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The trees will need to be picked up after April 20th in Jackson, NJ. We can arrange for this as the date gets closer. John asked about buying additional seedlings from the NJ State Nursery at the same time, since someone would be already driving there. He will look online for species and prices available, for approval of the expenditure at the next meeting.

Diane is working on the **Annual Report** for the Community Forestry Program but she has not received Public Works' budget numbers from Jay Hares. That is the last piece of information needed to submit the report.

John said that Jeff at Public Works has offered to **spray Willow Oak** for ticks and chiggers. Members have concern about the effects of spraying on pollinators.

John said CU has put out outreach about a **new trail** that will go all the way from Cape May to High Point. It will pass through the Menantico Ponds area, veer off near Belleplain, goes up along the Egg Harbor River. It does not pass through Vineland.

A motion to adjourn was made by John Pedersen and seconded by Lisa Fleming. All were in favor.