

Vineland Environmental Commission  
Regular Meeting  
October 12, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were: Diane Amico, Charles Valentine, John Pedersen, Sue Fenili, and guest Jeff Bordley, and virtually present were Lisa Fleming, and guests Ellen Pedersen and Lucia Ruggerio. Anthony Coffee joined later.

A motion to approve the **minutes** of the September 13, 2021 meeting was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by Charlie Valentine. All were in favor.

There is a communication on tonight's City Council meeting for **member appointment** renewals, as well as a new appointment for Ariana McTamney as an alternate. Anthony Coffee joined the meeting.

Diane gave the **budget report**. There is \$3000 left in the professional services. Other line items balances total \$452.

Lucia Ruggerio from the American Littoral Society received a \$15,000 grant for mitigating **stormwater in Giampietro Park**. In the first year, a Stormwater Masterplan would be created for the 52-acre park to address both existing and expected stormwater. Approximately \$30,000 in funds is available for implementation of the plan in year two. Nature-based solutions are covered, but piping is not. Aeration would be covered during implementation, but only if it is part of a larger plan. The park originally had been wetlands but over the years there were attempts to fill in or smooth out the large grass area. This has interrupted the channels that had brought the water back toward the stream and has resulted in large puddles that have nowhere to go. Two years ago, the Cumberland County Mosquito Commission suggested the City reconstruct the channels and aerate the compacted soil. With stormwater mitigation in mind, the Commission has been planting trees in the large open area and along the stream. Jeff Bordley said Public Works could put bridges over any bio-swales or channels. Rutgers would do the plan, with input from the City's Engineer. A topographic survey should be obtained. It was noted there may possibly be a high nutrient load coming from neighborhoods upstream. Lucia said we can include an education program for those neighborhoods, and for the disc golf club. One mitigation option is to build up some areas higher and leave other areas as wetlands.

Jeff Bordley discussed efforts to **move Canadian geese** out of two of the City parks by using "Goose Scram", which upsets their stomachs and makes the grass taste bad. Landscape buffers will not work, since at Campanella the geese just moved to the other side of the lake for access. The product lasts 25 days, and is made mostly of vegetable oils and other plant-based ingredients. Public Works tried a sound machine to scare the geese off, and it was not effective.

Ten trees were installed at Pilla School by 4 **volunteers** including John Pedersen, his son, and two Vineland High School students. John also installed three at Giampietro. The potted trees from Hopewell Nursery had very impacted roots. Some maple trees previously planted at Pilla School have died. As there are several other tasks needed to be done at Pilla School, primarily mulching, the next volunteer day will also be held there on November 13. A motion to purchase 50 tree trunk protectors was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by Charlie Valentine. All were in favor.

Education **signage** for the Giampietro Park Garden is still an open item, as Market Fuel needs all write-ups and pictures to be provided in order to design the signs. Internet photos are frequently not a high enough quality to use on signage. As a starting point, Lisa will start a list of what plants are there.

At **Willow Oak**, Public Works is placing a trailer there with some basic mowing and trimming power tools that we can use. Jeff said the brush hog leaves too much large debris in its path to be used on the main trail. Smaller mowers need to be used there. The meadow clearing should be done around February. Public Works has access to the equipment. It was decided that we should try to have a controlled burn in advance of this to make the clearing easier. Jeff and Diane will work on the application to the NJ Forest Fire Service. Stone for the parking areas and entrances was requested, and it should be gray trap-rock, not limestone. Jeff will work on the back road for access to the field area. There are plans to open up the Post Road parking area and clear overgrowth around the brass plaque and trash cans. Additional mowing and path maintenance was discussed.

**Wildflower Areas** will be listed by John Pedersen so that we can proceed with getting the list memorialized by City Council. Some areas have been left alone, but others have been mowed down. Jeff said the city's sign shop can make the "no mow area" signs. Diane said NJ State does have roadside guidelines for wildflower areas.

The Mays Landing Road bus stop and areas near the homeless shelter have been better maintained recently. The Maurice River Conservation area and Union road should be cleaned in winter when there are fewer bugs.

**Raingarden** maintenance at both the Annex and the Library hopefully should be done soon by South Jersey Landscape Design, as we are now on the schedule. Public Works has also been getting complaints at the Annex, but their activity has been limited to keeping vegetation and vines off of the building. The Rutgers Raingarden Maintenance Guide indicates that re-mulching should be done annually. If we can find training for raingarden maintenance, Public Works is willing to send their crew for education. Jeff has some other areas where we might be able to put in some green infrastructure, including Pagliughi Park, Campanella Park, and Carl Arthur Center. It was noted that the drains at the Annex raingarden are not properly funneling into the garden, but rather the water puddles into a pocket along the edge of the sidewalk. Jeff offered to add an extra pipe to bring the water further into the gardens.

Three people are registered to attend the **NJ Shade Tree Federation conference** at the end of the month. Lisa Fleming, Charlie Valentine, and David Lowenstern are registered.

**Site Plan reviews:** Columbia Care Inc., Vineland Cultivation Facility, located at Park Ave. & West Ave. Block 2801 Lots 5,9,10,,11: The applicant proposes putting in cooling towers and generators up against a hard building wall, so there may be a noise factor. However, there are no adjacent houses. The site is already 100% paved. They are requesting variances for existing impervious coverage and buffers. They are not proposing any removal of asphalt.

Vineland Marijuana Facility Parking Lot Expansion, Block 2104 Lot 77, N. Delsea Drive near Oak Rd: a bigger parking lot is proposed but the development will stay within current zoning standards.

2572 NW Blvd. LP, Block 803 Lots 3.03, 4, & 10: Property is in an Industrial zone near Durand School. The developer proposes extensive clearing and the site has numerous stormwater basins. There is a landscape plan. The nature of the building use is not known.

Landis Properties, LLC – Presidential Heights II Major Subdivision, Jefferson Ave. sent two notification letters indicating the intention to extend sewer in to the area.

The Sustainable Jersey Vineland Green Team is planning a **Green Fair** for June 5 in a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce. Planning is still in the early stages and the location has not yet been confirmed. The weekend was planned to coincide with World Environment Day.

Jeff said 9 trees have been cut down at the **mini-parks at Landis & Blvd**. The goal is to plant trees back in better locations in spring. He asked if the Environmental Commission would like to take the southeast corner as a project. This is the corner with the time-capsule pyramid. Trees were also removed from the northwest corner mini-park, and Jeff asked if the Commission could assist with planting new trees there this spring after Public Works does some preliminary work on the site.

Lisa spoke to the City Engineer regarding underground tree pits for **Landis Avenue trees**. Since there is currently no work planned on Landis Ave., D.J. Maillet suggested trying the new pits at Landis Park. However, this may not be the right kind of application for these. There may later be a concrete project on Landis Avenue that may be an opportunity to try one. John Pedersen discussed the condition of several trees along Landis Avenue from East Avenue to the Boulevard, many of which are dead. Ash trees around the city are suffering from Ash Borer infestations.

Diane received a request from Robert Scarpa for assistance **planting trees along the length of Northwood Drive**. This road was once filled with large shade trees that over the years have died or were removed. Overhead electric lines were installed after the trees were there, which now makes an obstacle on one side of the road. There is not a lot of room between the sidewalk and the curb. Bob will talk to his neighbors and provide a list of addresses who want trees. Once we know how many trees, what side of the road, and how much room is available, we can discuss further.

John spoke to **Bartlett Tree Service** but was not able to get the type of proposal he was looking for. For the total amount of money, we would only be able to treat a few trees at a cost of about \$1000 each. This would include excavation of the pits and unringing of the roots. There was discussion of what work they proposed versus what work is needed. For the Landis Avenue tree wells, Public Works plans to remove old soil and use a good fertilizer. The VDID has asked the Commission many times about getting trees replanted in the planters, but we have been limited by old stumps in the way. It was decided to select one location to try digging out and replanting. Some possible locations include in front of NAPA and the empty grate in the southwest mini-park near the mural. Jeff will remove the stump and roots, and change the soil, then we can plant a new tree in the spring. If some concrete needs to be cut out on either side, Jeff can do this, however, the Landis Avenue circulation study that was done for the VDID/City should be consulted regarding the proper size of tree pits. Jeff will have Public Works work on the tree wells over the winter.

**Tree seedlings** from the NJ State Nursery must be purchased in December for spring pickup. A motion to purchase seedlings for \$1500, was made by Charlie Valentine and seconded by Sue Fenili. All were in favor.

Jeff Bordley discussed the need for **training** for City employees. If we see any training of any type, we will try to get the information to Public Works.

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