

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes – Regular Meeting
January 10, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. Present were: Diane Amico, Charles Valentine, John Pedersen, and virtually Lisa Fleming, Sue Fenili, Anthony Coffee, Ariana McTamney. David Lowenstern joined later. Also present virtually were guests Jeff Bordley, Ellen Pedersen, Nora Zielinski and Steve Borek. The public notice was read into record.

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2021 meeting was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor. A motion to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2021 meeting was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor.

Diane gave the budget report. The regular budget line items are not populated yet until the budget is approved by City Council. As approved at the last meeting, Diane purchased tree diapers in the amount of \$366. She also paid the annual ANJEC membership for \$425. The Jobe tree fertilizer stakes are in stock at Reubens, so a separate purchase order is not needed. There are a few registrations for the Rutgers Green Champions series that will be reimbursed to attendees. The No Net Loss Tree Grant account has a balance of \$13,000, and the Developer's Tree Fund has a balance of \$41,500.

The January Volunteer day was cancelled due to snow. The February volunteer event will be planned for the Blackwater Branch / Maurice River tree planting area, after Diane coordinates with the EPA for the gate key. I would be helpful to be able to access the area in advance to see what work needs to be done.

The Giampietro sign is expected to be complete soon. The design work is done and we are just waiting for delivery.

David Lowenstern joined the meeting.

The prescribed burn for Willow Oak is expected to be completed this month. We are waiting for NJ Forest Fire Service to call us. Several trail signs are down. A motion to purchase 4x4s to fix the sign posts, along with some 2x8s for sign backing was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor. It was suggested that we use painted blazes on trees to mark the trails.

The NJ Forest Fire Service made recommendations to do additional prescribed burns at other locations in Vineland. The applications are due around October, so we will revisit the topic in late summer.

There are new Green Infrastructure classes available from Rutgers covering a variety of topics, including maintenance. Two Commission members have already registered, and Jeff Bordley said several Public Works employees will also attend classes.

We need to begin planning for tree planting at the two mini-parks on the southeast and northwest corners of Landis Avenue and the Boulevard, as well as for any replacement trees in the tree pits along Landis Avenue. Locations, numbers, and species will need to be planned and purchased in advance to have them ready for April.

Diane reached out to the American Littoral Society to schedule the walk-through at Giampietro with Rutgers and the City Engineer.

The meadow planting at South Vineland park is on hold until Jeff Bordley can find out whether this area is used by the disc golf club. There will be extensive land preparation needed if we are going to replace grass with wildflowers.

Site Plan reviews:

The Chick-Fil-A, Block 3503 Lot 5, W. Landis Ave., The application was discussed in detail. Ryan Headley was online briefly and gave some clarification on the history and existing conditions at the site, which was very helpful. Comments will be prepared, regarding several waivers and shade trees, to be forwarded to the Planning Board.

There are no comments on the balance of applications:

Brentwood Minor Site Plan, 2466 E. Chestnut Ave, Block 4405, Lot 32, is increasing impervious coverage, but the math on the 12 parking spaces may not be adding up. It is near Highland Ave.

One project up in the Industrial Park, Cronk-Curcio, Block 302 Lot 6, N. Mill Rd., is asking for 60% impervious coverage vs. 50% allowed, but we already reviewed this project earlier.

F & S Produce, 500 W. Elmer Rd, Block 5701 Lot 38, applicant is requesting some variances for re-ranking their asphalt for parking. It is somewhat close to South Vineland Park, but not significant. No comments.

Hewitt-Shiley is a legal notice for a permit application to NJDEP for 199 New Panther Rd to replace a malfunctioning septic system.

Christine Ramos, 605 Bellair Ave. Block 4914 Lot 3, is a request to bring a pre-existing non-conforming use duplex up to code.

Juan Soto, 322 Rosewood Ave, Bl.2221, Lot 25, is an application to bring a previously constructed home addition up to code.

Jeff Bordley said Public Works removed about a dozen Ash trees that were affected by the Emerald Ash Borer. The stumps and roots were left below ground level, but if we need to use the exact same spot to replant, he can have those removed.

The seed packets were received from American Meadows. They have an expiration date on them, so will be given out at events this year. In order to put our name on them, a motion was made by David Lowenstern to purchase printable clear labels. Charles Valentine seconded. All were in favor.

An updated ERI is needed. Diane will get some proposals so we can determine how to proceed.

The Audubon Society has approached the Commission with an offer to give a presentation at a meeting on the National Wildlife Federations "Community Wildlife Habitat" program. This is an extension of the "Garden for Wildlife" program and "Backyard Habitat" for residents. The program is based on a population and point system. The end goals are very good. The program itself has a lot of requirements and will require a team of volunteers to administer. There are fees involved. Members are interested in finding out more, so Diane will schedule the presentation for the February meeting.

Seedlings were purchased from the NJ Forest Nursery. We will need to pick them up either in March or April, and we need to plan ahead what to do with them. John Pedersen discussed finding a location to keep them potted to let them get bigger.

The City Engineer has two open requests of us. One is for trees for Landis Park to replace removals that are part of a sidewalk replacement project around the Veteran's Circle. The other is for suggestions on tree pit retrofits on 6th St. Diane will find out more information. For Landis Park, there were suggestions for Tulip poplars and Sycamores.

Arbor Day 2022 will be different than previous years, since we are planning a Community Arbor Day ceremony. Several locations were discussed. John Pedersen has reached out about D'Ippolito School. The mini-parks are also a possibility, since the location is visible and accessible.

An annual Tree Plan for the City is due to be presented to City Council every January. The Tree Committee will get together to work on this, using John Pedersen's long-term tree plan as a base for the report.

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