

Vineland Environmental Commission  
Minutes – Regular Meeting  
February 14, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. Present were: Diane Amico, Charles Valentine, Sue Fenili, John Pedersen, and virtually Lisa Fleming, and Ariana McTamney. Also present virtually were guests Lucia Ruggerio of the American Littoral Society, Kristen Hock of the NJ Audubon Society, Ellen Pedersen, and Steve Borek. The public notice was read into record.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2022 meeting was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by Charles Valentine. All were in favor. Diane made a correction to the number of seed packets we received, which is 1000, not 3000.

Diane gave the budget report. Budgets are not populated in the system yet because we are still on a temporary budget. The only expenditure so far this year is for the Green Champions Training.

Kristen Hock of NJ Audubon Society gave a presentation on the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat Program and explained the program requirements for municipal participants.

Lucia spoke about the status of the Giampietro Stormwater Grant to make a plan for stormwater management at the park. A walk-through site visit is scheduled for March 2 for all involved parties, including City Engineering, Rutgers, and American Littoral Society. Next steps include a site topographic survey, and planning for the second phase which may include regrading and restoration of wetlands. There is a public outreach aspect to the grant. A public survey needs to be compiled and the Commission will assist with spreading the word to the community and any interested stakeholders. It is hoped that the responses can be acquired by a closing date of June 4, which will give opportunity to survey attendees at the Vineland Green Fair. The American Littoral Society is participating in the S.J. Landscape Makeover program where residents can get reimbursements for installing raingardens in the vicinity of the Menantico Creek Watershed. The rebates are coming from the Pinelands Preservation Alliance. Lucia will forward the information so that we can share it.

Volunteer work days continued with the most recent at Giampietro. Two students participated. There are still a lot of vines to be removed. It was noted that Citizens United is doing a long term project that takes place on second Saturdays. We will move our events to third Saturdays. The next volunteer day will be March 19 at Giampietro Park to remove invasive vines from the riparian buffer.

The garden sign for Giampietro Park has been delivered and needs to be installed. The location needs to be discussed with Public Works so we can pursue what is the best way to get it installed. Lisa will mark the proposed spot either on paper or on-site with a marker.

Diane has not yet heard from NJ Forest Fire Service on the date of the prescribed burn at Willow Oak. The date is dependent on weather and moisture conditions.

John Pedersen discussed litter in the City. Diane said it is difficult to get Wawa and other corporate-owned locations to put up signage because the local stores don't make decisions. John will come up with a list of city-owned roadside areas that could benefit from anti-litter signage, and will draft some verbage.

Several Environmental Commission members are taking the Green Infrastructure Champion courses online over several months.

It was noted that there may be an issue with the Library raingarden downspout size being too small and there is nothing holding it in place. John Pedersen will send a photo to someone for an opinion on how it can be fixed. Diane received an inquiry from the Library Board regarding the intentions for the raingarden and plans for future maintenance. She responded to them with information about the raingarden. There was discussion about raingarden maintenance and compromising with the governing bodies for how we want the gardens to look.

Southeast corner Landis Ave. mini-park is to be planted with trees this spring. It was suggested to get either Sycamores or London planetrees, dogwoods, or poplars. We are still waiting for a plot plan of the available space for planning purposes. There was discussion of where an Arbor Day Ceremony could be held, along with a larger planting if possible. If we are going to plant trees anywhere for Arbor Day, we need all approvals by next meeting in order to plan. If we don't have approval to plant at D'Ippolito School by next meeting, we will pursue planting at the mini-parks. Various tree species were discussed for the mini-parks, including sycamore / London Planetree, dogwoods, and poplars.

#### Site Plan Reviews:

The Chick-Fil-A application previously reviewed has been tabled by the Planning Board. There are only two applications for review. One for building in Industrial Park for a marijuana facility in an existing building. The impervious coverage will decrease. There are no environmental concerns. The other is for a car dealership on Delsea Drive with no variances except front yard distance, and there are no environmental concerns.

The free tree seedling giveaway will be held Saturday April 16, 2022 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. We are getting fewer seedlings this year than in previous years.

The Sustainable Jersey Green Team is holding a Vineland Green Fair on Saturday, June 4, 2022. The Commission is welcome to host a table at this event.

Diane said the Vineland Environmental Commission was created in 1973, so soon we will be having our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This could be a good opportunity for outreach and/or a celebration event.

Diane recently distributed an electronic copy of the Environmental Commission Handbook provided to us by ANJEC. This is a new version, updated from the previous booklets that were handed out.

Sue Fenili has officially stepped down as a Tree Committee member but would like to stay involved in projects.

The Tree Committee annual Tree Plan to be presented to City Council has been prepared and forwarded with a request to do a presentation. Lisa assisted with writing the plan. Most of the contents are taken from our Community Forestry Management Plan.

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