

Vineland Environmental Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. Present were: Diane Amico, Charles Valentine, Sue Fenili, Lisa Fleming, and guests Nora Zielinski and Ellen Pedersen. Ariana McTamney and John Pedersen entered later. The public notice was read into record.

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2022 meeting was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by Sue Fenili. Lisa Fleming abstained since she had not attended the meeting. Ariana McTamney entered the meeting. The minutes were approved.

Diane gave the budget report of the balances in each line item. She presented an expenditure for possible reimbursement for ribbon for the tree seedling giveaway. Charles Valentine made a motion to approve the reimbursement. She will check with Purchasing on whether a reimbursement is possible. It is tabled until the next meeting.

There is no update on the Giampietro Park Grant or on the sign installation.

Vineland Green Fair will be held on June 4. Ellen and Sue volunteered to help at the table. David previously had also volunteered. Diane and Ariana will be there but will be also helping at the Sustainable Jersey table. Volunteers should be there by 9:30 a.m. The educational boards need to be attached somehow to the easels. Sue and Ellen have some additional handouts. We will be giving out wildflower seed packets.

For Willow Oak, Diane spoke to Public Works regarding whether raking of the branches in the field would be necessary. Public Works will take a look to determine whether those will get in the way of the mowers.

Diane, Ellen, and John Pedersen, along with 2 high school students met at the Library Raingarden for maintenance last Saturday. Prior to that, Diane and Ellen had a site visit with the Library Manager, Luis Amberths, to discuss their dissatisfaction with the appearance of the garden.

John Pedersen entered the meeting.

The Library manager is concerned about complaints he is receiving. Diane and Ellen discussed with him the purpose of green infrastructure and of the importance of pollinators, but these issues were of lesser importance to the Library than the appearance. Going forward, the Commission should decide how to proceed with ongoing maintenance. Ellen donated 70 plants which were planted last Saturday. Possibly planting some shrubs in front might help with the view from the road. Diane called several South Jersey nurseries looking for native shrubs. None of the nurseries are on the City's vendor list yet. It was discussed to get a mix of native shrubs, hydrangeas, azaleas, and something evergreen to plant across the front. The shrubs at the Annex are meadowsweet and steeplebush. It is not recommended to plant shrubs up close to the building. A motion to spend up to \$750 to purchase shrubs was made by John Pedersen and seconded by Charles Valentine. All were in favor.

The National Wildlife Federation gave us a complimentary registration for the Community Wildlife Habitat program, since they do not have a NJ Business registration and we are unable to pay them. The welcome package was received and Diane passed it on to the committee members. It is suggested that the committee start by discussing the current city regulations with the Code Enforcement department. The committee will talk to residents at the Green Fair to get a feel for how much interest there is. Nora volunteered to join the committee.

There were several volunteer work days this past month, including seedling giveaway and plantings, the Library raingarden, and Giampietro Park.

The Commission's Google calendar on the City website is continually updated with our events. All members are encouraged to use the calendar.

Site Plan reviews: The application for rezoning in southeast Vineland, which recently has brought a lot of opposition from residents, was not sent to us for review. It would be an actual rezoning, not a variance. There is a question as to whether this type of application should have come to us for review, similar to any other development application.

Chick-Fil-A was resubmitted with an only slightly modified plan, with a relocated canopy, and the overall plan is not better. Our previous comments still stand.

U-Haul on Delsea Dr is proposed as an expansion to add a 21,000 square foot storage. The committee will take another look at the application.

Other applications were minor zoning applications or moving of property lines. The Industrial Commission is selling a lot to a developer on Garden Road. There were no environmental comments.

On Maurice River Parkway, the truck storage yard application has been rescheduled for May 18. A number of residents in the area are planning to attend the meeting.

The seedling giveaway was a success. We ran out of the State-provided seedlings very quickly, and so then gave away some of our purchased seedlings. Arbor Day was also a success. Diane thanked Sue for picking up the trees. Three remaining trees are waiting for the holes to be dug in the southeast mini-park.

National Night Out will be on August 2. Members are interested in attending. Diane will register us for a spot.

The Salem Oak seedling needs to be planted. Possible locations were discussed and it was decided Landis Park would be the best location. It was decided to plant the tree and do media outreach at a later date, along with installation of a sign after we ensure the tree planting is successful. There should be a small fence for good protection. John Pedersen will put a stake in a spot along Park Avenue, then Diane will contact Public Works and Business Administration for approval before we plant the tree.

It is unknown why Public Works mowed in the riparian buffer at Giampietro. Another issue is that someone is seeding areas of the park with a non-native type of grass. The Stormwater Master Plan grant from the American Littoral Society is still on hold waiting for a determination on how to get the topographic survey. The City Engineering office did not get back to Diane about wetlands restrictions.

John, Ellen, and Scott Pedersen did work at Blackwater Branch, and he checked the tree tubes and reset the deer fence.

John Pedersen said he separately sent tree guidelines to the City Engineer.

A replacement program should be developed for the Ash trees that are dying and being removed.

The tree planting on Northwood Drive is in progress. The contractor should be going out there any time now. A choice of a few trees was provided and Diane sent letters to the residents asking for their choices, along with getting their signatures that they were in agreement to having a tree planted in front of their properties.

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