

Vineland Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting July 11, 2022

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, John Pedersen, Charles Valentine, and virtually David Lowenstern. Lisa Fleming, Sue Fenili, and John Casadia joined later. Also present were guests: Jeff Bordley, Ellen Pedersen, and Dawn Amari.

A motion to approve the minute of the June 13, 2022 meeting was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by David Lowenstern. John Pedersen abstained. Vote postponed until later in the meeting.

The budget line items are the same as last month since there have been no expenditures.

Diane thanked our guests for visiting our meeting.

The Stormwater Grant for Giampietro is still in the same status of waiting for a surveyor who can do the topographic survey. Diane is waiting for D.J. Malett to let her know if they have one that they use. The grant will reimburse the City for the expenditure.

The garden sign is now up at Giampietro. Jeff Bordley said that the seedlings that were mowed were already dead or dying due to lack of water. Public Works mulched around others. Jeff will advise us in the future of dead trees before removing them. John Pedersen staked more of the seedlings on the Landis Avenue side. Jeff said sometimes kids pull out the stakes and he finds them laying on the ground. Hopefully the mulching will help protect the seedlings for mowing. We requested to get a key for the water faucet. Jeff will also be putting a hose on location for watering. In the future we will also consider planting in the fall rather than the spring. Jeff said there are some bigger trees that will need to be removed from several city parks and it would be good to be able to replace them.

Lisa Fleming joined the meeting. Sue Fenili joined the meeting.

Diane said that the price of 2" caliper tree has increased a lot recently and there are other issues such as being pot-bound. The seedlings are cheap but are difficult to protect from mowing until they get larger. We will plan for the fall.

Diane said the trees for Northwood drive were delayed by the heat, as the nursery stock went into shock after being dug up, and were struggling, and the contractor said if he had planted them, they certainly would not have survived. He nursed them back to health but now it is too hot to plant. He will keep them until the fall.

John Casadia entered the meeting.

A vote was taken on approving the meeting minutes of June 13, 2022. Lisa pointed out one correction: that the trees at the Maurice River truck lot were not removed, only the buildings were removed. This will be changed to correct this. All were in favor of approving the minutes except John Pedersen abstained.

It was noted that the developer application for the Maurice River Pky truck lot was withdrawn by the applicant.

Jeff Bordley said that the State of NJ DEP has contacted the City about removing the vegetation along the dam on the Lincoln Avenue side of Giampietro. Public Works will need remove all of the growth along the guardrail and dam, including the wildflower and milkweed area.

Regarding the gardens in Giampietro Park and the concert that is planned for August, Jeff has planned to put up a temporary fence for protection. Lisa has been watering the plants there. Lisa gave updates on how the plants are doing at the raingardens at the Annex and Library. At the Annex, she removed a tree-of-heaven that was covered with Spotted Lanternflies. Jeff said there are a lot of lanternflies at Giampietro, and the City has received a lot of complaints about them, so Public Works will be spraying there for them. He will find out the name of the chemical and send us the information. John Pedersen said the bamboo has been spreading and getting more dense. Public Works has done some manual removal and mulching it down, but there is a lot more to do.

Ellen gave an update on the Community Wildlife Habitat progress towards signing up residents. We have not heard from the other two committee members since we are not sending out virtual links to our meetings. Ellen has sent an email to schedule a meeting but has not heard back.

David Lowenstern left the meeting.

There was discussion of additional maintenance items needed to be done at Giampietro Park. The back part of Gittone Park can use some trees. Public Works is working on plans to pave the trail around the pond at Campanella Park, in response to requests from the public and conversations with City Engineering. Currently there are wetlands issues that need to be researched first. Public Works did remove the fallen trees that were blocking the trails at Willow Oak. It is unknown whether the field should be raked of debris from the tree clearing. It does not appear that anything is growing there yet.

Site Plans are now being sent electronically rather than on paper. Very large files that are too large for email are not able to be sent at the moment. Diane is working on a resolution.

There is one application for a city parking lot behind the VDID office that is proposing a row of hedges. Some issues with hedges include security for visibility, as well as maintenance and trimming that will maintain the shape of the hedgerow. John Pedersen will forward any official environmental comments for submission.

Most of the other applications are on land that is already occupied or cleared. John will forward any comments to Diane. There are some leftover projects from last month that had not been reviewed yet.

A volunteer work day was scheduled for Saturday, August 13 at Willow Oak for trail clearing. Diane will send out the notification. There was discussion with Jeff of work to be done at Willow Oak and at Giampietro.

Diane is still holding the Salem Oak Seedling. Since it is too hot now, it should be planted in the fall.

National Night Out is August 2. Diane asked who will be volunteering. Sue, Ellen, and John P. volunteered. Diane is still waiting for prices for the canopy and banner, and she will also get a price on a stretchy tablecloth. It was noted that the easels should be replaced with something that holds the educational boards better. Jeff will look into whether Public Works can make something that would work.

The NJ Conservation Foundation is trying to purchase 86 acres near their Menantico Creek Preserve, and has requested a letter of support from the City. Diane forwarded the information to the Mayor. The Cumberland County Open Space fund has pledged funding contingent on getting the approval from Vineland.

There will not be a meeting next month (August).

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

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