

Vineland Environmental Commission  
Minutes – Regular Meeting  
September 12, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were: Diane Amico, Charles Valentine, Sue Fenili, John Pedersen, and guests Ellen Pedersen, Randi Rothmel of ANJEC, and Philip Ballou. John Casadia entered later. There were technical issues with the virtual access to the meeting, and two members were unable to join in.

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2022 meeting was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by Charles Valentine. All were in favor.

Diane gave the budget report and a copy of the report was passed around. The only line item that may have been decreased since the last meeting is the Departmental Supplies.

Randi Rothmel of ANJEC explained two grants available for Vineland. The first one is already approved and is comprised of several components for the Commission as well as for the Historic Society and the Chamber of Commerce. Our portion is for engineered tree pits for the side streets in center city, and the locations are to be selected by the City Engineer. We will need to set up a discussion with him before proceeding. The tree pits are relatively expensive at \$10,000 to \$15,000 each, and we are looking to get around 10 or 12 of them.

John Casadia entered the meeting.

The second grant applicant is the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, and the grant would be for tree planting within Vineland on city property and street right-of-ways. It was decided that 100 trees is a manageable number, and that the grant would need to cover contracting for planting as well as for supplying the trees, as we do not have the manpower to do the planting. This grant application deadline is this week. ANJEC needs a letter of support from the City administration. The Commission will provide a temporary letter of support to meet the application deadline, and then will try to get one from the administration to be submitted at a later date. There was discussion of sidewalk issues and that we should avoid any street frontage where there is limited space due to sidewalks.

Randi invited members to attend this years Environmental Congress coming up in mid-October at Mercer County College. The date does overlap with our NJ Shade Tree Federation Conference.

A local cub scout leader of Troop #36 has asked Diane if any Environmental Commission member could assist the group obtain one of their merit badges that involves an outdoor tree planting and learning about the environment. Sue Fenili and John Pedersen volunteered. Diane will put them in touch with the scout leader to coordinate.

At Willow Oak, John Pedersen recently did a litter cleanup. There is some evidence of past damage to pine trees that have fallen, possibly due to pine bark beetle. It was noted that the gum trees are already returning to the field even though we just did a controlled burn and extensive manual removal. At a minimum, fall mowing is needed to keep the small trees down. A motion to put in an application to NJ Forest Fire Service for another controlled burn was made by John Casadia and seconded by Charles Valentine. All were in favor. It is desirable that if we burn, that we also follow up with Stanker & Galetto again to come in afterwards with their equipment. Diane will contact NJ Forest Fire Service to ask whether it is too soon for another burn.

Since it is fall, there is a need to visit the raingardens for maintenance and cleaning out. A volunteer date was set for Saturday October 1 at the Annex and for Saturday October 22, at the Library. There may be some plant relocation as needed. We need to check with Jeff Bordley from Public Works regarding the area at Gittone that may be a good place to move some of the plants. We can also give out more wildflower seeds at the Library on the same day, since this is also National Make a Difference Day.

Ellen gave an update on the Community Wildlife Habitat efforts. About fifteen residents expressed interest and signed up at National Night Out. Ellen has sent out an email to them. It was noted that some people have signed up directly on the website.

Only one student attended the last volunteer day on August 13 at Willow Oak.

Diane contacted two different consultants for quotes on an update to our Environmental Resource Inventory, and neither responded. It was suggested that we try DVRBC. Diane will call them.

There was discussion of the design preference for the banner, and it was decided that we should have colorful photographs of wildlife, such as butterflies, birds, or frogs at either side to fill in the white space, with the text in the center. The pictures should be taken in Vineland. Diane will follow up.

Site Plan Reviews:

Taco Bell, 1234 W.Landis Ave., Bl. 2707 L4 for new construction on an already developed site. Landscaping and street trees should be done correctly.

2520 N.W. Blvd, LLC, 2520 N.W. Blvd, Bl 803 L11 for a use variance to allow continuation of non-conforming residential use on cannibus cultivation site as a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor apartment. Comments are being prepared for submission.

Vitulla, Ivy Ave in Malaga Camp, Bl. 132.41 L 1 & 18, for a residential pole barn. More information is needed to properly review.

NDS Technologies, 1560 N. Main Rd. Bl 1801 L69 for a Use variance to convert flooring business to warehouse and manufacture of scientific glass. No comments.

John Pedersen suggested a committee hold a separate meeting for the purposes of planning long term goals.

It will soon be time to plant the Salem Oak Seedling at Landis Park. John Pedersen can facilitate this in conjunction with Jeff Bordley.

The NJ Shade Tree Federation Conference will be held on Thursday and Friday, October 13 & 14. If anyone wants to attend, Diane needs to know as soon as possible to get a requisition and complete the registrations.

Meeting was adjourned by consensus.