

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes
Regular meeting – Tuesday October 10, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. Present were members Diane Amico, John Pedersen, Charles Valentine, Sue Fenili, and Lisa Fleming, as well as guest Ellen Pedersen. The public notice was read into record. John Casadia entered later.

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2023 meeting, with one typo correction in paragraph 8 from “now” to “not”, was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by Sue Fenili. All were in favor.

The chairperson passed around the budget report for review. The regular budget line items are the same as last month. We used approximately \$2200 of grant money to purchase trees. There were unexpected shipping costs, so fewer trees were on the order in order to keep the total below the amount on the purchase order. A motion to purchase stepping stones for the raingardens, up to \$200, was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by Sue Fenili. All were in favor.

John Casadia entered the meeting. A motion to purchase a lawn cart to move trees, up to \$500, was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Casadia. All were in favor. Diane will follow up on the purchase of the kiosk. Diane said that next year’s budget was approved with \$20,000 for updating the ERI.

Dave Orlandini from VHS sent an email to the Commission indicating his high-school class will be working at various natural areas and parks throughout the year. He asked for any requests for tasks to be done. John said at Willow Oak there are still trail markers to be painted. At West Side Park, the branch off of the creek is overgrown, but can be left alone. However, there is a lot of trash south of the dam. It was noted that on the day of the CCIA Waterways Cleanup, 75 bags of trash were collected in this area. The trash cans at the park are overflowing, and there are many alcohol bottles. This park is within the area that Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River is studying with the focus group. Everyone is encouraged to go online to take the public survey.

This Saturday will be the tree planting at Campanella Park, at 9:00 a.m. There are 46 trees to be planted over the next two Second Saturday events.

At the Library raingarden, it was noted that the coneflowers are reseeding in over-abundance. Lisa will remove some seed-heads and cut back some dead growth. At the Giampietro garden, there are some trees coming up, but some of those may be left there.

The Community Wildlife Habitat program has one new garden added. Members were reminded of the screening of the Hometown Habitat film at the Vineland Library on October 24 at 6:00 p.m.

Various site plans were discussed. The Davey Cold Storage applicant has clear-cut the property before the development application was made. Our ordinance does address clear-cutting. The application

proposes 75% lot coverage, up from 65%, and asks for a waiver for a landscape plan. The Committee will discuss comments.

It was noted that along the DeMarco Drive entrance to the Industrial Park, the dogwoods need pruning. It was also noted that there is over-mowing and over-clearing of trees along Maurice River Parkway. The resulting large grassy area is inviting cars to stop there, which is creating more litter.

As a follow up to the last meeting's conversation about a possible conservation area at the south end of the boulevard near the Vineland border, Diane did confirm that this is the Nascolite superfund site that borders the Fabbri development. It was agreed that the possibility of a preserved area would be dependent on whether it could be connected to other greenways or have better access. The property is currently very overgrown.

John Pedersen will take another look at the draft Guidelines for City Engineering regarding preservation of trees during construction. There has been no activity on finalizing the guidelines, and no feedback has been received.

Final year-end budget spending was discussed. Several purchase items were discussed, including easels, tablecloth, small handcart, weights for the feet of the canopy, and some clips and other office supplies. It was agreed to let Diane follow up by researching and purchasing those items where they can be found. John Pedersen will follow up on the tool purchases, including a mulch fork, post hole driver, and cart/wagon.

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