

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes – Regular meeting
February 13, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were: Diane Amico, Sue Fenili, John Pedersen, Charlie Valentine, Ariana Headley, and guests Ellen Pedersen and Josh Aderholdt.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2023 meeting was made by Charlie Valentine and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor.

The budget report will be available as soon as the permanent budget is approved by City Council. A motion to open a new purchase order for \$300 for Reuben Hardware was made by John Pedersen and seconded by Sue Fenili. All were in favor.

Upcoming events and dates are on the Commission's Google calendar on the City's website. Sign up sheets were passed around for the next 3 events: Vineland Green Fair on June 3 (rain date June 4), Seedling Giveaway April 29, and Ecofair May 6. National Night Out will be coming up in August. At an upcoming event, the Community Wildlife Habitat committee would like to promote their newly approved name of Natural Vineland. Members are invited to join Citizens United on March 25, from 9:00 to 12 noon, at West Side Park and nearby streets for a litter cleanup as part of the Cumberland County Trash Hunt.

The gate lock on the Maple Ave gate at Willow Oak has been changed and it is unknown who changed it. Public Works has one and Diane has been trying to get a copy. The prescribed burn is coming up and the Fire Dept. will need a key for access. John Casadia has removed the bluebird houses, but needed to walk in because he could not get in the gate. It was noted that there is a man in a truck that frequents both Willow Oak and Giampietro that has been the subject of discussion on social media as someone who is making visitors feel uncomfortable when visiting the parks. Lack of security at the parks was discussed. John said there is some Atlantic White-cedar coming up at Willow Oak and it would be beneficial if we could somehow protect from deer. He said the litter situation has been better recently.

ANJEC received a grant for Vineland for 6 tree pits for the center city area. There is a meeting with the City Engineer set up for February 23.

RSVPs for the Saturday event at the Library were received by an unusually high number of volunteers. In the future, events for smaller tasks may need to be limited to a certain number of people. It was noted that many of the students who RSVP do not show up. There will be a City event at Giampietro Park on April 1. Public Works may be out there in advance to clean up before the event.

John had fenced off a wildflower area on Landis Ave in front of Willow Oak but it was mowed. Diane said that area should be memorialized into an ordinance to prevent that from happening in the future.

Diane said there should be an annual calendar with our repeat activities and events that can be put out early in the year. Spring will be busy with both the tabling events and the volunteer days. There is already a

maintenance schedule for Willow Oak. The split rail fence at the Landis Ave Willow Oak parking lot is in need of repair.

There was a previous approval for purchase of shrubs for the Library raingarden. County Line nursery has Oakleaf hydrangea in stock. Diane is trying to place an order.

Planning and Zoning applications were discussed in general as regarding process, Fact & Findings Form, and timeframe to respond with comments.

Pettisani office on Lincoln Avenue is requesting a subdivision in a residential zone, which will create over the allowable impervious coverage. Other applications were summarized briefly. Some have lot coverage issues. Livestock in residential neighborhoods was discussed.

Regarding last month's discussion on whether the Commission should make comments on appearance, Diane looked up the ordinance creating the Commission, which is based on the State enabling legislation. The legislation does indicate that Environmental Commissions comment on "environmental appearance". Diane passed on the Commission's comments on the Walmart application verbally to the Planning Division. That project had already been postponed.

We received notification that the Cumberland County Landfill's permit renewal is coming up.

Diane submitted the Environmental Commission's 2022 Annual Report to City Council and the Mayor. It will be posted on the City website.

Vineland Public Library sends out a newsletter. It was suggested that we submit an article on the Library raingarden for consideration.

The Annex roof leaked and our office flooded all the way through to the floor below. The desk and laptop got wet, along with carpeting.

We do not yet have any plans for Arbor Day. Sue will review options for discussion next month.

State Plan Endorsement has been approved for the City of Vineland. There is an accompanying list of action items on the Implementation Plan that is on tomorrow's Council agenda. The Environmental Commission should be involved in some of the actions. However, some will require the help of consultants for doing certain plans. The list should be reviewed to decide priorities and a timeline. Some of the actions are required. Some actions would be done as a combined effort between departments and the governing body.

The Public Works Director is o.k. with us planting trees at Pagliughi Park, and Diane is in the process of verifying with John Hernandez that he is in agreement. The Cub Scout group that asked to participate in a tree planting could possibly come at the same time. Diane will ask if Public Works can dig the holes. We need to get smaller trees this time, for handling.

Diane met with Dave Maillet, the City Engineer and two other people from the Engineering Department regarding the Chestnut Avenue survey. Engineering had previously received comments from John Pedersen.

Items discussed included the 5' grass strip not being big enough for trees. Saving the existing trees was discussed, and the City Engineer will take a look at where and whether this is possible. It is suggested that the Commission submit formal comments to the consultant. Overall it was a positive meeting. Also discussed was the draft of the tree protection specs that need to be reviewed and edited into a form that can be used for Engineering projects. Dave Maillet will look at it.

Diane spoke to Davey Tree Service regarding tree inventories, and the \$3000 budget allowance is not enough to do Landis Park because there are too many trees there. It was suggested to divide the park into quadrants and do one section at a time, starting with the southwest if possible.

The Tree Committee Tree Plan still needs to be done. Last year, the Community Forestry Management Plan was used as a model, in the absence of anything else. A copy of the ordinance was printed, and emailed to the committee members, with the specifics that are required to be in the tree plan. This plan would resemble the plan that John Pedersen did a few years back. It should not be a report, but rather a tree care plan going forward.

In lieu of the March volunteer event, we will attend the CU cleanup at West Site Park.

For the April project, the trails at Willow Oak can use markings and trail-blazes painted with colors coordinated with the map. We also still have the square "natural area" signs that need to be installed at Bennett's Mill. Before the next meeting, John will make a list of supplies we need. Before the date is chosen, Diane will find out when the schools have spring break.

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