

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes – Regular meeting
May 8, 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, Charles Valentine, Lisa Fleming, Ariana Headley, and guests Josh Aderholdt and Hunter Capps. John Casadia and John Pedersen entered later.

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 10, 2023 meeting was made by Lisa Fleming and seconded by Charles Valentine. All were in favor.

The budget report was made available for viewing by members. The purchase order for County Line Nursery will be closed out.

The Commission will have a table at the Vineland Green Fair on Saturday June 3. Diane will bring the canopy and banner, and handouts. We still need a table. Set up is at 8:00 a.m.

John Casadia entered the meeting.

The Green Fair will be held on June 3 and the Environmental Commission will be hosting a table.

John Pedersen entered the meeting.

John Casadia had photos of the field at Willow Oak which showed that green grass is already growing after the prescribed burn. Diane said wildflower seeds are available in bulk, but are expensive. We would not be able to do the whole field, but doing a small area can be considered in the future. The prescribed burning is not intense, so some seeds should survive. Any milkweed in the field would be an indicator that plants can survive, since we previously had seeded with milkweed many years ago. We can plan for seeding in the fall.

John Casadia was at Willow Oak when Dave Orlandini's class was there doing work. We will present the students with certificates for volunteering.

There was discussion on the roadside mowing on Landis Avenue in front of Willow Oak. We need to find out exactly who is doing the mowing.

A volunteer event is tentatively planned for June 10 at Giampietro Park to do maintenance on small trees, pending John checking his schedule. A second volunteer day will be planned for July 8th at Willow Oak on the Maple Avenue side to paint the sign and do maintenance around the bronze plaque. The trail blazes also could possibly be painted. This time of year, ticks will be an issue.

Eight hydrangeas still need to be planted. It was decided to put these along the wall at the Lincoln Avenue entrance to Giampietro. John Pedersen and Lisa Fleming will each try to plant a few.

An update was given on the Community Wildlife Habitat Program. A presentation was made to City Council. The committee had a table at the Wheaton EcoFair, where approximately thirty residents signed up.

A new order for trees should be placed in advance for fall planting. A new purchase order would be needed.

For Site Plan reviews, the committee is working on a process for reviewing plans. There is an upcoming application for a liquefied natural gas line. It is possible that the application was pulled.

The problem of large wooded properties already being zoned as industrial was discussed. A large amount of wooded acreage is being lost. One application for the area of Sherman and Orchard Road is clearing a large area. It is a good place for this type of housing, but the developer should contribute something to the tree fund. The Site Plan Committee will formulate official comments.

There is another development on Oak Road that has just cleared an entire area up to the stream buffer. The lot is zoned industrial. We have not yet seen any application for this property.

There is a Draft Tree Ordinance by NJDEP that is open for preliminary informal comments, with the intention to put out a formal proposal later. Once passed, this would become the model for all municipalities in the State of NJ. There was discussion of the practicality of implementation. The component regarding trees on private property may warrant the City creating a Shade Tree Commission or hiring a licensed Forester, as liability for the committee may be an issue. Lisa discussed an alternate process where putting trees on a property has some kind of incentive, such as tax incentives.

The seedling giveaway was a success. We ran out by 11:30 a.m., as we were only provided 200 seedlings this year.

14 trees were planted at Pagliughi Park by John Pedersen, Scott Pedersen, Josh Aderholdt, Ellen Pedersen, David Lowenstern, and Diane Amico. Some of the trees were very large and difficult to handle.

Arbor Day trees were delivered by Sue Fenili to Rossi School and D'Ippolito School. She also organized a tree planting at Pagliughi Park with the Cub Scouts for Arbor Day, as they worked on their "Into the Woods" badge. Starting next year, Sue will be passing on the Arbor Day activities to another member.

Josh asked about Conservation easements as part of the conditions of Site Plan approvals. We have not done that, but it may be something to look into. In the past, the City has not been receptive to holding on to properties that might require maintenance or liability, or which have costs. A Conservation Easement would be owned by the property owner. It is unknown whether the City has a mechanism in place to ask for an easement.

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