

Vineland Environmental Commission

Minutes

Regular meeting – August 14, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. Present were members Diane Amico, David Lowenstern, Sue Fenili, John Pedersen, Lisa Fleming and Anthony Coffee, as well as guests Ellen Pedersen and Josh Aderholdt. The public notice was read into record.

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2023 meeting was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by Lisa Fleming. All were in favor.

The chairperson passed around the budget report for review.

Diane would like to develop an annual planning calendar for events to include activities done on a regular basis such as Second Saturday volunteer events and seasonal repeat activities. It was decided that Second Saturday activities will be as follows: December: no volunteer event, or to be used for picking up litter at the two nature areas on the outskirts of town. October and November: fall tree planting days. January: South Vineland Park cleanup. No second Saturdays will be used for raingardens; work will be done by members. February: Giampietro Park for Riparian buffer invasives removal. April: Giampietro for all other work. August: to be left open due to heat. September: West Side Park. March and July: Willow Oak.

The Willow Oak field has been mowed. Diane referred to John Pedersen's previous maintenance recommendations, and would like to send some directions to Public Works. After discussion, it was decided that Diane will tell Public Works not to mow again until early next spring, in keeping with a once per year mowing before March 31. They should keep the perimeter and trails clear. Trail areas through the field are to be kept narrow, and we can do this. Different methods of mowing and burn schedules are to be discussed later, since this would be a larger discussion. Discussion of Landis Ave wildflowers was also tabled for another meeting. Other items at Willow Oak were discussed, including the recent volunteer day, the map that is ready to be used, and a wood sign kiosk. The Maple Road sign still needs to be fixed before painting. John will reach out to Public Works. There is one gallon of paint at the Annex. If they need a purchase of materials, they can reach out to Diane for a purchase order or account number. The sign at West Side Park could use paint, but we only have one gallon, so this project can be considered for another time.

The open purchase order at Reuben Hardware is depleted. A motion to issue a new requisition to Reuben Hardware for \$400 was made by Lisa Fleming and seconded by David Lowenstern. All were in favor. Weedwackers are damaging the tree guards.

Regarding raingardens, Lisa finished planting phlox last week. The Library was looking nice, but now the echinaceas are dying, the plants are turning brown, and the edges are dead. Coneflowers have repopulated extensively and some should be removed, possibly to be moved to Willow Oak. Alternatively, the seeds could be collected. Plants could also be moved from the Annex to Willow Oak. There is still a problem with autumn olive around the field perimeter, so these possibly could be replaced with button bush. Lisa will start cleaning up the Echinacea. John said the riparian buffer at Giampietro could use some additional vegetation. A motion to purchase additional plants was made by John Pedersen and seconded by Anthony Coffee. All were in favor.

The next volunteer day will be September 9, at West Side Park. Four people worked at Willow Oak in August, clearing trails and painting trail blazes.

The Community Wildlife Committee attended National Night Out. There are several new gardens certified. We are up to 113 points and the goal is 300.

Various site plans were discussed. Details of the Fabbri application were discussed in more detail. The Committee will prepare comments regarding the large cleared area, and will forward to Diane.

Lisa spoke about general trends on trees, based on summary points provided by John Pedersen. The new stormwater regulations in NJ mean that more clearing will take place to make room for detention basins. She will review some definitions for further discussion. Sites that are zoned Industrial is where a lot of trees are being removed, however, that is a Master Plan issue. The summary provided by John indicates where the Site Plan Committee will focus their future comments. Lisa reviewed the list of the committee's goals.

The Maurice River Corridor Focus group has met. John Pedersen participated on one meeting and Lisa participated in two meetings: Heritage & Tourism and Transportation. The overall concept plan was very large and complex, and is just in a study phase.

Training CEUs are needed before the end of the year to keep an active status for our Community Forestry Management Plan. Rutgers is offering a lot of online courses. The annual Shade Tree Federation conference will be October 26 & 27. Members are encouraged to attend.

Diane was approached by the developer of a website called Ecopreneur, where non-profits can advertise volunteer events, and site users can participate in volunteerism to earn points which translate into "coins" that they can spend on Amazon. Diane will try it out to see if we get any response from volunteers. The site is very new.

Diane verified the fall timeline for CountyLine Nursery to provide trees. We do not have currently a purchase order. Ellen said Pinelands Nursery has smaller potted trees. The planting days are planned for the October and November second Saturdays. They will deliver for large purchases. A motion to purchase 40 trees from Pinelands Nursery was made by Lisa Fleming and seconded by Anthony Coffee. All were in favor. John P. will develop a plan for planting, since it will be subject to approval by Public Works, and will forward it to Diane. We will need additional supplies, such as mulch. John will get a list of trees to purchase.

Anthony Coffee said there is a new phone app for the City called MyVineland App.

Signage and kiosks were discussed. Premade kiosks are available for purchase online.

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