

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes
Regular meeting – September 11, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. Present were members Diane Amico, John Pedersen, John Casadia, and Charles Valentine, guests Ellen Pedersen and Josh Aderholdt in person, and guest Tiffany Falcone, NJDEP, virtually. David Lowenstern entered later. The public notice was read into record.

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2023 meeting was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Casadia. All were in favor. There were 2 minor revisions to the minutes: Under Maurice River Corridor focus group, John Pedersen also attended a meeting, and under Community Wildlife, the word “seven” is to be changed to “several”.

The chairperson passed around the budget report for review. The only new expense is the open p.o. for Rueben Hardware. Next year’s budget requests are due soon. Diane will add a request for a one-time line item for an update to our Natural Resource Inventory, in the amount of \$20,000 for the consultant.

Sign kiosks for Willow Oak were discussed. Some products carried by Uline were reviewed. A motion to spend up to \$1000 for a dark reddish-brown kiosk was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Casadia.

John Pedersen compiled a tree order for Campanella Park. We are waiting for Public Works to approve locations. A motion to spend up to \$2500 on a tree purchase was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor. The trees will be delivered to John Pedersen’s office since we have no other availability of a delivery location.

David Lowenstern entered the meeting.

Our next two Second Saturday volunteer events are reserved for tree planting.

John P. and Josh worked at Willow Oak, and there is still a need for trail clearing. Diane did ask Public Works to mow the main trail, smaller trail openings, and to not mow the field during the spring/summer. Diane looked up various types of meadows, including warm season grasses, cool season grasses, and wildflower meadows, and the associated maintenance schedules. Federal recommendations, state recommendations, and a paper by Pat Sutton were reviewed. The recommendations include once per year mowing in early spring before April 15th to a height of 8” to 10”, and prescribed burning every other year. We are doing the proper maintenance for the type of meadow we have, and should not change anything unless the type of field changes.

It will soon be time to clean out raingardens for the fall since the flowers are done blooming.

The volunteer work day at West Side Park took place and there were four VHS student participants.

Diane presented a draft working calendar to use as a planning tool. Our official calendar is online on the City website. The planning calendar has all potential events, as well as seasonal tasks that were previously discussed.

Regarding Blackwater Branch, jurisdiction has been transferred from EPA to NJDEP. Tiffany Falcone will look into who at NJDEP can give us access to the site.

A tree planting plan for Campanella Park was presented to Public Works. They would like to do an onsite walkthrough with John Pedersen to see the locations.

Ellen reported that Natural Vineland has 121 points. There will be a screening of the Hometown Habitat film at the Vineland Library on October 24 at 6:00 p.m.

There are no comments on the current site plans for review. The Oak road property is still creating concern because the property has been totally cleared before project approval was obtained. John Casadia will look into it.

NJDEP is assisting Vineland with getting video cameras to mitigate illegal dumping. Tiffany has been working with Sharon Flaim and the code enforcement officers. There is a dumping problem at the southern end of Vineland near the Rt.55 overpass. There is an open area that is available to be preserved but needs someone for oversight. The property is heavily vegetated and does not have easy access. It is next to an area for redevelopment that is being sold to Fabbri. Tiffany will forward mapping. This is the former Nascolite site. There are also a few areas under Rt. 55 overpasses where there is dumping and could use cameras.

Diane did post our last volunteer event on the Ecopreneur site. There is also a new app called MyVinelandApp where she will submit our events for posting. MyVineland has a reporting feature right on the homepage for many different types of issues for all city departments.

Diane was a featured presenter at the ANJEC roundtable and spoke on forming partnerships for local projects.

A topographic survey has been received from the American Littoral Society for the portion of Giampietro Park where stormwater mitigation will be planned.

Citizens United has asked if we would like to host a table at the Mauricetown Riverfest on Saturday 9/16. We need to decline, as we do not have manpower on that day.

Pesticide spraying along the roads was discussed. John P. has noticed that there has been an uptick in the number of locations being sprayed. The County has previously told us that they use appropriate for near water. Also, the Mosquito Commission for Cumberland has already indicated that they only use repellants that are non-toxic.

John P. is working on a report on the Cool City tree planting project. The ash trees at the senior center still need to be replaced, approximately 20-30 trees. This would be a contractor project.

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