

Vineland Environmental Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday October 21, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were: Diane Amico, Sue Fenili, Lisa Fleming, Charles Valentine, and guests Ellen Pedersen and Josh Aderholdt. Anthony Coffee and John Casadia entered later.

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2024 meeting was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by Charles Valentine. All were in favor.

The budget report was reviewed for unspent balances for 2024. Diane did receive a request for some supplies from John Pedersen. We have not yet heard from the Library regarding the garden fence we offered to purchase.

The Giampietro Park stormwater mitigation project is scheduled to start on November 12 at 8:30 a.m. The project did require a soil conservation application because it met the threshold. This has been done. We had offered to buy the plants but an order has not yet been prepared. The Commission had previously discussed not purchasing the regular raingarden plants but rather lower maintenance plants and trees. The plan was sent to everyone and Diane is looking for suggestions on what members would like to see planted. Various options were discussed.

Anthony Coffee and John Casadia entered the meeting.

The Natural Resource Inventory is still in progress with some information trickling in, but we have been billed for work done. We have not yet been able to have a committee meeting with them, as they have not responded to our request.

Diane Amico, Lisa Fleming, and John and Ellen Pedersen attended the Vineland Library Board meeting to discuss the future of the raingarden. The presentation went well but was cut short as time would not allow a longer discussion. The stormwater function of raingarden was discussed. They have concerns about appearance. They are open to putting an article in their newsletter if we write one. Lisa found some small fencing that is easy to install and would delineate the edge. It was suggested to them, but it needs to go before their board for approval.

There is no volunteer event scheduled for December. We will discuss the next year's events in January. John Pedersen and Josh watered previously planted trees at South Vineland Park.

The NJ Conservation Foundation opened and dedicated a new trail off of Panther Road. The trail is named after Greg Romano. A map was passed around. There are several miles of various trails in 700 acres.

The Community Wildlife Program is up to 153 points.

There is one site plan application for a long piece of property previously farmland but will now be residential. Other applications did not show any environmental concerns.

John Casadia picked up the bluebird box materials at Lowe's. With increases in prices for wood and supplies, it costs approximately \$50 per box to build. The School Board donates the poles.

Prescribed burns in woodlands around the city, besides Willow Oak, have been requested by the NJ Forest Fire Service, to mitigate a high threat of wildfires in the pinelands and in some areas of southeast Vineland. The

Business Administrator would need to approve the additional prescribed burns if NJ Forest Fire Service contact him with a list of properties. These include the Maurice River Conservation area, Bennetts Mill, and another city-owned property on Panther Road. If the City approves a prescribed burn at Bennetts Mill, NJ Forest Fire Service will do a rough survey of property lines as part of the process.

There are several member terms coming up for renewal. Diane will do the memo to the Mayor.

Diane received an offer from the NJ Tree Foundation for us to host their “TreeKeepers” education program. This educational day is free for participants and attendees can earn CEU’s for the Community Forestry Program. Since we already have enough CEUs for this year, we can do this after January. Members were in favor of pursuing this.

The 2025 Meeting schedule will be submitted for the City calendar and security guard scheduling. Diane asked members if they were o.k. with using the third Monday as a substitute for meeting dates that might fall on a holiday. All were in favor.

John Casadia made a motion that we approve up to \$400 for Library raingarden fencing. Charles Valentine seconded. All were in favor.

The fall tree planting at Landis Park took place on October 12. This was a small event but gave us a chance to see where to make improvements before the November 9th date that will be more heavily attended. The grant cutoff date is November 9th. There needs to be an effort to get the word out, as our outreach is limited to Facebook and the Vineland app, and the information is not getting to the majority of people. A flyer was sent to members for distribution. Lisa offered to make an email list from the participants of the seedling giveaway. Anthony will get the flyer up on the monitor screens in City Hall. We have 200 trees to be given out. Ellen and John are working on the tree species list for purchase. Some species, such as pawpaws, will be for giveaway only, due to the fruits. It was noted that there are more requests for smaller trees because people don’t have room in their yards. Various species were discussed.

For this project, John P. has requested some supplies such as stakes from Vineland Produce, mulch, post driver, hose splitter, longer hose, gypsum, buckets, and an auger, which can be purchased from Reuben Hardware. A motion to purchase stakes from Vineland Produce for \$50, and for an open purchase order for Reuben’s for \$600, was made by John Casadia and seconded by Charles Valentine. All were in favor. A motion to purchase an auger for \$150 was made by Diane and seconded by John Casadia. All were in favor.

Logistics were discussed and the need for help with moving trees, moving water, and keeping participants organized. There were several attendees at the last event who arrived after the first planting tutorial. John Casadia offered the use of his trailer to deliver trees to the park early in the morning. Diane will confirm with the Water Utility that the water will be left on until at least Nov. 9th.

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