

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes
Regular Meeting December 9, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were Diane Amico, Sue Fenili, Lisa Fleming, John Pedersen, and guest Katherine Dollman from NJDEP.

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2024 was made by Lisa Fleming and seconded by Sue Fenili. All were in favor.

There is no budget report because it is the end of the year and the window for requisitions has closed. The invoice for the ANJEC annual membership has been received but will be processed after Jan. 1.

Katherine Dollman from NJDEP spoke about Green Acres funding available, as well as community garden grants for schools. If they can email the information on school gardens to Diane, she can forward it to school contacts. Tiffany from NJDEP is working with Citizens United for the invasive species removal which will start in February. It is unclear whether this is the Parrotfeather project. There are also grants available through NJ Forestry such as the Green Communities Grants.

The Green Communities grants are for assistance with updating Community Forestry Management Plans and doing Tree Inventories. There are new requirements for CFMP plans that are more involved than previously. We will discuss this at a future meeting.

It was noted that the trees planted at South Vineland Park by the American Littoral Society are actually not on City property.

For the Natural Resource Inventory, Lisa is working on additional data for a mapping layer of parcels we know are being developed that are not yet on the NJDEP land use maps.

Willow Oak has a lot of trash along the road, so this would be a good candidate for a 2nd Saturday project. This will be scheduled for January 11th. The perimeter of the field has been mowed with one path across the center.

Citizens United is doing a cleanup along the Tarkiln Branch creek on Saturday February 8th west of West Avenue, starting out from Shirley Ct. We will partner with them on this for our 2nd Saturday February project. Diane gave an update on the USEPA requests for the City to cleanup Tarkiln Branch in anticipation of contamination cleanup related to the KillTone Superfund Site, and the overall challenges with cleanup of streams. The City can get involved in city-owned properties that abut to the stream, but individual property owners are responsible for what is behind their houses.

The TreeKeepers Course that was approved last month will be scheduled after we decide on a date. The NJ Tree Foundation is waiting for us to get back to them. We first need a location, possibly the Library. Early spring will be an ideal time.

The trees leftover from the Landis Park planting will be left in pots until spring. Lisa may bring some of them to Giampietro Park. John offered to assist with digging holes.

For the Arbor Day Foundation grant, it is not looking like we can use the tree giveaway toward the final totals of the grant, since it may be outside of the scope of the grant. Diane will work on the final report. John will try to get a few more in the ground at the Park. It is noted that the Willow oaks are fairly large and should go into the ground soon.

The Giampietro Park stormwater mitigation project is done except for possible fencing. Related to stormwater at Giampietro, John said that City Engineering put drainage along the treeline with no consideration to the existing trees. The Guidelines for the City Engineer were discussed and whether those are in a finished format.

The water in Landis Park has been turned off for the year, so there will be no more tree watering until the spring.

Citizens United has asked us if we would like to partner with them on a Climate Change presentation at the Landis Theater featuring Noreaster Nick, and/or a movie, followed by a panel discussion. Noreaster Nick needs to be scheduled very far in advance. CU will arrange for the guest and the theater. They are looking for panelists who are directly affected by climate change, such as farmers experiencing drought, or residents experiencing flooding. It was decided that the EC will assist and man a table, but will not be the sponsor of the event.

We have not heard anything yet on member appointments. A few members terms have expired, but those are usually done retroactively. John asked about liability during the appointment gap.

The new Elmer Street tree pits are already collecting leaves in the grates of the drain at the base of the trees at the parking lot.

Lisa discussed the site plan for the Truck Stop, which is already cleared ahead of the application, and is across the street from the existing truck wash.

Adjournment by consensus.