

Vineland Environmental Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
July 8, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were: Diane Amico, Charles Valentine, Sue Fenili, David Lowenstern, John Pedersen, and guests Ellen Pedersen, Tiffany Falcone (NJDEP, via TEAMS), Kimberly Spiegel from Citizens United.

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2024 meeting was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by David Lowenstern. All were in favor.

There were no changes to the budget report from last month, as there have been no new expenditures. A copy was passed around.

Tiffany said if the EC would like to do any fall days of service for employees, let her know so that she can schedule a day for the quarter. There may be some tree planting projects coming up. Willow Grove Lake is also a possibility.

Kimberly from Citizens United was present to discuss the invasive plant Parrotfeather, which is again appearing in the Menantico Creek. Diane gave a brief history of our past efforts to eradicate this plant from this creek. The plant has now reappeared and CU has received calls from residents along the Menantico. It has spread as far north as Landis Avenue. CU is collecting data on size and location of the stands, and is looking for the EC to assist with public outreach in order to obtain permission for access. They are currently mapping the public access points, then will work their way in between. Some courses of action were discussed, including drafting a letter to residents for their signature, contacting the Mayor, and knocking on doors. Diane asked for the estimated north and south boundaries of the extent. From there a list of addresses can be developed. The plant is particularly problematic because any small pieces that break off will re-root, making mechanical removal not possible.

Diane received an update to the Giampietro Park concept plan for stormwater mitigation. There will not be enough money in this round to make a second channel, so the plan only includes one channel with plantings. The City Engineer is involved because there is grading involved. The topography and location of wet areas is what determined where the features will be. The current rendering is very similar to the original plan, although this is a smaller section of the original plan. John said there is concern for maintenance. The type of plants on the plan will create similar maintenance issues as the riparian buffer. It would be preferable to plant trees in lieu of plants. There are some trees already planted that should remain. We can make the comment that the trees in the green area of the plan are not to be disturbed. John will send his comments for forwarding to Rutgers and Littoral Society. The challenges of maintaining other previous plantings was discussed.

A virtual meeting was held with Marathon Engineering for the Environmental Resource Inventory. Lisa and Diane attended. Marathon will start working on the project.

It was noted that there are some big trees growing in the Annex raingarden.

National Night Out is approaching. It was agreed to share a spot with Natural Vineland for sharing of manpower. Natural Vineland has tables, and the EC has a canopy. Diane will send in the registration. Natural Vineland is already registered. Help will be need to pick up the supplies at the Annex and do the set up. Our supply of promo items was discussed. We will hold off on ordering more seed packets until next year, as we have enough for this summer.

For the next Green Fair, Diane suggested that there could be some activity or event at our table such as a reusable bag collection or other positive action for participation by visitors. The Green Team has discussed a large poster contest for all Vineland Schools.

Diane was contacted by Rob Ferber of NJ Conservation Foundation regarding a letter of support from the City's Administration for the purchase of property which the County is partially funding. This property is next to Bennett's Mill Natural Area. Diane forwarded the request to the Mayor, and the request is in legal review. NJ Conservation Foundation does allow hunting on their properties.

The City's Purchasing office has solicited for proposals for surveying services and has a list of vendors that various departments can use. This may be useful for surveying Bennett's Mill, as there is currently a question of where the property lines are and who put up No Trespassing signs.

The next volunteer Saturday will be held at Normandy Lane Park on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street on July 13 for cleanup and tree care.

John said the large Willow Oak at Willow Oak Nature Area is dying. After discussion, there was not interest in putting a lot of effort or expense into saving it, but rather we could plant a new one.

The EC sent official comments on the Data Center project. The project was approved.

Diane discussed Atlantic Electric's blanket application to NJDEP for vegetation clearing around lines. It was discussed that utilities are required to keep lines clear and are doing so very aggressively.

Economic Development has requested to use our space at the Annex while their office is being remodeled. They will move their staff in August. Diane will move our things into the closet.

Diane spoke to Jim Neher regarding the tree planting plan for Landis Park. He is o.k. with the planting, but would like to see a map of locations before we do anything. Page 5 of John's plan will be sent to him. We have not heard back yet from the Arbor Day Foundation about our grant application.

City Engineering held a walk-around onsite meeting along Park Avenue to review the redesign project with various stakeholders.

A motion to spend up to \$2500 for trees for Landis Park was made by John Pedersen and seconded by David Lowenstern. All were in favor.

Adjournment made by consensus.