

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes – Regular Meeting
August 12, 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, David Lowenstern, John Pedersen, and guest Ellen Pedersen.

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2024 meeting was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor.

The budget report was passed around for review. It was discussed whether some of the tree grant money can be used to move trees out of the Annex raingarden and relocated.

A reminder was given for a few open purchase orders, including Lowe's for bluebird house materials and Vineland Produce Auction for tree stakes. It was noted that we need to follow Purchasing directives for aggregates for purchase of tools, unless the purchase is urgent and the tool is needed immediately.

Ariana Headley entered the meeting.

Nothing has happened at Giampietro Park because they are waiting for our approval and members had expressed concern for maintenance and were not in favor of the Rutgers plan as presented. Previously there was agreement as long as existing trees were not removed. It was discussed that maintenance is an issue for every project, so we should let them do the planting, as long as they don't remove existing trees. The design has been revamped several times. If there is not enough money to complete the project, or if we have a preference of what type of plants, we can purchase the plants ourselves. A motion to approve the plan, as long as they don't cut down any existing trees, was made by Lisa Fleming and seconded by Sue Fenili. Roll call vote: Lisa yes, Sue yes, David abstain, Ariana yes, Diane yes, John abstain. Diane will contact the Littoral Society.

Marathon sent a bill for 18% of the ERI project cost, but did not supply any documentation or description. Diane asked for more information before we can pay the bill.

Regarding raingardens, John and Ellen worked on the Annex recently. Lisa said there is at least one white cedar that might be worth relocating, and maybe more. John is willing to relocate trees, when it is the right time of year. There are some that need to be cut down. There is a question of whether landscaping companies would dig up and relocate trees. The survival rate would likely be low. It was decided that some trees could be moved by members when possible. Lisa has been keeping an eye on the garden at Giampietro, and noticed a parasitic vine called dodder has appeared. It may also be infesting plants along the lake.

John received a call from a member of the Library Board indicating that the board wants to remove the raingarden there. One member of the Library Board wants to keep it, and a meeting may possibly be arranged for a presentation and discussion with the library board. John discussed the importance of these gardens to stormwater management. The benefits of placing a sign describing the raingarden on the inside of the building near the window near the garden. It should be cleared with the library that they would be willing to have the

sign there before we purchase anything. Ariana will design something and contact Dr. Amberths or Aaron Melnick to see if they will allow it before we have something printed. It was noted that if the sign is generic, we could use it for something else later if it should need to come down.

National Night Out was cancelled and will not be rescheduled. There are no more litter bags in storage at the Annex. Before the next events in the spring, we should decide on a new promo item to order.

Lisa requested the purchase of small fencing for the library to protect plants that are still getting established. A motion to purchase fencing was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor.

This is the year that Willow Oak is due for a prescribed burn. John said the last time he was there, the growth was minimal and may possibly be brought under control with mowing. A motion that Diane submit the application to the NJ Forest Fire Service, unless upon inspection by David and/or John determines there is not enough growth and control is not needed, was made by Lisa Fleming and seconded by Sue Fenili. Roll Call vote: Lisa yes, Sue yes, David yes, Ariana yes, John yes, Diane yes. If there is a need for a Willow Oak tree to replace the large one that is dying, Lisa said there is one in her yard that could be transplanted.

There was no volunteer day in August. The September 14th volunteer day will be at South Vineland Park. There is a need for brush clearing, tree staking, and tree care. October and November are reserved for tree planting.

There are no updates to the Community Wildlife Habitat Program.

There are no comments on Planning and Zoning applications. Some general discussion took place regarding what are the current applications in the pipeline. The other side of the driveway into the Industrial Park has been cleared, but we have not seen any development application for that area. It was noted that the dogwoods along the driveway into the Industrial Park need maintenance.

Regarding the data collection on Parrotfeather along the Menantico, Citizens United has reached out to get contact information for various properties in the target area.

Diane requested that the two meetings in October and November, scheduled for Tuesdays due to holidays, be changed to the third Monday. This would change the 10/15 meeting to 10/21, and the 11/12 meeting to 11/18. A motion was made by Diane and seconded by Sue Fenili. David abstained, all others were in favor with no other objections.

There has been no progress on the new tree ordinance as required by the City's Stormwater permit.

For the fall planting at Landis Park for October second Saturday, John will get a species list to Diane for purchase.

Diane received a request from Donata at the Vineland Downtown Improvement District for trees to be planted at Gonzales Park on 6th Street at Sabater School. We will keep the request in mind as a possible project.

The project for the tree pits for the Elmer Street parking lot has been scaled back to a smaller size, and will consist of 4 trees planted. Because the money was not sufficient for a larger project, it was asked if the Environmental Commission could assist by purchasing the trees. The species that members suggested were Serviceberries, Amelanchier. It needs to be a small species due to powerlines. There were no objections to making the purchase.

It was noted that most or all of the ash trees from the Cool Cities planting at the Housing Authority on Chestnut Avenue have died.

A motion to adjourn was made by John Pedersen and seconded by David Lowenstern. All were in favor.