

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes – Regular meeting
September 9, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were members Diane Amico, Charles Valentine, Sue Fenili, Lisa Fleming, John Pedersen, and David Lowenstern, and guests Ellen Pedersen and Josh Aderholdt. John Casadia entered later.

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 12, 2024 meeting was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by Lisa Fleming. All were in favor.

The budget report was passed around for review. The only change from last month was the requisition for Ace Hardware for \$200.

We are waiting for a start date for the Giampietro Park stormwater mitigation project. It was discussed whether this will require a soil conservation application. Diane spoke to Rick Caudill of City Engineering regarding the work done there recently by the city, which was on the drainage going across the parking area due to a broken pipe, and is not related to the upcoming work.

John Casadia entered the meeting.

The Natural Resource Inventory is in progress. We received an invoice for a portion of the work.

While at the Library raingarden working on the edges, Lisa noted that someone did some weedwacking. Regarding the possibility that the raingarden might be removed altogether, Diane sent an email to Dr. Amberths at the Library to open a discussion. There are a few trees there that should be removed. It was discussed whether these could be transplanted, although the cost of a landscaper might be higher than purchasing a new tree, the odds of survival are lower, and digging up a tree to preserve roots could disrupt a large section of the garden.

At Willow Oak, John saw tree branches down across the main trail and he contacted Public Works for removal. The possibility of getting Mr. Mayo from DunRite to return after the prescribed burn this winter to re-disc /mow the field. Over the last month, it was confirmed that there are trees there which are already approximately 3 feet or more, so the burn should not wait another year. Diane did submit the application.

Lisa saw an invasive parasitic plant at Giampietro called “dodder”. Diane notified Public Works so that they can remove any that they might see while doing maintenance, and she advised them to put it in the trash rather than bring it to the compost site.

Second Saturday volunteer day will be on September 14 at South Vineland [Campanella] Park. October and November dates will be for the tree planting at Landis Park. It will be posted on the City's Facebook page.

We just received two development applications today, so those are not reviewed yet. One involved existing buildings with minimal environmental impact.

Lisa discussed new NJDEP rules called R.E.A.L. which address flooding, stormwater management, and Climate Change. Green Infrastructure will now be applicable for modifications, not just new construction. This may be detrimental for Brownfields development. Online hearings will be coming up.

We are still waiting for a meeting at the City level to develop the new Tree Ordinance as required by NJ State.

For the new tree pits on Elmer Street, the City Engineer met onsite with Rutgers and ANJEC on September 5th. Construction is scheduled to start on September 16th. The trees we are purchasing, 4 Serviceberries, will be delivered on September 23rd.

Lisa said some of the Cool Cities trees, specifically purple plums, are not looking good. It was noted that on a street off of Valley Avenue, there is a row of new houses with no trees. Trees are not required for construction on an existing street. Here there are also no curbs, water is puddling, and there are drainage requirements so it drains to the street.

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