

Vineland Environmental Commission  
Minutes  
Regular Meeting January 13, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were Diane Amico, Lisa Fleming, John Pedersen, Ariana Headley, and guest Ellen Pedersen, as well as Tiffany Falcone from NJDEP attending virtually. Charles Valentine and Josh Aderholdt entered later.

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2024 was made by Lisa Fleming and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor.

There is no budget report because it is the start of the new year and the budget amounts will be set after approval by City Council.

Josh Aderholdt and Charles Valentine entered the meeting.

There has been no movement with Marathon Engineering on the ERI since the last conference call with them. Lisa has information for them which will be sent shortly.

For the raingardens, an article is still needed for the Library newsletter. In February or March, once some leaves are coming out and the plants have been defined, Lisa said she will cut back some stalks.

Public Works has notified Diane that recently in the last few months there is damage in the Willow Oak Landis parking lot from vehicles doing donuts. John noted there is also damage to the fence from vehicles.

John presented a mapping of invasive plants at Willow Oak that was completed by Richard Zielinski. The species includes autumn olive, honeysuckle, bamboo and more. This map provided additional points for the Natural Vineland program. These species should be removed to keep them from crowding out other species, and for Natural Vineland, this activity should include an educational component. Tiffany offered to contact the AmericaCore Watershed Ambassador to see if they can partner for the invasive plant removals. John worked at Willow Oak on Saturday for 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday.

On February 8, Citizens United is doing a stream cleanup at the Tarkiln Branch, and since this is our second Saturday it makes sense to partner with them for this event. Our March second Saturday falls on the same day as the Stockton Pinelands Course, so will be pushed out to March 15 at Willow Oak. Diane noted that one of the volunteer dates in the coming months should be used for planting the leftover trees from the giveaway. It was previously discussed to plant these along the front of the riparian buffer at Giampietro because they are tall enough to see and if they are put across the front it would serve to delineate the border in areas that look like they are getting mowed.

Diane asked for suggestions on better storage for our tools. The smaller supplies are in the Annex, but most of the larger items are outside in the weather and are unsecured.

The Community Wildlife Habitat Program is up to 163 points.

The NJ Tree Foundation TreeKeepers Program is waiting for us to find a location and date for their education event. The Library was previously suggested. Tiffany is in contact with them and will reach out for us.

Planning and Zoning applications were looked at by the committee but there were no comments to submit. Diane said if any comments are formalized, they can be forwarded.

The Littoral Society had offered to put in fencing around the stormwater channel at Giampietro Park with some leftover money from the stormwater mitigation grant. Diane received feedback from Public Works that they prefer no fencing. The Public Works director was very complimentary of the project. Since Diane has received comments that disc golf club is already walking through the newly planted area, the money could be used for additional ground level signage asking people please don't trample the plants. Littoral Society is already purchasing one main sign. Putting in a bridge was suggested by John. Lisa said that would be a good idea and there is already one spot for a bridge that is planted with grass. Diane said a bridge will not be included in this grant and project by the Littoral Society but that we can do a bridge later. Lisa said we can make paths.

Diane said that after talking to a second person at the National Arbor Day Foundation, the tree giveaway will be included in the grant reimbursement after all. We have already received the money and it has been put back into the City's account.

A maintenance manual has been received for the Elmer Street tree pits from Rutgers. Diane forwarded this to Public Works and City Engineering. John discussed proper filtering of leaves. Diane said if there are any comments to be made, we can discuss at the next meeting. Diane will send the manual to everyone for review. John said there are vehicles backing in too far and hitting the trees. Wheel stops may help prevent tree damage, or bollards, signage, moving the curb, or asking the ambulances not to park there. There are other locations as well where this is happening. Diane said if solutions are something to be pursued, the locations, along with more information, should be compiled and then she can forward to the appropriate city departments for consideration. This communication should include the specific locations, numbers, and solutions requested.

The property adjacent to South Vineland Park is up for sale again. Diane sent the link to the listing to the Mayor, Business Admin, Recreation, Public Works, and others. This may be a good use for the Green Acres Grant that was previously pointed out by Tiffany. Lisa is going to forward the Green Acres grant information as a follow up.

It is noted that the City of Vineland was recertified with the Sustainable Jersey program and the Environmental Commission did participate with actions that earned points.

Adjournment by consensus.