

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes
Regular Meeting March 10, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were Diane Amico, John Pedersen, Charles Valentine, and John Casadia, as well as guests Ellen Pedersen, David Ferrara Americorps Watershed Ambassador, and Dana Palma and Levi Palma.

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2025 meeting was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor.

There is no budget report because we are still in a temporary budget. The permanent budget should be approved this month by City Council. There is approximately \$39,000 in the Tree Fund.

We received the invoice for the upcoming year's membership registration for the NJ Shade Tree Federation. Diane asked whether any members read the newsletter or would like to continue this membership if they see a benefit. We do get a discount on the annual Conference, however, in recent years, we have been getting our Continuing Education Credits mostly online. She will ask again at the next meeting to include other members' opinions who are not in attendance at this meeting.

The City Clerk's office is updating their files and procedures, and is administering the Oath of Office to all new and re-appointed members of all City Commissions and Boards as required. The members who were just renewed and appointed must go to City Clerk's office to be sworn in.

Diane discussed the availability for the Commission to create By-laws. These would reiterate what is already in the City ordinance regarding the organization of the Commission, but could also include additional sections on meeting attendance or other governance issues if we wanted to. Charlie Valentine said we can address meeting attendance verbally if needed.

Diane called Marathon Engineering regarding finishing up the Environmental Resource Inventory before the end of the first quarter.

Saturday, March 15 will be the invasive plant removal at Willow Oak. The plan and map for Saturday was reviewed. We have 2 confirmations for participation. It is on the calendar for April's second Saturday to take place at Giampietro. It would be good to do some tree planting if any of the leftover trees are appropriate for that location.

There have been some issues receiving plans from the Planning/Zoning offices. We have been receiving property owner's notices from the Clerk's office without knowing the details of the projects. There were no comments on development projects from this past month.

Diane followed up on the trash problems at the Tarkiln Branch by contacting the City Engineering office to discuss switching out the storm drain inlets. They visited the site, and noted that there are a significant number of storm drains in this vicinity that would make this a larger project of its own due to the scale of it. They will look into it, and they also noted that some of the trash is from illegal dumping and other sources besides litter from storm drains. Someone is clearing trees along the stream but it is not USEPA. Citizens United may be planning additional cleanups. There is one city owned property closer to Delsea Dr. that may allow access, but there is less trash at that end. The Housing Authority properties are owned as a different entity than the City, and we would need permission to access. Diane did not receive any photos, which would be needed for further follow up on the issue. John said there is an overflowing dumpster near the stream; Diane would need an address or more information to follow up on that.

Arbor Day is approaching on the last Friday in April. Diane was in contact with the Compass Academy at 23 W. Chestnut Ave, who expressed a willingness to plant a tree. John volunteered to get a tree to them. Their Arbor Day event would likely be on a weekday.

Diane followed up on the trees that John said were removed on Park Avenue. These were near the new Public Works yard, and were not part of the Park Avenue redesign, but rather are likely part of the plan for the new Public Works facility.

Diane asked members to keep an eye out for any online opportunities for Continuing Educations Credits.

We have not received any notification from NJ State about tree seedlings available this year.

John Casadia sent a report to Diane regarding the volunteer time and project details for bluebird nesting boxes constructed and erected in 2024. He displayed a sample box and the construction details were discussed. He monitors about 30 – 40 nesting boxes at schools and natural areas. At Willow Oak, all 3 of the boxes he set up had bluebird nests in them this past year.

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