

Vineland Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were Diane Amico, Lisa Fleming, John Pedersen, and Josh Aderholdt, and Charles Valentine. John Casadia entered later. Also present were guests, Katherine Dollman NJDEP, Ellen Pedersen and Nora Zielinski.

A motion to approve of the minutes of the August 11, 2025 meeting was made by John Pedersen and seconded by Charles Valentine. All were in favor.

The budget report for the standard line-item budget was passed around. The new laptop was purchased. All other line items remained the same.

A volunteer work day took place on September 13 at Willow Oak for invasive plant removal. The next volunteer work day will be held October 11 at Willow Oak to continue the project by planting native plants where invasives have been removed. This will start at 8:00 a.m. Lisa said there is also another invasive plant growing in the field, Lespedeza, which is a type of Chinese clover, and potentially worse than the Autumn Olive. This should be added to the mapping. It is on the east side of the field at the southern end. We are still waiting for the Buckthorn bags.

Monique Howard of the Vineland Voice, and John Casadia arrived to the meeting.

Diane said the prescribed burn is on for this year with the same time frame as is each year. Diane spoke to NJ Forest Fire Service, Quincy Jones, who said he could burn the piles of invasives that are removed if they can be piled toward the middle of the field, no more than 6-10 feet high, with piles placed 100 feet apart. There was discussion of whether this is the best option.

The Cumberland County Waterways Cleanup is coming up September 27. Tarkiln Branch is still on the future plans. Citizens United usually does Alliance Beach. We will keep the Tarkiln cleanup in mind for a future project.

Lisa cleaned out the Library raingarden and cut back some coneflowers. Some things are in bloom. Diane noted that nothing is in bloom at the Annex and there are a lot of trees growing there. The Commission has not done any maintenance there since we were told the City did not like the garden and would be removing it at some point. Lisa said at Giampietro Park the swale looks. Some plants are blooming but there are some dead patches. There is some standing water in the swale after several days of rain. This could be the high water table. Green Infrastructure typically manages water so that there is no

standing water for more than 3 days. It could be better after the plants get bigger and take up more water. In the other gardens, Lisa found, and removed, some Dodder. This is an invasive parasitic plant that we will need to keep on top of before it spreads. Once it takes hold, the entire plant, must be removed. She found it on the Willow tree.

Nora said Natural Vineland went to National Night Out in August.

There were no development applications with environmental concerns for comment. It was noted that the City is moving forward with plans for the new industrial park on south Lincoln Avenue near the Data Center.

Diane contacted the Vineland Police Dept. regarding the security issues at Willow Oak. They are going to increase patrols in both parking lots, during both daytime and after dark. Jim Neher also has been making visits and has not seen anything to report. There was discussion of security cameras and the associated expense. Katherine Dollman suggested sharing of the cameras that were provided by NJDEP to monitor illegal dumping for the litter problem. She will look into it. If the cameras are being moved around, possibly Willow Oak can get into the rotation. It was noted that South Vineland Park is closed with a driveway gate each night. A motion sensor light is another option.

Ellen will apply to Natural Vineland for points for the Willow Oak invasive plant removal project.

Diane said the Tree Inventory and Community Forestry Management Plan are still on the radar to be done. Diane said we should plan now for another tree giveaway next fall, as an alternative to planting street trees.

Some of the dogwood trees planted at Landis Park have died. A motion to purchase an additional 10 dogwood trees, for Landis Park and/or around town, to be added to the previous order for Pinelands Nursery, was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Casadia.

The Vineland website was accessed and reviewed as a resource for the Vineland Voice to get information on Willow Oak and other City parks, as well as our event calendar. Any stories for the media must come from Public Relations.

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