

Vineland Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were Diane Amico, John Casadia, Charlie Valentine, Josh Aderholdt, and Lisa Fleming. John Pedersen entered later. Also present were guests Ellen Pedersen, Zach Landicini, R.J. Franceschini, Rob Martha, Gavin Martha, and Nichole Gardner.

The Chairperson presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Gavin Martha for his efforts working with John Casadia to clean, maintain, and move bluebird nesting boxes.

John Pedersen entered the meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2026 meetings was made by Charlie Valentine and seconded by John Casadia. All were in favor.

The budget report for the standard line-item budget was passed around. The amounts in the line items are currently only temporary appropriations until the final budget is passed by City Council.

Zach Landicini discussed 2 bills in the NJ Legislature titled “NJ Polluters Pay to Make NJ More Affordable Act”. If passed, this would impose a one-time penalty on the 32 global largest oil extractors on profits from the last 10 years if the companies want to do business in NJ. It is significant that the fee would come out of past profits, which means it cannot be passed on to the customers as a tariff. The money will go into a fund that will be available to municipalities via requests for funding for climate resiliency projects such as for upgrading electric grids, health programs, water infrastructure upgrades, and more. It is encouraged that Vineland send a Council Resolution in support of the bills to our NJ representatives to encourage the State of NJ to adopt the terms of the program. Other states have passed similar legislation. EC members will review the bills and discuss at the next meeting.

American Littoral Society reached out regarding a planting day in the spring to replace or add plants to the Giampietro swale. Lisa may try to meet with them after some plants start to come up so we can see what survived and where. Lisa said there may be some other options for better suited plants or bushes. Public Works has indicated that they noticed the surrounding area is a little dryer since the swale channel was installed.

Regarding the Library raingarden, the trees may be too large now to move. There is one tulip tree that needs to be cut down. The roots are a concern.

Regarding Willow Oak, some members are going to work there Saturday 2/14. Diane will open the gate. The prescribed burn has not been done yet and the status is unknown, as

Quincy Jones is out sick long term. We will wait to see if the Forest Fire Service has someone else doing burns this year, then we will consider options for mowing the woody growth.

Diane said Nora is researching costs for removing the bamboo at Willow Oak for preparation of a grant application. Diane is waiting for the 2026 vendor list to get prices for surveying and engineering services.

John Pedersen said there is a lot of litter in and around Bennetts Mill and a lot next to it has been cleared for a house.

Tarkiln Branch is still very littered. Josh will determine which properties that are the worst so that Diane can contact the EPA representative working on the KillTone superfund cleanup. He may already have property owner permission, or can get it.

Lisa said that recently the site plan applications coming in involve expansions of existing development into wooded areas in the back. She has not seen anything indicating that the Tree Ordinance is being considered during site plan approvals. There is one for a car lot which has one basin on the plans that will be planted with shrubs. John Pedersen discussed maintenance of the basins when there is vegetation involved. There is a housing development planned for the farm at Lincoln Ave near Magnolia. Some past applications were discussed.

The Data Center has now submitted another amended plan that includes LNG, which will be heard at a special meeting on March 26th. They have submitted an Environmental Impact Statement. The EIS does not discuss the biosludge tank. Various processes at the site were discussed. The committee has not done a complete review of the project yet.

Josh and John Pedersen will take a look at the annual Tree Plan requirements to be submitted to City Council.

John Casadia gave an update on the bluebird nesting boxes. He will removed them from Willow Oak before the prescribed burn.

Zach Landicini said that the acoustic berms at the west side of the Data Center are on a negative grade, making them too low to be effective for the generator noise, and are also not discussed in the EIS that was submitted. The wellhead protection area near the Data Center was discussed and there were already comments provided by the Commission for the last plan submittal.

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