

Vineland Environmental Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
March 11, 2024

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, Charles Valentine, John Pedersen, Sue Fenili, Ariana Headley, and guests Tiffany Falcone NJDEP, and Ellen Pedersen. John Casadia, Lisa Fleming, and David Lowenstern entered later.

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2024 meeting was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by Charles Valentine. All were in favor.

The city budget is scheduled for tomorrow's City Council meeting for approval. The proposed Commission budget was passed around. So far this year, requisitions were already done for Reuben Hardware and the ANJEC membership. The consultant for the NRI will be contacted after the budget is approved.

Lisa Fleming entered the meeting.

The split rail fence is still down at the Willow Oak parking lot. The new fence posts should be more secure than the previous one, and it would be beneficial if we could hire someone to do it. This Saturday the kiosk sign is scheduled to be installed, along with trail marking with paint blazes. Citizens United is doing a trash cleanup the same day in the vicinity for the Cumberland County Trash Hunt.

John Casadia entered the meeting.

John saw No Trespassing signs around Bennetts Mill. There is a question of who put the signs out. The road is also roped off. There was an abandoned trailer there which John reported to the City.

The wording on the volunteer sign-in sheet has been updated to reflect last month's discussion for verifying volunteers are over age 18, and all outreach now includes that an adult must accompany minors at all times.

Regarding the Blackwater Branch tree tube removal, NJDEP has a four-wheel vehicle available but the trailer is still needed to haul out the tubes, posts, deer fence, and metal poles. Tiffany can ask Giordano's if they have something and if they can come take everything. The plastic should be recyclable. She also knows of a group that will take the tree tubes for re-use, but is still working out the details of storage and transportation. April 10<sup>th</sup> was tentatively decided as the date for the tube removal. This will be confirmed over email. John said the EPA indicated that the arsenic from the superfund cleanup has re-surfaced.

Lisa said the raingardens are too wet to do work right now.

The American Littoral Society provided a master plan for stormwater mitigation from Rutgers for Giampietro. Diane is waiting for the city engineer review.

David Lowenstern entered the meeting.

John Casadia is planting a strip of privately-owned land with wildflowers. He has purchased 15 pounds of seed.

The Natural Vineland committee will be attending the Wheaton EcoFair on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

The Seedling Giveaway will be April 6<sup>th</sup>, and we are getting 450 seedlings. We cannot purchase additional seedlings from the NJ State Nursery, as none are available. Volunteers should be there early to set up. We can give out wildflower seed packets that day as well. The sign-up sheet was passed around again.

The Vineland Green Fair will be held on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

There was general discussion on site plan applications but no formal comments. There was discussion of how the basin requirements are taking up space that could be for vegetation. The Hawke Pointe development application shows they are taking out trees to make room for green infrastructure.

Two legal notices were received for wetlands determinations. The Cumberland County Mosquito Commission will be doing stream clearing on Panther Branch north of Landis Ave.

Last year in lieu of Arbor Day trees delivered to schools, Sue did a planting with the Cub Scouts at a park. Diane asked for anyone who would like to do something for Arbor Day. Different options for Arbor Day were discussed. John Pedersen, David Lowenstern, and Sue Fenili volunteered. After something can be arranged, Diane will order trees.

There is no progress on the new Tree Ordinance for the City. NJDEP has webinars to assist towns develop their ordinances. There are also outreach requirements.

Lisa discussed "gravel gardening" with drought tolerant plants as an alternative to grass as a way to address water supply issues in the midwest and west. In our area, the wildlife gardening projects, which also eliminate lawns that need watering, are a positive.

Diane discussed the Sustainable Jersey efforts and how the Environmental Commission actions are part of the city's certification. Some of our actions do not meet what Sustainable Jersey requires, so Diane is trying to keep those requirements in mind as we go forward with projects. We should be doing site plan reviews using the ANJEC Fact & Findings form so we can get Sustainable Jersey points for site plan reviews.

Lisa attended a webinar where a good graphic was presented on the Benefits of Trees from the website of the City of Tacoma Park. Their website is well-presented as well. She will forward the link to everyone.

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