

Vineland Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. Present were Diane Amico, Charles Valentine, John Casadia, Sue Fenili, John Pedersen, and guests Ellen Pedersen, John Aderholdt, and Anna Lisa Franceschini. Lisa Fleming and David Lowenstern entered later.

A motion to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2023 meeting was made by Sue Fenili and seconded by Charles Valentine. All were in favor.

The budget report was passed around. We are still on a temporary budget, therefore, we need to wait until we can get a purchase order in place before beginning work with the consultant for the Natural Resource Inventory.

Tiffany Falcone, NJDEP discussed the project collaborative at the Blackwater Branch riparian buffer, where tree tube removal will take place this Wednesday. NJDEP is providing their staff and has arranged for donation of the tree tubes to the Raritan Headwaters Association. Giordano's has donated a 20 cu.ft. container for tube collection and will store them until they can be transferred. It is expected that 9 staff from NJDEP and 6 members of Tiffany's Community Collaborative Team will attend.

Lisa Fleming and David Lowenstern entered the meeting.

Anna Lisa Franceschini was present to discuss a project she is working on for school which involves preparing an ordinance and/or presentation to City Council. She has chosen a project involving roadside "no-mow" areas for wildflower preservation. Members discussed their past efforts, successes, and challenges with this endeavor. Areas discussed were in front of Willow Oak and along the Boulevard. She will need a list of potential areas to approach City Council.

For Arbor Day (and Earth Day), the Cub Scouts are planting a tree, under the direction of Sue Fenili, at Pagliughi Park on Saturday April 27.

At Giampietro Park, the stormwater mitigation project is moving forward for this summer. The grant obtained by the American Littoral Society does include \$60K for implementation. Rutgers is doing design and facilitating the groundwork. We are waiting for final drawings. Work was prioritized starting from the north end of the park where channels will direct water back to the stream. City Engineering has asked that the project avoid the dam area. Diane met with the Disc Golf Club this past weekend, and they are looking forward to seeing improvements made. All grant funds need to be drawn down by October 31.

Last month's Second Saturday project was a partnership with Citizen's United at Willow Oak. The kiosk sign has been erected and a map is posted. Approximately 15 CU members collected 30 bags of litter from the frontage and across the street. This month's Second Saturday project will be held at Giampietro and will include cutting back some invasive vines from the riparian buffer.

Lisa continued to do maintenance at the raingardens, and cut back some old growth at the Library.

Natural Vineland will attend the Wheaton EcoFair on May 4. The point level remains at 143.

The Green Fair will be held on May 18. Volunteers should arrive at 8:00 a.m. at Vineland High School to set up the Environmental Commission's table. Diane, Sue, David, and Josh have volunteered to help.

The Elmer Street tree pits are on track to be installed by Rutgers. The City Engineer requested some changes to the original plans to remove porous pavement from the design. There are also some administrative details awaiting verification involving a portion of the project on private property.

The Site Plan Review Committee did submit comments for the Forest Glen development application, which were forwarded to the Planning Office. Two legal notifications for wetlands delineations were discussed.

The Seedling Giveaway this past weekend was a success, with 450 seedlings given out. NJ Forestry has put out a request for photos of trees from past giveaways. Diane will complete the required reports and follow up surveys for NJ State.

Diane completed the Environmental Commission's 2023 Annual Report and sent it to City Council and the Mayor. Completion of the report also is submitted to Sustainable Jersey for the municipal action "Environmental Commissions", which earns points for the City towards Certification in that program.

Ellen Pedersen discussed the Mayor's Monarch Pledge, a program through the National Wildlife Federation, as a possible city action. One hurdle may be that it requires involvement of the Mayor's staff.

The City is still trying to coordinate the creation of the new Tree Ordinance, as mandated by NJDEP through the Stormwater requirements. The City Planner will be setting up a meeting to include Rick Tonetta as a liaison to the Mayor.

A motion to purchase tree stakes from the Vineland Produce Auction in the amount of \$100 was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Casadia. All were in favor.

John Casadia is planting a portion of his farmland with wildflowers. These will be approximately 50% perennial and 50% annual.

John Casadia said that Dina Rossi from CC Tech, who was instrumental in the students' construction of bluebird nesting boxes, was inducted into the Cumberland County Women's Hall of Fame. He put an ad into the event program booklet thanking her from the Environmental Commission.

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