

Vineland Environmental Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
April 9, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into the record. Present were: Diane Amico, John Pedersen, Sue Fenili, John Casadia, Anthony Coffee, David Lowenstern, Charles Valentine, guests Sarah Johnson and Cheryl Hullihen.

**Kids to Parks Day** Cheryl Hullihen presented the final flyer to be distributed, and discussed activities planned for the event to be held on May 20th. It would be good to clean up around the park before the event, although there are litter cleanups planned for that day. Additional possible activities were discussed, including painting the benches or planting a tree. However, there were many very young children at last year's event, so it may be difficult to arrange a painting project as part of this event. Sarah and her parents may be busy leading other activities, and painting or planting requires direct adult supervision. Cheryl will look into whether they can get the paint donated and will check with Sarah to see if she is interested in adding these activities. If there are any trees leftover from Arbor Day, it could be planted this day, but the leftover seedlings from today's giveaway will not last until this event. These activities would be for older attendees. Putting up "no mowing" signs was discussed, but the children cannot be near the roadside. In the event that painting becomes an activity, Charlie Valentine made a motion that the Commission purchase paint for the benches at Giampietro. John Casadia seconded. All were in favor. For the litter cleanup walks, it was mentioned to be aware of ticks. Cheryl will consider modifying the flyer to add painting events for children age 12 and older.

After Cheryl left the meeting, members expressed concern about painting during the event, the ability to supervise, and the age of the children. Also, tree planting requires adults. Diane will call the Hullihens tomorrow to advise to remove painting as an event for the day. If it could be painted a week or two ahead, that would be better.

**ANJEC Rutgers grant** Diane gave an update on the meeting with the City Engineer, Mayor and Business Administrator. The city wants the City Hall block to be the priority recipient for the stormwater project grant. The sidewalks already need to be redone and may be replaced with porous pavement. The project may also contain a raingarden. The Rutgers engineer will do the design to be presented to the City. Since the old Police building may be demolished, they likely will be looking at that side of City Hall for installing parking. At the end of the meeting, another possibility came up for a cistern at the new Public Works garage on Park Ave. that could be used to fill the water trucks and the street sweeper. John P. said watering the downtown trees has been an issue, and rainbarrels along Landis Avenue would help. The final decision on a project has not yet been made.

**Rainbarrels:** Sarah Johnson may have access to several rain-barrels currently stored at Bridgeton Parks & Recreation. The Littoral Society also hosts rain-barrel workshops for the public if we would like to schedule one.

**Volunteer Work Days:** There has not been much going on. Sue said at Willow Oak there are a lot of trees down. Our work day there is scheduled for April 22, Sunday, 1:00pm to 5:00pm, weather permitting. John P. said that the Boy Scout with whom he is in contact still intends to fix the bridge over the wetlands.

**Education display board design.** Everyone can bring something for the display to the May 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Giampietro Park raingarden sign:** Sue's son-in-law is ready to make the sign as soon as we can provide the wording. Diane said there are concerns with the terminology, as the area technically does not meet the definition of either a raingarden or bio-swale, nor is it a native plant garden. If we would like raingarden signs, The Littoral Society can provide them in both English and Spanish. We may need a simple sign that describes how vegetation helps with storm-water, or a sign about pollinators. Jody Carrara offered to look at the area after the plants start coming up. Sarah will speak to her boss about helping with plants for the garden.

**Wildflower milkweed areas:** John P. received a response from Mark Guglielmi, who is o.k. with not mowing the wildflower areas. It is still necessary to speak to the county. It may be possible to mark the corners rather than roping off the entire area. Signage is needed, and the format of the one David installed at Romano Park is a good example. If there

is a standard sign, we can order several/bulk. John P. will get pricing for about a dozen for discussion at the next meeting. It would be good to also get one of the small "Environmental Commission" signs that were put up many years ago along some stream crossings.

**Maurice River Conservation Area:** No one has been out there, so it is unknown whether the deer stand is still up.

**Leftover tree seedlings:** This weekend John P. and John Lauria will be planting Atlantic white-cedar at West Side Park. It may be possible to also put some near the creek that crosses Valley Ave. Diane will forward the color printouts of each species we received to John. Large plastic tree pots are needed for some of the seedlings, in order to grow them to a larger size before planting for a better survival rate.

**Bennetts Mill** John P. cleaned up the area a couple of weeks ago.

**Other open space:** A group purchased 600 acres near Menantico Creek, and may be planning to put trails there. The Nature Conservancy has two large properties in Vineland but it appears they may be divesting themselves from south jersey because it is expensive to own the land. There is one property at Willow Grove Lake that appears to be in need of care.

**Park Ave fallen tree:** A tree a 918 E. Park Ave was temporarily straightened by John P, John Lauria and Anthony Coffee, but needs something more extensive. Diane would like to contact Lawn & Garden Landscaping, who the Commission has used before for tree services. Previous staking and guying at Giampietro cost approximately \$300. There are other trees in other locations that also need to be straightened. Diane will get a quote on one vs. several. John P. will get addresses for some other trees. David will also get a price from his own landscaper as a comparison.

**Arbor Day** – Sue said all letters and packets were sent to teachers, and the packets included information for the Anti-Litter Initiative. Trees are to be delivered on May 26<sup>th</sup>. Trees were purchased from Hopewell Nursery and will be picked up on 5/25<sup>th</sup>. We are also getting 3 trees for the VDID, and another another 3 for John P. to plant in some downtown locations, pending approval. All locations must be called in for utility markouts. Diane will see if there are any Engineering projects or if there is any input from Dale from Recreation. We are low on bark guards, and Sue needs them for the Arbor Day trees. A motion to order bark guards, up to \$200 was made by John Casadia. The motion was modified to up to \$250 by David. The motion was seconded by John Casadia, and all were in favor. There was some discussion of the Board of Education's maintenance practices.

Old business:

The **Tree seedling giveaway** was busy, and residents were appreciative. A resident that attended said one of the street trees that had been planted, a zelkova, had died. Diane said she was informed by NJ Division of Forestry that the disease came from the nursery, and we were not the only town that had problems with the zelkovas. The ones that lived need pruning.

New business:

**Tree preservation guidelines:** John P. and David prepared a draft spec to be reviewed. The "city's representative" that is mentioned needs to be identified. The sample was taken from an ordinance. There is contract wording that may be redundant if the specs are included in another city contract for a project, since the city already has its own contract requirements, but the technical parts can be used if they are pulled out and written like a spec. The technical details came from a sample provided by the Urban Tree Foundation. John discussed problems with current construction practices as well as current Electric Utility practices.

**Bluebird houses:** John Casadia said the birdhouse project is completed at Cumberland County VoTech and now they are going to monitor the progress.

John Casadia made a motion to adjourn. Charles Valentine seconded. All were in favor.