

Vineland Environmental Commission
Minutes
Regular Meeting – October 15, 2019

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, Charles Valentine, David Lowenstern, Anthony Coffee, and guest Nora Zielinski.

A motion to approve the **minutes** of the September 9, 2019 meeting was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by Lisa Fleming. All were in favor except David Lowenstern abstained.

The **budget report** containing current balances in each line item was passed around for review.

Regarding **pesticide spraying**, we have been unable to find out who sprayed the block around the new police station. The Cumberland County Improvement Authority is managing the project and their construction manager did not return our phone calls. There is concern that the trees around the entire block will die off in the next year or two, as the systemic pesticide was sprayed right up to the trees and on the roots. Lisa said it would be good to come up with a plan for addressing the issue, perhaps in the form of an ordinance requiring notifications prior to spraying. Almost all pesticide application instructions say not to spray near water, and it has been noted that many guardrails being sprayed, or could be sprayed in the future, are over creeks/water. Before discussing, it would be good to have some alternatives to suggest.

The **Annex Raingarden drains** have been re-routed by Rutgers, and they also weeded. The Library is not done yet; Diane will follow up with Cheryl Reardon. The Annex should not need to be weeded in the near future. The City will potentially be adding additional raingardens on its properties, with additional maintenance needs, after the old Police Station is demolished and the block around City Hall is redesigned. It is important for our two existing raingardens to be well-maintained so that going forward those can be a positive example.

John Pedersen reported that **Volunteer work days** have continued with spreading of all of the stone at Willow Oak with help from the LDS Church and John Lauria. The trails are now in fairly good shape. Volunteers also assisted with the Cumberland County Cleanup at Alliance Beach in a partnership with Lisa Fagan and VHS students. This week 6-7 bags of trash were collected on Garden Rd.

Lisa said the **Giampietro Park Raingarden** was dry but she watered it. She has been visiting regularly for maintenance. Diane said we should plan for long term maintenance that could possibly include hiring someone, like a gardener or landscaper, who would have knowledge of the specific plant species. There is currently a new Dog Park under construction across the street from Giampietro Park.

John Pedersen has the **Wildflower Area** signs, but will wait for the official designation of the areas and roadsides before erecting any signage. The next step is to get a list together of the specific spots so that we can approach City Council for the designation.

The old historical bridge at Burnt Mill Pond may be falling down after the work that was done there on the dam in the last few years.

Near Bennett's Mill and Maurice River Conservation Area, John Pedersen said there has been a lot of roadside trash. They recently collected 20 bags along Union Road, and more near the bus station on MaysLanding Road across from the homeless shelter.

Diane gave an update on the status of the City's **Sustainable Jersey** Program. There is a greenhouse being erected at Vineland High School as part of an action item under this program and Commission members are invited to assist with the construction. Some work was done this past weekend, but there is more still to do.

Planning & Zoning Application Reviews:

As a follow up to last meeting, Diane said the Fratelli application was approved with no increase in impervious coverage, but with decreased buffers.

This month, the Planning Board meeting preceded our meeting, so an opportunity to comment on two applications was missed. These were Tyson and First Choice Freezers. However, due to postponements, two are still pending being heard before the Planning Board in the coming weeks. These are Rovagnati Meats and Landis Substation.

Some members of the Tree Committee would like to visit the site of Rovagnati Meats to see if the site meets the definition of "forested". If they have comments, those will be forwarded to Diane to send to Planning prior to the meeting. The applicant appears to intend to eventually completely clear the entirety of a 35 acre property. The second phase includes clearing at least part of an area that has wetlands.

The Landis Substation application was submitted by Atlantic City Electric and is for construction of a stormwater basin in the middle of the site, with no tree clearing involved.

Lawn & Garden Landscaping is still on track to install the trees and shrubs at the **Library** soon. They had waited for the hot weather to pass before doing the work.

Diane said she could use help at the new **office** hanging the educational boards. If anyone is available, please let her know.

Diane has a meeting scheduled with Paul Farinaccio of the Vineland Board of Education to discuss trees on school properties.

Emma Melvin of the American Littoral Society has asked if the Commission would like to help to host a **Raingarden Workshop**. The workshop would be given by Rutgers and ANJEC. The workshop could be held either in the fall or in the spring, whichever is convenient. Diane said the spring is usually very busy for us. Perhaps we could do this over the winter just before spring approaches.

Diane did not get any response from the City's I.S. Division about whether there are any old **computers** or printers around that we could use at the Annex. If we want any equipment, we will likely have to order our own, which would also be done through them.

It was discussed that in some areas it might be helpful to be able to inspect or take photos with a drone.

The proposal by Jay Adamson was reviewed. Mr. Adamson was asked to provide a quote to develop some specs for tree pruning, but sent a draft of the specs instead. The draft is not what we would have been looking for, since the specs refer back to the Environmental Commission for guidance. We need someone who can oversee a project from start to finish. We need a new quote from Mr. Adamson with additional services.

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