

Vineland Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 8, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Amico. The public notice was read into record. In attendance were Diane Amico, John Pedersen, Charles Valentine, and virtually Lisa Fleming, guests Jeff Bordley of Public Works, Ellen Pedersen, and Molly Riley of The League of Conservation Voters. David Lowenstern entered later.

A motion to approve the **minutes** of the February 8, 2021 meeting was made by Charles Valentine and seconded by John Pedersen. All were in favor.

John Pedersen and Jeff Bordley discussed the gardens at **Giampietro Park**, and potential areas for planting such as around the flagpole and along Landis Avenue near the driveway. Both Rotary Club and Citizens United are considering doing plantings somewhere with seed mixtures and/or plants. (At this time, David Lowenstern entered the meeting virtually.) After the last meeting, it was discovered that the City does not own the lot next to the Landis Ave. entrance, however, we may own approximately 30 feet. Jeff Bordley will get Engineering to stake it out and measure it, so we know how much property we have to work with. Since the intended planting would contain pollinator plants, how the neighbor uses the next property could be a concern if it is found that they use farm pesticide sprays. Jeff can write a letter to the owner to let them know what the City intends and to see what the neighbor intends.

Jeff Bordley discussed using **weedkiller** on certain areas such as sidewalks, fencelines, and cracks in pavements. They usually use RoundUp or similar, with glyphosate. It is used at Giampietro only around trees with poison ivy, and does not kill well-established trees. There was discussion of possible future use of algaecide in the lake and tick spray at Willow Oak. It is our preference that nothing be sprayed at Willow Oak. The City does spray the perimeter of the dog park, areas where children may be playing close to woods, and recreation fields. Jeff said they are trying to incorporate compost into fertilizers and to use more integrated pest management. No spraying is done near water, although they may be spraying near guardrails. The City is looking into getting a lit fountain for Giampietro to mitigate algae in the water. They will try this first before considering algaecide. Ultrasonic geese deterrents are being purchased for both Giampietro and South Vineland Park. He said the City is not in favor of native plantings around the lake in order to keep things open for aesthetics and fishing. However, at South Vineland Park, the area on the west side behind the gate is wide open. This could be an option for planting the wildflower/meadow area.

The **field at Willow Oak** has many gum trees and requires maintenance. Also, all of the raingardens will require upcoming maintenance. We have not yet figured out the best way to maintain them, and who should do it. There is some knowledge needed of plant species. Jeff has seasonal workers, but someone would need to train them.

For the **Rotary Club project**, donations have been offered to the club for purchase of the plants. For the flagpole planting, John said that bushes need to be removed, grass areas need to be turned over, and someone would have to maintain the area afterward. To further the discussions and to see if we can schedule the planting as one of our monthly projects, John will set up an email thread or a virtual meeting with Rotary and CU to discuss next steps.

Regarding the split rail fence at **Willow Oak**, it was agreed that we will combine our \$500 purchase order for Lowes's with additional funding from Public Works to buy the necessary materials. There was discussion of whether to use cement to hold the posts, or if another option is preferable. It was noted that this is not the time to be mowing the interior of the field, so we will coordinate closer to the end of the year. John will send Jeff his workplan. The perimeter of the field will be regularly mowed, as well as the larger trails.

At the **bus stop on MaysLanding Road**, it may take awhile to get signage and more trash cans. Possible options for fencing between the bus stop and the woods were discussed, such as snow fencing or split rail. Jeff will look at the area to see what will work, and also will have the old concrete removed.

Public Works has erected two **monofilament recycling receptacles** at Giampietro Park. Additional receptacles are planned for there and South Vineland Park, for a total of six. Someone put one up at West Side Park. John said it would be useful to have dog waste bags at Willow Oak. The bags would be biodegradable.

Litter was discussed, especially along the boulevard, and Conrail has been contacted by the City about cleaning up their properties.

The next **Saturday project is to be scheduled for March 20th** at Willow Oak. Diane will send out the notice. The Rotary project should be scheduled for May.

Molly Riley from the **NJ League of Conservation Voters** was present to discuss her role as Water Quality Coordinator, and offered assistance with stormwater management, polluted runoff, and promoting green infrastructure.

The Tree Seedling Giveaway is April 24 at John Pedersen's office. We will need help that day, and will need to pick up the trees in advance.

Diane got a call from a resident at **4 Evelyn Ave**, who would like a tree put back where the city removed one, Jeff will look into why the tree was removed so we can determine whether another one should go in that location. There may be an issue of the City not wanting trees between the sidewalk and the curb. It is still unknown why all of the trees around City Hall were removed, although it is believed it has to do with the redevelopment of the block.

We are still working on a temporary **budget**. Our budget was approved to be the same as last year, and will become permanent after the next Council meeting.

Diane said that items in our **First Aid** kit are expired and we should purchase replacements. It was mentioned that both Sharon Flaim and EMS have items they might give to us. John said we should get safety goggles, especially for volunteers working on trees. Possibly Public Works has some they could provide.

Zelkova trees around center city need trimming, especially on Myrtle between Landis and Chestnut. Jeff will set up a meeting with the Tree Crew supervisor, David Rodriguez.

Site plans received include a bigger plan for the FSC property on Sherman Avenue near the headwaters at Berryman's Branch. Another application is for a triplex on Almond which is grandfathered in, and where the concerns would be density, parking, and litter. The PhilCorr project is for an industrial property on Almond near Rt. 55, where a house was torn down to make a graveled parking area for trucks in front of property. The lot coverage is still below the requirement at 61% vs. 65% allowable. They are saving some trees and have some landscaping. John said more needs to be done to save trees, since previous projects have left the buffer too thin.

Diane was informed by the Business Administrator that we should start having completely **virtual meetings** in order to avoid hiring evening security guards. She is discussing with the IS Division how to facilitate this while still meeting the Open Public Meeting requirement of including the public. An all-virtual format will not work for doing site plan reviews. We also have members who are not using computers for meetings. Diane will look into whether we can change our meeting night to coincide with another Board or Commission who already has a security guard.

Arbor Day ceremonies will not take place this year with the schools. However, we can still purchase trees and plant them at Pilla School.

The Commission thanked Jeff Bordley for attending, and is looking forward to working with Public Works.

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