



Verona Environmental Commission

600 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, New Jersey 07044

VEC Public Meeting: June 18 – 7:30 pm to 9 pm - Fireman's Room at the VCC.

Members: Gloria Machnowski, Jerry Shimonaski, James Loudon, Larry Lonergan, Anthony Saltalamacchia, Virginia Citrano, Jessica Pearson, Julia Capuano. Chris Stark, Martin Golan and Council Liaison Kevin Ryan.
Guest: Jerry Fried and Councilman Sapienza.

MINUTES

I. Members approved the minutes from the last meeting, May 21, 2014.

II. Presentation about Complete Streets policy by Jerry Fried, Montclair EC member, former Mayor and staff member at the Voorhees Transportation Center.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) has adopted a Complete Streets policy that will apply during the planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation of new and reconstructed transportation facilities. The policy ensures safe access and mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users. This includes all projects funded through the NJDOT capital program. The NJDOT encourages regional and local municipalities who apply for funding through Local Aid programs to use similar policies.

<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/works/njfit/complete.shtm>

Members agreed to work towards developing Verona's own complete streets policies and suggested presenting the program to the council members.

III. New VEC members' responsibilities. Chris Stark (member from 7/1/14 to 6/30/17) and Martin Golan (alternate #2 from 7/1/14 to 6/30/16). Chris would like to focus on food waste composting and rain barrels programs. Martin would like to focus on reducing air pollution.

IV. Recycling video: the video was presented in Town Hall, VTV, and is in the township's website. Members agreed to submit the video to the ANJEC 2014 awards and plan school presentations in the near future.

V. Jerry attended the BOE meeting. The Conceptual Drawing of the Lower Field Project posted in the school's website is not accurate. The school will not build a full retaining wall along the eastern side and less picnic tables will be added, therefore less trees will be cut down. We don't know how many. Some of the VHS trees are Acer platanoides (Norway Maples) which are invasive aliens, meaning that you shouldn't buy and plant those trees, but as Jim mentioned, that doesn't



mean that you have to remove them. Pyrus (flowering pear) are also alien invasive trees and for some reason Verona keeps planting them (there are 2 new ones in the Community Center near the front door). Paul McDevitt said that only trees that need to be removed to remediate environmental problems would be cut down (if it grew around contaminants). He made a commitment to keep as many healthy trees as possible. About 60 native trees and shrubs will be planted in the eastern side of the upper field. The BOE asked to add more trees along Sampson Drive, Grove Avenue and Franklin Avenue, which is also not shown on the concept plan. The final plans will be ready in August and the VEC will review them and submit comments then.

VI. Peckman Woods Restoration Project / ANJEC Grant: The VEC organized a planting event on May 31 in the Peckman woods. The commission purchased 6 Ostrich ferns, 2 Serviceberries, 3 River Birches and 3 Swamp White Oaks. VDPW provided compost and tools and delivered the native trees to the site. Over 20 volunteers and 16 kids participated. Volunteers used a submersible pump provided by the BOE to water the trees. The commission also installed watering bags in all trees and will keep filling the bags and weeding all summer long. Therefore volunteers will be invited to participate on a weekly program. The VEC also plans to develop a trail guide.

VII. Social media update: in addition to the commission's website, the VEC opened a Twitter account managed by Virginia and a Facebook account managed by Jessica. The Twitter account has over 50 followers and the Facebook account over 100 likes. Social media presence is helping the commission to facilitate daily communication with residents and significantly increase community participation in VEC programs.

VIII. This was Jerry's last meeting as an official member. Thank you for all your work Jerry!