



Verona Environmental Commission

600 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, New Jersey 07044

VEC Public Meeting: December 17 at 7:30 pm – VCC Firemen's Room, 2nd floor.

Attendees: Gloria Machnowski, Anthony Saltalamacchia, Virginia Citrano, Jessica Pearson, Chris Stark, Martin Golan and Council Liaison Kevin Ryan. **Guest:** Gerard Shimonaski.

MINUTES

I. Members approved the November 19 minutes as well as the 2014 Annual Accomplishment report, which will be sent to the Town Council Members. Larry provided his approval by email since he was not able to come to the meeting (he attended his company holiday party).

II. VHS Environmental Club plans for 2015: Julia has scheduling conflicts with her new job and therefore couldn't attend the VEC meeting. She will send us this information asap.

III. Green Construction update by Larry: postponed to next meeting.

IV. Peckman Woods Restoration: the second report to ANJEC is due in January 7th. Gloria will prepare the report and request VEC members approval before submission. Members approved to use the remaining grant funds to buy materials for the construction of a small footbridge to connect the main trail to the right side. Virginia recommended to contact Bob Prout to invite Eagle Scouts candidates to participate. Chris volunteered to take care of placing a VEC geocache in the trail. Geocaching is an activity in which participants use a GPS to hide and seek small waterproof containers called "geocaches", containing a logbook, pen, and items for trading, usually toys or trinkets of little financial value. More info at <http://www.opencaching.com/en/>

V. Nature Trail Project: commissioners are working to protect the existing woods in the municipal lot located at 42 Grove Ave. The Verona Juniors will officially vote in January to approve a \$2,000 donation for this initiative. The plans include creating a nature trail, adding native plantings with help from volunteers, installing a park bench, a trash receptacle and a park sign with the DPW. The commission is focusing now on the layout design, Jim could help, Verona Mayor Manley supports this project, as well as Mr. Martin, who offered to help.

VI. Steep Slope Ordinance and Anti Idling Resolution update: The VEC keeps advocating for both to be adopted by the Town Council.

The commission officially recommended the Town Council and Town Manager to study and adopt the Steep Slope Ordinance drafted by Jerry and approved by members, back in November of 2013. The VEC had been advocating for a Steep Slope Ordinance since the 2009 Master Plan was released. It will empower local authorities to protect Verona residents and their properties from improper construction, building and development on steep slope

areas. On the Anti Idling Resolution, the commission recommended the model for municipalities from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection <http://www.stophthesoot.org/Model%20Idling%20Resolution%206-08.pdf> – Gloria will talk to the council members to offer answer any question they might have. Commissioners asked Kevin to bring up both matters again at the council meeting and if needed, to schedule a presentation.

VII. Commercial and institutional recycling, accepted materials visual list. Members, including Kevin, agreed on the need to update Verona's current ordinance to add guidelines for commercial and institutional establishments, as recommended by Sustainable Jersey. Outreach materials should also target commercial institutions (annual letter to business managers informing tonnage reporting requirements). Gloria mentioned that during Verona's Sustainable meeting Noreen informed her that those letters will be sent to businesses owners in Verona and that the tonnage report is also taken care of. Commissioners want to know who is preparing and signing those reports. Also, we need to produce an accepted materials flyer that is a visual indication of what can be recycled in Verona. The flyer can be included in the website, VTV, etc. Gloria will talk to Steve about it. Kevin will also bring this up during the Council meeting.

VIII. The Commission participated in Verona's Fair in the Square on Sunday, December 7th , Jessica, Gloria, Tony, Chris and Martin work at the VEC table. Despite the cold and windy weather it was festive all day long with crafts and composting demonstrations (including a real composter on site that the township bought for the VEC). Kids made over 40 pine cone bird feeders and several snowflake ornaments with plastic bottles from HBW, previously cut by students from the Environmental Club. Several kids hung their bird feeders from nearby trees while others took them home with a brochure to help them identify common backyard birds. The commission also distributed composting brochures. Tony installed the composter behind HBW to use it in future demonstrations. Members agreed to use it also during Verona's Spring Green Fair at the VEC table.

IX. Next Meeting: January 21, 2015.