



Verona Environmental Commission

600 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, New Jersey 07044
www.veronaec.org

VEC Public Meeting: May 20 at 7:30 pm – VCC Annex Building, 2nd floor.

Members: Gloria Machnowski, James Loudon, Anthony Saltalamacchia, Virginia Citrano, Jessica Pearson, Chris Stark, Martin Golan, and Council Liaison Kevin Ryan. **Guests:** Jerry Shimonaski and Olivia Pena.

MINUTES:

Chairperson reads notice of Open Public Meetings law. Notice of this meeting was sent 48 hours in advance to the Star Ledger and the Verona Cedar Grove Times. The meeting was also posted on the Verona Township website and the VEC website.

I. Members approved April 15, 2015 minutes after fixing a typo.

II. Peckman Trail Project– ANJEC Grant final report: We planted 40 sweetgum tree saplings (leftovers from Montclairs' giveaway). Jessica is coordinating the delivery of a Dogwood tree purchased with the last \$100 from the grant. We'll need help planting it. We installed the geocache, Rui Dionisio from the BOE authorized it but he needs to confirm with F. N. Brown principal since seekers need to walk through their parking lot, geocaching.com requires official authorization. There is a lot of Japanese knotweed on the trail, we removed a lot but some is very big and we need help. Jessica got all vouchers from Matthew at Town Hall for the report; Gloria is preparing the final report for ANJEC.

III. 42 Grove Ave. Project Update: We presented the project at Town Hall last Monday with the Verona Juniors and Historical Society. Each donated \$2,000 to the project, Gloria gave the checks and letters of purpose to Matthew Laracy. He deposited the money into the Environmental Commission's Trust Account. The township could provide another \$2,000. Jerry mentioned that this is the first time that several organizations join forces in Verona for a project like this.

The VEC has a copy of the property deed, it has a restriction, it can only be used for municipal use, such as a public park. Gloria called Pat from Caulfield Associates in Hoboken, the company that did the survey back in the 60's, they don't have a copy of the survey, but she got a tax map from Verona's engineer's office.

Gloria met with the home owner at 40 Grove, Mr. Knight, he confirmed that the gravel parking lot belongs to Verona Township and he supports preserving the woods and the current natural look of the property as well as adding 2 benches and signage. An opportunity to make the wayside exhibit wheelchair accessible is by installing it about 8 feet from the sidewalk on

the current gravel area, creating a pathway from the sidewalk to the display and replacing the drop curb with regular curb so cars don't park in that area anymore. Members agreed with this idea. This way we avoid having to excavate the center / front of the property to level it with the sidewalk. Gloria met Chuck at 42 Grove today; he'll get estimates for the 2 benches (the black benches that the township uses) and for the concrete slabs to install them, and the concrete slab for the wayside exhibit and garbage can, and to cement the post for the aluminum cast sign. He mentioned that it would be good to get that post to do all the mason work together.

Chuck has the garbage receptacle for us. He likes the idea of the raised bed in the middle/ front; he'll bring a truckload of dirt and mulch for that. And then the township will re-seed the grass. Regarding the nature trail, he'll clear the path that's already there, just a short trail to begin with, there are 2 dead trees nearby that he'll take care of and he'll mulch it.

Gloria is working on the artwork and design for the signage. The aluminum cast marker will cost about \$ 1,500 (Sewah Studios) and the Wayside exhibit will cost about \$ 1,000 (Envirosigns). And with the rest we'll pay for the mason work and plantings. Chuck will also contact the county to see if he can replace the driveway curb with a regular curb to close that driveway entrance. Jim explained the general layout for the park. Members like the idea of framing the trail entrance with the two benches. Jim is working on the concept for the park layout. We'll need to mark the actual lot to show DPW where exactly we want the benches and everything else. Christine Liarkus (Senior Research Architect at NJIT's Center for Building Knowledge) visited the site and made some recommendations too. Helb needs a general drawing.

IV. Verona Green Fair – We are participating in the fair on Sat. May 30 from 11 am to 3 pm. Tony is not available to set up with Gloria, Chris will help her to set up at 10 am. Martin and Jess are available for the second shift. Julia will man the Morgan Farms' table. Virginia will try to come later in the day. We'll have local recycling information/brochures, a recycling game and recycling bins/barrels available for residents. Residents will be able to sign up to get the bins delivered to their homes. Chris is working in the visual list of items accepted and not accepted for recycling in Verona. He has a friend that will help him with the design and offered free prints if needed.

Fair participants include the Liberty Science Center, PAWS Montclair, Hillcrest Urban Gardening, Direct Energy for Solar, Ron Grosinger-EV, Remyndr- new recycling app, Verona Spine & Wellness Center, Verona Yoga, The Library/FOL- Book Swap/Donation, Hilltop Conservancy, VMAC/Police- Medicine drop off, Verona Health Dept.- Children's nutrition programs, Safe Routes to School and Verona In Motion, Verona Rec. Dept./ Verona Ropes Course- Low ropes elements for kids, Ivy Rain Barrels & Composter, PurpleDragon.CoOp, Morgan Farms, New Jersey Electric Auto Association, TechniArt (LED Light Bulbs Sale, at a discounted price), Native Art (Minerals & Fossils), Thai Elephant, etc.

V. HBW Environmental Club report – Tony is working with students to make posters for the cafeteria and a video about how to recycle at school. He recommended waiting until next year to install the raised vegetable bed in back of the school; teachers are too busy right now.

VI. Steep Slope Ordinance Update. Kevin explained that with the support of Roman, the new council member, it will be easier to implement this ordinance. He will also bring it up at the planning board.

VIII. Public Participation: Verona resident Olivia Pena is concerned with the plans to expand development on Hilltop, Cedar Grove, and how that will impact our environment and our community. The VEC will contact Cedar Grove Environmental Commission to see what we can do about it.

Martin Golan also mentioned that the house located at 20 Mountainview Road was demolished the day before the meeting scheduled between residents and the town manager. And that he made no reference as to when the house would be demolished after repeated requests. Residents contacted the local Health Department on Tuesday morning April 28, 2015 and spoke to Connie about the OSHA Silica / Nuisance Dust provision that calls for wetting; she said they contract through Montclair. Residents were concerned about exposing residents, including kids, to lead dust, but the demolition started before wetting the house and neighbors were not notified of the demolition day or time and therefore kids were playing nearby. The VEC submitted the required comments weeks before, and before the demolition contacted Thomas Jacobsen (Township Construction Official) and he explained that for him to issue a demolition permit, the owner needed to present a 10 items checklist and follow State regulations.

Next Meeting: June 17 – 7:30 pm at the VCC Annex Building, 2nd floor.