

Verona Environmental Commission

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

Verona Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes - Wednesday, September 12, 2018

1. The regular meeting of the Verona Environmental Commission, held at the Conference Room of the Community Center, 880 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, New Jersey, was called to order at 7:00 pm by Gloria Machnowski, Chairperson. The Open Public Meetings Act Statement was made.

Present: Gloria Machnowski (Chairwoman), Anthony Saltalamacchia (Vice Chairman), Jessica Pearson (Planning Board Liaison), Sean DiBartolo, Martin Golan, Michael Auteri (Alternate II) and Mayor Kevin Ryan (Council Liaison). Timothy Kiernan, Verona resident. Nick Licitra, West Orange resident, former Verona resident. **Absent:** Sarah Yauch O'Farrell and Frank Ceccacci (Alternate I).

- **2. Public participation:** Nick Licitra introduced himself to VEC members. O'Farrell invited Licitra to attend the meeting. Licitra offered to volunteer at future VEC events.
- **3. Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on July 18th, 2018 were approved after correcting a few minor typos, following a motion by DiBartolo, seconded by Pearson. All members were in favor.

4. Events

- a) Trail Cleanup: The VEC organized a West Essex Trail Cleanup on September 8, for National Day of Service & Remembrance, with help from Sustainable Verona and Montclair State University. MSU sent a bus with 30 student volunteers. About 30 more Verona volunteers participated. The group made big piles of trash at Fairview Avenue, Durrell Street, Valley View Road, Keeney Street and Lewis Road. The Verona Department of Public Works already removed the piles of trash. Machnowski requested Engineer DeCarlo to contact Essex County Parks regarding several big ditches in the trail caused by water runoff, and large debris items in need of removal. Essex County Parks DPW will take care of it.
- b) Green Fair: The VEC will participate in the Green Fair & Open Streets Fest on October 13 from 11 am to 4 pm. The VEC will have 2 tents (one at the Civic Center and one on Gould Street) lent by Mayor Ryan and Machnowski. The VEC will distribute reusable water bottles and reusable grocery bags and will focus on how to reduce plastic pollution and stormwater runoff; and the benefits of implementing Green Infrastructure. Members will coordinate to set up and man the tables. DiBartolo suggested to add the event to the town calendar, Machnowski will contact Steve Neale about this. She posted the event on the VEC's website, as well as the NJ Builders Association Green Infrastructure Guide as agreed at the last meeting.
- c) Waterway Cleanup: On July 19 DiBartolo contacted DeCarlo about the riparian zone adjacent to Mr. Gallagher's property at 30 Douglas Place, which is behind the Annin Flag. DiBartolo visited the area to get an idea of the conditions during a storm that dropped about a 1/2 inch of rain. He provided photos and video of his site visit and observed at least three obstructions in the stream bed that could constrict the stream profile, increase flow rates, and promote an increase rate of stream bank erosion. Of additional concern to the VEC was the lack of soil erosion and sediment controls for the Annin construction project. There were no silt fences or hay bales along the boundaries of the construction site to protect the downgradient streams. DiBartolo observed

sediment-laden runoff from the site entering the streams, which are tributaries to the Peckman River. To address this DeCarlo contacted the developer, the site supervisor and the Hudson Essex Passaic Soil Conservation (HEPSCD). The HEPSCD regulates soil disturbance over 5,000 square feet, and Matt D'Alessandro is the Assistant Manager in charge of their inspections. Tom Jacobsen is Verona's Construction Official/Code Enforcement Officer.

The developer installed the silt fence on July 27, 2018. Mike DeCarlo did a site inspection to ensure they had enough area covered. Machnowski pointed out that construction started on the Annin over a year ago, in mid-June 2017. Soil erosion and sediment controls should have been in place since construction began. She suggested that perhaps a more proactive approach was needed. Pearson agreed and mentioned that Mike DeCarlo is very professional and as the new Town Assistant Engineer he is in the process of correcting problems that were not addressed in the past. Saltalamacchia added that Mr. Gallagher complained about erosion and runoff problems in the area back in May. DiBartolo pointed out that there should be an inspection schedule in place.

Members discussed a possible cleanup of the stream between Douglas Place and the Annin property for September 22 from 10 am to 12 noon, meeting at the end of Douglas Place. Cavallo already approved it, but he pointed out that DPW assistance will probably be overtime so the VEC needs to keep it limited. Pearson suggested to ask Geordie Smith for help, he does a lot of trail maintenance in Verona. Machnowski added that Geordie already volunteers for the Hilltop Conservancy and for the local youth mountain biking team so he is very busy; perhaps DPW could offer assistance to remove large items during regular business hours.

Mayor Ryan asked who is responsible for the creek maintenance behind the Annin property. According to DeCarlo this stream carries a 50-foot-wide riparian buffer on each side measured from the top of banks. Pearson explained that according to the NJDEP Division of Land Use, the VEC is not required to apply for a permit to do the usual cleanups that we do around the waterways in Verona. All we require is to adhere to the rules and gain approval for clean ups from the township. It is in the interest of the township to keep the waterways free from obstacles to reduce flooding risks. Cavallo directed DPW to check a discharge of possible motor oil floating on the surface of the stream, that Walter Steinmann showed him. DPW checked the area on two separate occasions and the source could not be located. VEC members suggested to report the oil spill to the DEP. Mayor Ryan will speak with Cavallo.

DiBartolo volunteered to contact DeCarlo to suggest contacting the Annin contractor before September 22 to have them remove one of their trees that appears to have fallen a few months ago across the stream bed. They might be able to hook the tree with chain to drag it out of the stream channel with equipment they may have on site. Since they own this tree, it could be appropriate for them to remove it. As long as any equipment they employ does not sit within the riparian zone they would likely still be complying with the NJAC 7:13-7.6 Permit-by-rule #6. Members agreed, DiBartolo will proceed as planned to reach out to DeCarlo.

5. Updates

- a) Membership: The Environmental Commission has an opening for an Alternate II position. Walter Steinmann moved to Germany with his family for an extended stay, and therefore he resigned from the VEC. Currently Ceccacci is Alternate I, so he should become a full member. Auteri is Alternate II and could become Alternate I. The municipal clerk received two applications from Verona residents willing to join the VEC: Timothy Kiernan and Bill Dean. Machnowski shared the applications with all members. Tim participated in several VEC events and attended meetings, his first choice was to join the VEC. Machnowski met Bill at the last West Essex Trail Cleanup, his first choice was to join the Board of Adjustment. Tim has a strong sense of purpose and has been donating his time as a volunteer for years with other groups too. Mayor Ryan mentioned that this appointment is to be made by the Township Manager, but he will heavily rely on the VEC Chair recommendation.
- b) **Verona Environmental Resource Inventory:** Machnowski requested a copy of the new NRI draft produced by the Land Conservancy of New Jersey and distributed the copy to all VEC members on July 30. The VEC was

invited to submit comments. Once complete, Barbara Davis from the Land Conservancy will make a presentation on this to the Planning Board. It will not be incorporated into the Master Plan until the town is ready to start that project.

Machnowski pointed out that the ERI Update is based on available data from federal and state resources, as well as municipal resources, including the 1999 Natural Resources Inventory. She read part of the Executive Summary: "Documentation of the natural resource base – the geology, hydrology, ecology, and wildlife – conveys the scope and condition of the resources upon which the Township relies. Extensive mapping and tables detailing the Township's environmental resource base are included within the ERI Update. Sections include information on geology, topography, slopes, hydrology and water resources, soils, flooding, wetlands, wildlife habitat, historic resources, air, and climate change. The ERI Update will assist the community as it makes decisions regarding future planning and development. The preparation of an updated ERI will help meet the Township's goal of being a sustainable community. The Environmental Commission will add new material to the ERI as it becomes available. Knowledge of the natural resources will allow Verona Township's officials and citizens to make informed decisions as they strive to preserve and promote the character of the Township and to create a sustainable community within its landscape".

Machnowski worked with Steinmann to draft comments, which she distributed to members on September 4. She summarized the comments. Pearson totally agreed with the drafted comments and suggested to replace the word "prosperity" (twice) with the word "posterity" on page 20 of the ERI, as it appears on N.J.A.C. 7:9B. Surface Water Quality Standards. Pearson also suggested to add to the list of Threatened and Endangered Species on Page 30 (Table 12) the Red-headed Woodpecker and the Bald Eagle, and to review the New Jersey's Endangered and Threatened Wildlife list posted at:

https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/tandespp.htm

Pearson added that including links may not be effective for those reading the document from a hard copy. Machnowski explained that the main purpose of including links on the comments was to facilitate the Land Conservancy to identify resources to be included on the "References" section starting on page 105. Auteri mentioned that electronic versions of the ERI could include hyperlinks (links that turn the URL into a word or phrase). Hyperlinks definitely look better on the page, but in some cases they defeat the purpose. Some people print out electronic files to read them on paper, which also cancels out the usefulness of a hyperlink. URLs may not look as nice, but they will remain intact no matter how the public reads the document. Of course, few people will bother to type long URLs, so those are fairly useless.

The review of the Environmental Resource Inventory Draft was approved with the listed additions, following a motion made by Saltalamacchia; seconded by Auteri. DiBartolo did not read the ERI draft so he abstained from voting. The rest of the member were all in favor. Machnowski will submit comments to Steve Neale who is also gathering comments from the Planning Board.

c) Feedback on recent VEC recommendations: On July 19 Machnowski submitted to the Municipal Clerk two VEC approved letters to be distributed to Verona Mayor, Town Council and Town Manager. One of the letters had several recommendations for Verona Lake, and the other letter recommended to adopt a Complete Streets Resolution. There is no response from Essex County on the concerns and suggestions for the lake. Verona Township has no plans at this time to adopt a Complete Streets resolution.

Machnowski was told that Essex County was going to test the water at Verona Lake, after O'Farrell submitted photos of dead fish. She counted a total of ten dead catfish and then she spoke to a fisherman who was there specifically for catfish as he eats them. He said some people don't want them and instead of releasing they keep them in a bucket and they die, when the people leave they dump them in the lake. Perhaps it's a dissolved oxygen issue. There are Dissolved Oxygen Kits that you can buy in Amazon: It comes in a plastic case and contains everything needed to perform 30 tests. The price is \$62.48.

The town is waiting on funding to install the bike racks and community garden proposed by the VEC. There is a Partners for Health grant to fund both. DeCarlo is working on community garden plans bust has a few other major projects he needs to get done first. Once we have some initial plans we can start to go from there. Other Complete Streets projects are already underway and there is a team working on better street painting, crossing guards, stop signs, etc.

Street entrance) is planned to get started on in April of 2019. The town didn't want to start on that before the Library Grand Re-Opening. But on September 11 DeCarlo contacted Machnowski explaining that since the site has been cleaned up and the area has been graded and landscaped, it does not seem to be enough space to utilize the area for a rain garden. DeCarlo asked if we want to re-visit the front of the Community Center or take a look at the library site now that it is completed. VEC members mentioned that the previously proposed site at the Community Center had several problems. Chuck Molinaro, DPW Manager, did not recommend that site due to high maintenance and liability concerns. DiBartolo will revisit the library site and work with DiCarlo to see if they can come up with a better location.

On July 20 the VEC sent a letter about Single-Use Carryout Bag Policy to Governor Murphy, Senator Pennacchio, Assemblywoman DeCroce, and Assemblyman Webber. On August 27 Governor Murphy vetoed A-3267/S-2600. This bill would have placed a five-cent fee on single-use carryout bags provided by certain types of stores to customers. The VEC followed ANJEC recommendations and opposed the bill, which, if signed as it was, would have preempted local legislation on the matter. Instituting a five-cent fee on single-use bags that only applies to certain retailers does not go far enough to address the problems created by plastic bags. The VEC asked for a ban on single-use carryout bags. Saltalamacchia mentioned that the five-cent fee is charged in Long Island and it is helping to change behavior thus reducing the amount of single-use plastic bags. Gloan added that canvas bags, which are washable and reusable, are the solution.

6. New Business:

a) 825 Bloomfield Avenue Tree Removal.

Pearson took photos and sent emails to Machnowski, Jack McEvoy, Cavallo, DeCarlo and Tom Jacobsen about 30-35 trees that were taken down at 825 Bloomfield Avenue (between Chestnut and Fells Road). She wanted to know what the reason or basis was for this and if the property owner notified the town, or if he was granted permission to take them down. DeCarlo answered that he was not previously informed of any work to be done on that site. Construction Official/Code Enforcement Officer Jacobsen explained that he saw a tree company at 825 Bloomfield Avenue performing tree removal at the site. There was no communication or prior approval for the work being performed. He stopped at the site, the foreman of the tree company stated there were numerous dead trees, and many declining trees including large dead limbs that had fallen over the sidewalks on Bloomfield Avenue and Chestnut Road.

Jacobsen notified the Chairman of the Shade Tree Commission Bob Dickinson to meet him on site. They toured the site with the foreman and Dickinson agreed in principal the work discussed. The new owner is West Caldwell Councilman Michael Crudele. Jacobson met with Crudele on August 24, 2018 to discuss the property. Crudele stated his goal is to clean up the property and has hired a landscape architect to design a landscape plan. Previously Jacobson obtained the original folder of the property from the Engineer's office. The building was built in 1987, and a landscape plan at the time was approved. He advised Crudele that the new landscape plan submitted must conform with the original approved site plan, and if the new site plan varies from the original site plan, it must be approved by the Town Engineer, Shade Tree Commission, and possibly a Board. Crudele stated he will abide by all requirements and that there is no plan to remove any more trees.

DeCarlo reviewed the Township ordinance § 136 Trees, which states "No person or persons shall destroy and remove two (2) or more trees with a diameter in excess of four (4) inches, measured one (1) foot above the ground, growing upon any unimproved lot or tract of land within the Borough of Verona, County of Essex, unless said destruction or removal is accomplished in accordance with the provisions of this chapter". The ordinance

only applies to "unimproved lots", being any clearly defined piece of land, the location, dimension and boundaries of which are determined by the latest official record, upon which no structure permanently affixed to the land, with a roof, and intended for shelter, housing or enclosure, has been constructed. DeCarlo also pointed out that "§ 136-5. Inspection by Borough Engineer" has grey areas, they mention "previous application" or "applications". Was the intent to look at previous site plans, when the lot was an "unimproved lot"? DeCarlo added that "§ 136-6. Basis for determination by Borough Engineer", says "The Borough Engineer shall, at all times, follow the intent of this chapter, which is to preserve trees wherever this can be accomplished". He pointed out that the intent of the chapter seems to be based on definition, and that is defined an unimproved lot or tract of land. He said that it is a very slippery slope when "intent" is left up to interpretation.

DeCarlo also mentioned that the town will be looking to modify Verona's code about this and many other similar land use items that have "gray areas" or where the "intent" is not clearly established or defined. He said that since the town is going to re-examine the master plan soon, now is a great time to think about all of this and work together to move forward. During the email exchanged Gloria mentioned that the VEC has been talking about the need of a real Tree Ordinance that applies to private properties and improved lots since (at least) 2009. A large group of residents signed and presented a petition to the Town Council asking for a town arborist, a tree ordinance and a "Not Net Tree Loss Policy" in Verona many years ago. Residents sent several letters to newspapers and held several meetings, including meetings with the Shade Tree Commission. The petition was presented by Laura Morowitz at the Town Council meeting on June 15, 2009 and residents were told that the town was going to hire an arborist, but nothing happened.

Gloria added that this is a matter of a scientific perspective, the scientific (and economic) benefit of trees. Trees have a high return on investment due to ecosystem services. Experts suggest that every dollar invested on tree planting and management can result in a high return on investment even as high as over 500%. The compensatory value of the urban forest in the continental US is estimated to be worth more than \$2.4 trillion, with \$18.3 billion worth of ecosystem benefits occurring annually. Trees and greenspace provide important direct and indirect benefits social and biological benefits such as:

- Reducing stormwater runoff
- Reducing air and water pollution
- Reducing energy costs and use associated with heating and cooling
- Reducing the urban heat island
- Protecting roadways and reducing the amount of asphalt sealers required
- Reducing noise pollution
- Providing valuable carbon storage and sequestration... and much more.

Gloria mentioned that DeCarlo suggested to review West Orange tree ordinance as a starting point, but she pointed out that their ordinance allows property owners to cut down three trees a year without a permit and many properties in Verona don't even have three trees. She added that last year "Several West Orange residents...expressed concern about the many trees that were recently cut down..."

See article "Residents Request Review of Tree Ordinance in West Orange" from Aug 2017:

https://www.tapinto.net/towns/west-orange/sections/government/articles/residents-request-review-of-tree-ordinance-in-wes

DeCarlo and Jacobsen agreed with Gloria. Jacobsen said that over the years there have been many discussions regarding a tree ordinance. He added that it is clear that the ordinance must be re-examined and hopefully this will be the "tipping point" that we can all come together with Cavallo, the Mayor and Council to come up with a comprehensive tree ordinance that is clear, concise, and reasonably enforceable.

b) Soil Erosion issues:

-91 Fairway Avenue

O'Farrell and DiBartolo sent Machnowski information and photos about soil erosion issues. Machnowski contacted DeCarlo, he explained that he received a complaint from 73 Fairway on the second week of August .

They were calling about soil erosion sediment from the ongoing construction project at 91 Fairway Ave. Jacobsen, Molinaro and DeCarlo visited the site and noticed that most if not all the soil erosion control measures were damaged or missing. DeCarlo noticed that there were some areas where the silt fences had failed. Silt fences are not a good idea for steep slopes since they can trap water and hold back large volumes of water until it reaches the top of the fence which is acts like a dam. Once the dam breaks then flood waters and ravage the area below. He told the owner at 91 Fairway that properly installed hay bales are more practical in this situation. He called Matt D'Alessandro from HEPSCD and he agreed. D'Alessandro issued a stop work on that site and instructed the owner to he make the repairs and install hay bales. Jacobsen and DeCarlo called Tara at 73 Fairway to let her know the outcome.

-White Rock Road (Hilltop Pulte Homes)

DeCarlo said that the same thing has happened here. The silt fences have failed. There are actually pictures and videos from O'Farrell and DiBartolo showing this. HEPSCD was inundated with calls about this site. They issued a complete stop work on August 17th. Looks like Pulte was working over that weekend so probably they are going to be fined. HEPSCD has also called in NJDEP because they also have jurisdiction on this because of the size of the project and drainage area. Matt D'Alessandro informed that they visited the site to address this entire issue with them.

c) VEC Letter to the Town Council regarding Tree Ordinance.

Mr. Cavallo recently told Machnowski that a New Tree Ordinance will probably be discussed at the next Town Council meeting on September 17, 2018. Members discussed the attached letter. The letter was approved by the VEC following a motion by DiBartolo, seconded by Auteri. All members were in favor.

7. Training:

a) "Asking the Right Stormwater Questions" Training.

Kerry Kirk Pflugh, Director of the Office of Local Government Assistance at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, reminded Verona authorities that the Tier A MS4 NJPDES Permit requires Verona (which is a Tier A Municipality) to ensure that current municipal board and governing body members that review and approve applications for development and redevelopment projects (i.e. planning and zoning board members), complete the "Asking the Right Questions in Stormwater Review Training Tool" by July 1, 2018 (new members are within 6 months of commencement of duties).

This training video is posted at:

http://water.rutgers.edu/Projects/MunicipalOfficialTraining/E-Tool%20(FINAL)/story.html?usp=send_formwww.nj.gov/dep/stormwater/training.htm

The Tier A Municipality must certify in each annual report that municipal board and governing body members have completed the necessary training and must maintain a list of the names and dates of individuals that have completed the training, which shall be kept in its Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SPPP).

Machnowski, DiBartolo and Pearson already took this course and recommended the rest of the VEC members to take it as well. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the program at 609-633-7021 or stormwatermanager@dep.nj.gov

Case managers are listed at http://www.nj.gov/dep/dwq/msrp_managers.htm

b) Recently enacted Soil Conservation District Rules. VEC members, please read new rules.

http://hepsoilnj.org/soil-compaction-mitigation/

Effective December 7, 2017, in accordance with P.L. 2010, Chapter 113, the State Soil Conservation Committee has revised its New Jersey Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Standards to include provisions for mitigating the negative impacts of soil compaction on construction sites subject to review and regulation by the New Jersey Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Act, N.J.S.A. 4:24-39, et seq. These provisions have been included within Chapters 8 (Topsoil) and 19 (Land Grading) of the Standards.

Machnowski recommended members to review materials and bring any questions to the next meeting.

8. Site Plan Review:

DiBartolo and Machnowski serve in the VEC site plan review subcommittee. Walter Steinmann was in this subcommittee as well, but he recently moved to Germany. Auteri volunteered to serve in the subcommittee if needed. Machnowski will provide Auteri with ANJEC materials and other relevant training sources for site plan review. The Verona Environmental Commission frequently receives applications to review and submit comments to the Board of Adjustment and Planning Board. Unfortunately, in many cases, enough time is not given to properly prepare comments. Sean DiBartolo, P.E., LEED AP, is the main VEC member in charge of reviewing plans and preparing VEC comments. DiBartolo gave a summary of VEC comments submitted on September 11th, 2018 to the Board of Adjustment regarding the Resubmission for the Kensington Senior Development LLC at 420 Bloomfield Avenue and 312 Claremont Avenue (comments and marked up plans attached). Pearson explained that the new full time Town Assistant Engineer, Mike DeCarlo, is qualified for most of the projects, but when additional certifications are needed he contacts Township Engineer Glenn Beckmeyer. Pearson added that during Planning Board or Board of Adjustment meetings, experts testify for applicants and residents can ask questions but they cannot make statements.

Mayor Ryan mentioned that he was told that the boards are highly independent, nevertheless he has encouraged them to call additional experts to testify that are not associated to the applicant. He added that using independent experts will cost money, but it will be money well spent. Pearson added that independent experts can be paid with bonds required from applicants for that purpose. Mayor Ryan recommended Machnowski to contact the Chairman from the Board of Adjustment and Planning Board and require more time to properly review plans and applications. DiBartolo also suggested to request again that the plans and application materials be provided digitally, such as pdf or similar file format. Members agreed with the suggestions. Machnowski will contact the Boards.

9. Attachments

- a) VEC Letter to the Town Council regarding Tree Ordinance.
- b) Comments and marked up plans submitted on September 11th, 2018 to the Board of Adjustment regarding 420 Bloomfield Avenue and 312 Claremont Avenue.

10. Adjournment

There being no further questions or discussion, the meeting of the Environmental Commission was adjourned at 9:15 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for October 10, 2018 at 7:00 pm.



Verona Environmental Commission

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

September 12, 2018

To Mayor Ryan, Members of the Verona Town Council, Manager Cavallo and Engineer DeCarlo,

As members of the Environmental Commission, we frequently weigh in on environmental matters of importance that we see throughout our township. We strive for the betterment of quality of life for all residents of Verona.

Over this past week, the Commission was made aware of an inordinate amount of mature trees that were removed from <u>825 Bloomfield Ave</u>. The tree removal company claimed that many were dying and some had dead branches, however we do not see proof of such claims.

The Commission would never petition to maintain unhealthy and or dangerous trees on any property within town. We have posted numerous times on Facebook, warning our residents of the unfortunate circumstances that NJ is facing with Ash tree infestations and other tree maladies. We understand that in some cases, trees may not be saved and must be taken down.

However, in reviewing our Tree Ordinance, as created and approved on October 20, 1964 the limitations of its applicability on only "unimproved lots" makes this ordinance more or less inept and powerless. In the 1960's there were probably hundreds of "unimproved lots" in town. Today, 54 years later, we know that is no longer the case. We also know that our township has been experiencing storms that have led to unmitigated flooding incidents that are certainly exacerbated by the loss of mature trees.

The Commission is making a formal recommendation to the Township forthwith to immediately rectify and revise the existing Tree Ordinance Chapter 136: "Trees" by removing the word "unimproved" from its provisions and updating all references to "Borough" to that of "Township".

136-1 Purpose:

The Borough Township of Verona finds that the unregulated and uncontrolled destruction and removal of trees upon lots and tracts of lands within the Borough of Verona has resulted in increased soil erosion, widespread flooding. has decreased fertility of the soil, has created dust and mosquito breeding places, has caused depreciation in property values and has impaired the stability and value of real estate, with the result that there has been and will be in the future a detriment to the public health and welfare which requires the passage of this chapter.

136-3: Destruction of Trees Restricted

No person or persons shall destroy and remove two (2) or more trees with a diameter in excess of four (4) inches, measured one (1) foot above the ground, growing upon any unimproved lot or tract of land within the Borough Township of Verona, County of Essex, unless said destruction or removal is accomplished in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.";

136-4: Application Procedure

Any person or persons desiring to remove or destroy any such trees in excess of the sizes referred to in § 136-3 above shall file an application therefor with the Borough Township Engineer on the forms provided for such purpose. Said application shall identify the lot or tract of land upon which the trees are located, disclose the name and address of the owner, tenant or duly authorized agent of said owner and tenant and shall show the exact location of the trees sought to be destroyed or removed.

136-5: Inspection by Borough Township Engineer

If said application, together with any previous application or applications, discloses that two (2) or more trees in excess of the size referred to in § 136-3 of this chapter, are to be destroyed or removed from said unimproved lot or tract of land, the Borough Township Engineer shall examine into the matter by personal inspection of the premises referred to in the application, by inspecting the trees referred to therein and by observing the drainage condition and topographical condition existing upon said lands and the vicinity thereof.

136-6: Basis of Determination by Borough Township Engineer

After completing his examination, the Borough Township Engineer shall make a determination with respect to whether or not the permit applied for should be granted. The Borough Township Engineer shall, at all times, follow the intent of this chapter, which is to preserve trees wherever this can be accomplished, and he shall not make a favorable determination with respect to the aforesaid application unless he finds that one (1) or more of the following conditions exist:

A.

The area where such tree is located will be occupied by a building or structure, a driveway or recreation area, a roadway, a drainage right-of-way or a server line, or the area where such tree is located within fifteen (15) feet of any of the foregoing.

<u>B.</u>

The area where such tree is located has a depression or fill of land which is deemed injurious or dangerous to said tree or other trees located nearby.

<u>C.</u>

The presence of said tree is likely to cause hardship or will endanger the public or an adjoining property owner by reason of it being diseased or dead or for some other adequate reason within the intent of this chapter.

136-7: Issuance of Permit; Refusal

If the determination of the Borough Township Engineer is favorable, he or she shall issue the permit applied for. If said determination is unfavorable, the Borough Township Engineer shall promptly notify the applicant in writing with respect thereto and shall not issue said permit.

136-8 Violations and Penalties

Any person who violates any of the provisions of this chapter shall, upon conviction thereof, be subject to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500.) or imprisonment in the county jail for a period not exceeding ninety (90) days, or both.

And finally by replacing the term "unimproved lot" with "lot" among the list of definitions in 136-2.

Our immediate recommendation to remove the definitive term "unimproved" is for the short term until such time that the Township may draft and adopt a new ordinance which would provide further regulations with more strict specifications, terms and enforcement provisions to strengthen the essence of the ordinance and to provide all residents with a standard which shall be upheld.

We believe that this imperative revision cannot be put on the back burner or wait until the other properties are denuded and therefore degraded without accountability. We urge the Council, the Mayor, the Manager and our Engineer to move forward on this with expedience. We also ask that this Council consider the new Tree Ordinance soon to be drafted as a high priority.

We believe that being termed a "Tree Town" or a "Tree City" carries with it a responsibility to actually protect all of the trees that protect our properties, our neighbors' properties as well as lending health benefits and beauty to our entire township.

Best Regards

Gloria Machnowski, Chairperson Verona Environmental Commission

fhil-

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Verona Environmental Commission

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September 11th, 2018

Mrs. Kelly Lawrence, Board of Adjustment Administrator Building Department / Construction Code Office Township of Verona, 880 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, NJ 07044

Dear Mrs. Kelly Lawrence,

The Verona Environmental Commission reviewed the Resubmission for the Kensington Senior Development LLC - 420 Bloomfield Avenue and 312 Claremont Avenue. The comments below and attached marked up plans are provided for the Board's consideration.

- 1) The applicant continues to indicate that the Verona Stormwater Management ordinance is the appropriate regulation for the design. This is true to the extent that the the municipal ordinance is providing stricter more protective criteria towards the stormwater management of the project than the NJDEP Stormwater Management Rules (NJAC 7:8). See NJDEP Stormwater Rules FAQ 12.3, which indicates municipal ordinances can be amended to be more stringent than the requirements of the Stormwater Management rules, but not to be more lax.
- 2) The applicant claims in the Existing Conditions section of the Stormwater Management Report that the lot at 312 Claremont Avenue can be excluded from stormwater calculations. However, the submitted project consists of a site comprised of two lots that cannot be treated separately. Per the definition of "Site" in both the Verona Ordinance and NJDEP regulations, the 312 Claremont Avenue lot cannot be excluded. NJDEP has held that review of an application is done for the whole site and not individual lots comprising a site. Since the site (and both lots) drain to the same watershed, the 312 Claremont Avenue Lot cannot be excluded in the analysis.
- 3) Milling and/or paving a parking lot does not count as disturbances per NJDEP Stormwater Rules FAQ 4.3, provided that there are no changes to the existing stormwater drainage system. The installation of trench drain, inlet drain, and ductile iron pipes on the 312 Claremont Avenue lot indicated in the latest submission constitutes changes to the existing stormwater drainage system. Therefore, the area of milling and/or paving is considered a disturbance (14,370SF or 0.33 acres) and is included in the total disturbance for the site. Scaling off of Sheets SP-5 and SP-5A, we estimated the total land disturbance for the project as 43,608.5 SF.
- 4) The Stormwater Management Report indicates that for the proposed conditions there is a "decrease in the expected runoff at all times throughout the design storms." Please confirm that the time of concentrations remain unchanged or are increased for the entire site, not just the 420

Bloomfield Avenue lot.

- 5) Detail for Inlet "Type E" shown on Sheet SP-5A for 312 Claremont Avenue lot is not provided in submitted drawing set.
- 6) The applicant indicates in their Low-Impact Development (LID) Checklist, Nonstructural Approach to Site Design narrative that they consider reducing impervious coverage on the site as meeting Nonstructural Strategy No. 2. However, Strategy No. 2 calls to "minimize impervious surface and break up or disconnect the flow of runoff over impervious surfaces." The applicant has not demonstrated that they intend to break up or disconnect the flow of runoff (thereby increasing time of concentration and promoting infiltration). Just addressing the reduction of impervious surface does not meet Strategy No. 2.
- 7) The applicant does not provide their site design approach related to other Nonstructural Strategies in their LID Checklist submission: Minimize land disturbance including clearing and grading; Provide low maintenance landscaping that encourages retention and planting of native vegetation and minimizes the use of lawns, fertilizers, and pesticides. Each strategy should be addressed as to why it was not incorporated in the design.
- 8) The applicant indicates that they are incorporating vegetated buffers into their design approach in Section 3.1 of the LID Checklist. However, those buffer are ineffective if they are placed upgradient of impervious areas that develop runoff, such as is the case for the majority of this development.
- 9) The applicant indicates in Section 3.3 of the LID Checklist the parking design elements for the project. The information provided should reflect the site as a whole and not one lot or another separately.
- 10) The applicant indicates in Section 3.4 of the LID Checklist that there is no room on the site to accommodate any stormwater conveyance system. However, there is a 17.57' pervious surface strip along the 420 Bloomfield Avenue east boundary of the property. Could the building footprint be shifted to the eastern property line and allow for a vegetated drainage swale to convey site runoff that allows for infiltration back into the ground at the west end of the property?
- 11) Proposed Improved Lot coverage is listed separately for each lot on Sheet SP-1 and per NJDEP and Verona requirements, the total coverage should be listed for the entire site. Scaling off of the Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan set, we estimated a Proposed Improved Lot Coverage as 86.3% based on a Proposed "Improved Area" of 53,340 SF. Scaling off the Boundary & Topographic Survey drawing, we estimated the existing Improved Lot Coverage as 91.1% based on an Existing "Improved Area" of 56,450 SF.
- 12) The applicant indicates in their response letter addressing Beckmeyer Comment b. for Block 701, Lot 3, that a soldier pile and lagging wall is to be installed on the eastern property boundary. Groundwater elevations or depths have not been provided in this application. However, if groundwater is shallow and exposed by the soldier pile and lagging wall, soil loss could potentially occur through the lagging and impact structure on the backslope of the wall.
- 13) The total disturbance for the site is over an acre of land and is considered a Major Development.

The applicant will need to provide a maintenance plan for stormwater management measures that meets the requirements of the Verona Stormwater Ordinance or NJAC 7:8-5.8.

- 14) The applicant should be asked to use permeable pavement or permeable pavers in the parking areas and driveways on Claremont Avenue and Bloomfield Avenue in order to reduce the stormwater runoff. The applicant should attempt to add landscaped islands into the open parking or bioswales along the perimeter. The applicant must consider and integrate many other nonstructural stormwater management strategies into their design plan for completion.
- 15) The applicant should be asked to require the contractor to recover, recycle and reuse the construction and demolition scrap. EPA shows that if we grow the recovery and reuse building materials, we could reduce the environmental burden of new construction. When designing buildings, both inside and outside, incorporate sustainable materials whenever possible. Please see attached the Low Impact Planning and Construction Checklist. This suggested list was compiled by the VEC based on best available practices.
- 16) Other important considerations include the walkability and safety of an area heavily traveled by school aged children and park-goers alike. The proposed plans seems to allow cars to dart in and out of a building in our downtown area. Traffic woes stemming from 92 additional assisted living units seems unfathomable.
- 17) The development does not seem to meet the responsibility to offer 15 to 20 percent affordable housing units in this building, which will only add to Verona's need to add further affordable housing units in another area of an already overburdened township.
- 18) Finally, this is actually in direct conflict with Verona's Master Plan for the downtown zone which states that the Downtown Zone goal is to "Protect the integrity of existing retail and business development at a pedestrian scale". Section 8, page 16. The Planning Board already denied the applicant's request to revise the zoning ordinance to allow the proposed type of use in Verona's town center. Their decision to maintain the current goals and types of development in Downtown should be strongly considered and respected.

Best Regards,

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