



Verona Environmental Commission

600 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, New Jersey 07044

www.veronaacc.org

Minutes of the Verona Environmental Commission Regular Meeting on Wednesday, May 16, 2018 starting at 7 pm, at the Conference Room, Verona Community Center, 880 Bloomfield Ave., Verona N.J.

Attendees: Gloria Machnowski (Chairwoman), Anthony Saltalamacchia (Vice Chairman), Jessica Pearson, Martin Golan, Sarah Yauch O'Farrell, Sean DiBartolo, Walter Steinmann and Frank Ceccacci.

1. The Chairperson called the meeting to order and read the notice of Open Public Meetings Act.
2. The floor was opened to public participation. Jessica moved the motion, seconded by Walter, and approved by all. There were no public comments.
3. Minutes from the April 18, 2018 meeting were approved by members after fixing a few typos. Sean moved the motion, seconded by Tony, and approved by all present members.

4. Updates :

- Grant award letter review: ANJEC selected the VEC project "Rain Garden for the Community Center" for a grant of \$1,497. This is a 1 year grant, projects must be completed by June 1, 2019. A progress report is due by October 5, 2018. Final documentation must be submitted by June 14, 2019. ANJEC asks to be invited to the kickoff and all public events related to the project. Signage or documents produced with grant funding should display ANJEC logo & tagline. Direct outreach to inform and engage residents is required, as well as photos and copies of outreach materials (postings, press, articles, flyers, brochures).

If VEC members accept this grant and commit to provide all of the inputs and tasks contained in the proposal, the VEC Chairperson and a VEC member must sign the form and return to ANJEC by September 1, 2018. Two thirds of the funding will be mailed to the town when ANJEC receives the signed agreement. ANJEC will remit the balance once the project is completed and all documentation received: such as records of project expenditures (vouchers/purchase orders/receipts), in-kind labor, outreach materials and activities. ANJEC will reimburse budgeted project expenses that have been paid out by municipality via a signed voucher up to the amount of the grant. They reserve the right to withdraw financial support if the project does not maintain progress or falls significantly behind schedule.

Gloria mentioned that DPW manager, Chuck Molinaro, had some concerns when the grant application was submitted. Tony proposed to meet Mr. Molinaro, and Town Assistant Engineer Mike DeCarlo at the proposed rain garden site to discuss their concerns. Sean and Gloria will attend as well. Jessica proposed to table the vote to decide if the VEC will accept the grant or not until the next meeting. Members agreed.

- Earth Day Outcome: The VEC celebrated Earth Day with a Tree Giveaway and cleanup on April 21. The event took place at Grove Park, 42 Grove Avenue in Verona. The tree seedlings were greenhouse grown by the State Forest Service and came in 8" recyclable tubes. VEC Commissioners distributed 300 native trees such as Eastern Redbud, Swamp White Oak, and Eastern White Pine. Volunteers removed plenty of garbage, including bottles of vodka, pipes and fencing. During the cleanup Tony found a wagon wheel dating from the

early twentieth century. Verona Councilman Jack McEvoy participated in the cleanup and took the wheel home to restore it.

- Report: Martin attended the Essex County Environmental Commission Round Table, at the Essex County Cedar Grove Park, Robert J O'Toole Community Center on April 30th. The event theme was "Breaking Free from Disposable Plastic". It highlighted single use bag myths and provided model ordinances for municipal commissioners to enact. N. Dini Checko, Plastic Pollution Project Director for the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, shared statewide initiatives, and Patricia Canning from the South Orange Environmental Commission detailed the recent townwide single use plastic reduction efforts. Sustainable Verona is planning a Checkout Bag Ordinance presentation to the Town Council in June.

Frank mentioned that he picks up plastic bags and bottles on a regular basis at the West Essex Trail. Members talked about studies on living species with the ability to break down plastic (ideonella sakaiensis bacteria, wax worm caterpillars and mealworms). Walter pointed out that New Jersey doesn't have deposit laws, but almost all states have deposit laws to incentivize the recycling of bottles and cans. Gloria added that recycling plastics will not fix the plastic pollution crisis. Jessica mentioned that Verona is paying to recycle, instead of making money from it, and as a consequence taxes will go up. VEC members talked about related articles: "More towns are saying no to plastic bags. Is a statewide bag ban coming?" from NJ.com/news and Star-Ledger's "For N.J towns, it's time to bag a plastic menace". Long Beach Township new ordinance requires shoppers to bring reusable bags or pay a small fee for paper or recycled plastic bags. Under the ordinance, businesses would be prohibited from giving out plastic bags. Instead, customers are encouraged to bring their own bags. If a customer wants a bag, the business can hand out paper bags, but the customer would be charged 10 cents. Long Beach joins places like Longport, Teaneck and Ventnor as members of NJ municipalities that have passed ordinances to either ban plastic bags or place a fee on their use. Various other communities, like Monmouth Beach and Point Pleasant Beach, are considering similar policies. A bill currently in the State Assembly, sponsored by John McKeon (D-Essex,) would gradually decrease and eventually ban the use of non-compostable plastic bags in New Jersey. The current bill is the seventh version since 2007. No version of the bill has ever been advanced out of committee. McKeon's bill is currently the only proposal in Trenton to curb single-use plastic bags statewide. Since 2010, at least five other similar bills have been introduced by state lawmakers, but none of those made it out of committee either. And since 2007, there have been at least 12 bills aimed at creating plastic bag recycling programs or studying the effects of plastic bags on New Jersey's environmental health. None of those advanced out of committee despite being sponsored by legislators from both sides of the aisle. VEC members mentioned that banning plastic bags is a good start, but plastic production has to be reduced and replaced with sustainable alternatives.

- Natural Resource Inventory: The main contact person at the Land Conservancy is on sick leave, Verona will wait for her to return. A draft was received by the township and interns are filling in required information.

- Site visit: upcoming parking at the end of Park Pl. Steve Neale mentioned Mike DeCarlo is creating a parking lot concept and will send for bids on both, conventional and permeable pavement construction. Sean will contact Mike and Chris Perez to see if a meeting can be arranged.

- Recommendations for Verona Lake: create wetland buffer, reduce runoff, prevent nutrients entering from golf course, install solar power aerators, introduce lily pad. Walter talked to Essex County Liaison Julius Coltre, who suggested that the VEC submits a letter of recommendation to the Essex County Freeholders. Walter mentioned that aerators work only at the surface level, and that's not enough, you need also bubblers at the bottom of the lake. Members talked about information provided by Verona resident Virginia Citrano about Lake George Association (LGA). They focus on protecting their lake from pollution, sediment, stormwater runoff, and harmful nutrients. Verona could do something similar. One of the greatest threats to Lake George's water quality is untreated stormwater flowing into the lake. They focus on stopping untreated stormwater from reaching the lake. They also restored wetlands at the head of the lake to protect water quality. All flowing stormwater captures pollution, sediment, harmful nutrients, and salt — none of that is beneficial to the lake.

When the stormwater has not been treated, the harmful substances that the stormwater carries flow directly into the streams that feed the lake and the lake itself. Jessica mentioned that the removal of trees have also a big impact in our waterways' water quality. She added that there are several flooding problems in town, such as Sunset Ave. and Brookdale Ave. Tony mentioned there are also issues at the Water Treatment plant, and proposed more inspections to protect buffers of water bodies. Frank proposed to ask for enforcement of pesticide regulations. Members agreed to write a draft of a recommendation letter to be submitted to the freeholders through the town council. Jessica proposed to include in the letter not only the current problems and how to mitigate them, but also how to prevent further problems. Members also recommended to test the water on the south side of the Verona Lake. Sean mentioned that perhaps this is something that Mike DeCarlo could arrange with Rutgers. Gloria will put together a draft letter with all the recommendations and present at the next VEC meeting for approval.

• Small Cells, Mini Cell Towers, Wireless Facilities: Members discussed the Health Risk Of 5G. According to <https://ehtrust.org/small-cells-mini-cell-towers-health-letters-scientists-health-risk-5g/> scientists studying the health effects of 5G and wireless radiation are calling for a halt to the rollout of 5G and a halt to increasing radiofrequency radiation exposures to the public. They recommend that wireless exposure to the public should be minimized and the deployment of small cell antennas into neighborhoods should be halted. Jessica mentioned that Verona Councilman Alex Roman recommends adopting a wireless ordinance in Verona, as well as avoiding the installation on the right of way, but he thinks that a total ban will be overturned. According to the 47 U.S. Code § 332 - Mobile services <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/47/332>

(7) Preservation of local zoning authority

(A) General authority

Except as provided in this paragraph, nothing in this chapter shall limit or affect the authority of a [State](#) or local government or instrumentality thereof over decisions regarding the placement, construction, and modification of personal wireless service facilities.

(B) Limitations

(i) The regulation of the placement, construction, and modification of personal wireless service facilities by any [State](#) or local government or instrumentality thereof—

(I) shall not unreasonably discriminate among providers of functionally equivalent services; and

(II) shall not prohibit or have the effect of prohibiting the provision of personal wireless services.

(ii) A [State](#) or local government or instrumentality thereof shall act on any request for authorization to place, construct, or modify personal wireless service facilities within a reasonable period of time after the request is duly filed with such government or instrumentality, taking into account the nature and scope of such request.

(iii) Any decision by a [State](#) or local government or instrumentality thereof to deny a request to place, construct, or modify personal wireless service facilities shall be in writing and supported by substantial evidence contained in a written record.

(iv) No [State](#) or local government or instrumentality thereof may regulate the placement, construction, and modification of personal wireless service facilities on the basis of the environmental effects of radio frequency emissions to the extent that such facilities comply with the [Commission's](#) regulations concerning such emissions.

(v) Any [person](#) adversely affected by any final action or failure to act by a State or local government or any instrumentality thereof that is inconsistent with this subparagraph may, within 30 days after such action or failure to act, commence an action in any court of competent jurisdiction. The court shall hear and decide such action on an expedited basis. Any [person](#) adversely affected by an act or failure to act by a State or local government or any instrumentality thereof that is inconsistent with clause (iv) may petition the [Commission](#) for relief.

In addition the Federal Communications Commission Office of Engineering & Technology 1997 Bulletin 65 "Evaluating Compliance with FCC - Guidelines for Human Exposure to Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields" states the following: "This revised OET Bulletin 65 has been prepared to provide assistance in

determining whether proposed or existing transmitting facilities, operations or devices comply with limits for human exposure to radiofrequency (RF) fields adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The bulletin offers guidelines and suggestions for evaluating compliance. However, it is not intended to establish mandatory procedures, and other methods and procedures may be acceptable if based on sound engineering practice.”

https://transition.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Engineering_Technology/Documents/bulletins/oet65/oet65.pdf

5. Upcoming Events:

- Green Fair & Open Streets Fest: May 19, 11 am-4 pm. Gloria will set up with Sarah, Frank and Walter. Jess will come at 11 am, Sean around 1 pm and Martin around 1:30 pm. The VEC will focus on reducing single use plastics, and encourage people to walk and bike more, and drive less, to reduce emissions. The VEC will distribute reusable bags and bottles and have the poster with pictures of plastic pollution in Verona Lake. In addition to the usual VEC table in the Civic Square, the VEC will have a registration table on Gould St. for the activities there.
- VHS initiative: Say no to plastic straws, support the VHS Marine Biology Club initiative. Take pictures and videos of not using straws and post/follow the club & the No Straw Challenge on Instagram: vhs_marinebio
- Gloria will receive soon a tray with 50 common milkweed plants and pollinator wildflowers seeds donated by ANJEC and Pinelands Nursery. This effort supports the NJ “Milkweed for Monarchs” program. The plants should be installed on township property, such as at a library, school or municipal building. VEC members approved to plant them at Grove Park. Gloria will require town authorization.
- Verona's MSW Recycling Rate - Walter reported that the recycling numbers from 2016 were unusual with all the concrete and soil in the disposal mix. He worked out the numbers taking out the concrete and oil soil. It looks like the residents recycled 947 tons of paper, corrugated, newspaper glass, aluminium, steel, plastic. The total tonnage of waste was 5364.38 tons either to transfer station or recycled. This is minus the oil soil and the concrete and represents a 17% recycle rate of these items in Verona for 2016. Gloria asked to compare with the 2011 data http://www.ecuanj.com/docs/RecyclingRates_08_11_v4.pdf Walter explained that the current recycling rate in Verona is around 64% including plant waste, but it is 45% without plants and with concrete and oil, while it is 17% if you only consider aluminum, plastic and paper minus oil and cement. Walter said that the residential recycling total tonnage per year is currently 8,000 -about 853 truckloads of recycling to transfer.
- Official Email Addresses, VeronaEC.org: most of the VEC members already switched to the new email address. Gloria asked members to let her know if they have any problems.
- Peckman Trail / River Cleanup is scheduled for June 2 (National Trails Day - 50th anniversary). Gloria, Sarah, Martin, Jessica and Sean are planning to attend and run the event.
- New Jersey Sustainability Summit: Thursday June 21, 2018 - 8:30am - 4:00pm at the College of New Jersey - Register at <http://www.sustainablejersey.com/events-trainings/2018-sustainability-summit/> The summit will explore how individual and community behaviors can impact the quality of necessities for better or worse, such as our air, water, health, economy, and so much more. The event attracts over 300 diverse participants from across New Jersey. \$35: Elected and appointed officials, public and non-profit employees, and green team volunteers. \$100: All other attendees.

6. New Business: Sean mentioned that several VEC members' terms are ending on 06/30/2018. Gloria confirmed that Jessica Pearson, Michael Foley, Walter Steinmann and Frank Ceccacci need to fill out the online form posted at <https://www.veronanj.org/boardsapp> if they wish to be considered for reappointment. Usually Mrs. Kiernan, Verona's Municipal Clerk, contacts all commissioners or board members that need to submit the form.

Adjournment – Next Meeting June 20, 2018.