

**Regular Meeting Minutes:**  
**Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at 7 p.m.**  
**Via Internet Conferencing**

<b>Members Present (Quorum Established at Four or More Members)</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jessica Pearson (Chair/Planning Board Liaison)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adam Bulger	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sean DiBartolo (Vice Chair/Plan Review)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kelly Peña	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Yauch O'Farrell	<input type="checkbox"/> Philip Beaulac (Alternate I)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fuad Dahan	<input type="checkbox"/> Christopher Tamburro (Gov. Body Liaison)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Walter Steinmann	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant Seat (Alternate II)	
	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>ACTION REQUIRED</b>
1.	<b>Call to Order by Jess:</b> a) Open Public Meetings Act Statement. b) Roll Call performed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Public Comment Period:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Public Comments</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Approval of December 11, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>MOTION to Approve:</b> Kelly; <b>Second:</b> Sarah.</li> <li><b>APPROVAL:</b> All Members Present AYE.</li> <li><b>Abstentions:</b> None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sean will email approved minutes to Township Clerk Kiernan and Public Information Officer Northrop and post them to the VEC website.</li> </ul>
4.	<b>Updates:</b>	
	<b>a) Peckman Kiosk Plans (On hold)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jess, Walter and Sean still need to meet to discuss content and design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lock replacement underway.</li> <li>Meetings should occur for layout and content between Sean, Walter and Jess.</li> </ul>
	<b>b) Newsletter: Spring 2025 focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ideas are discussed.</li> <li>Utilization of Jr. Commissioner as writing and idea resources is discussed.</li> <li>Ideas include: Earth Day Events.</li> <li>What's in the Peckman River: Adam and Trey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spring Release date should occur in early to mid-March.</li> </ul>
	<b>c) Sustainable Verona</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No meeting was held in January.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updates at each meeting.</li> </ul>
	<b>d) Junior Commissioners Welcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trey: VHS Sophomore; has been active in past VEC cleanups. Most interested in native plants to the area, and cleaning up the Peckman River.</li> <li>Noella: VHS Junior: Has been at past VEC cleanups; Most interested in cleanups at park and schools, gardening, and native species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No actions necessary.</li> </ul>
	<b>e) Earth Day Plant Sale:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jess developed an order spreadsheet with plants, plant information and pricing. Plant species would be contingent upon availability from our vendor partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jess will await feedback from the Manager and the plant vendors and rework the sheet before sending it out to all members for review.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The sheet was forwarded to Mgr. O'Sullivan and Hillcrest Farms for review and further discussion.</li> <li>○ No feedback has been gained as yet. The sale would be scheduled in late April, so locking in some information sooner than later is necessary.</li> <li>○ The plants that would be available at that early part of the season will likely be small and will not yet have bloomed, so pictures and online outreach with descriptions to market the plants will be important.</li> </ul>	
	<b>f) 2025 Poster Contest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Jess sent the criteria for the 2025 Poster Contest to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade elementary school teachers last week.</li> <li>○ Expanded the subject matter to include no idling, reducing plastic and shedding light on our open space parklands and how important they are.</li> <li>○ Entries are due by March 21, 2025.</li> <li>○ Awards ceremony to take place at the April 21, 2025 Town Council Meeting.</li> <li>○ In order to highlight all of the entries, Jess usually makes a video that is shown at the ceremony using all entries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jess will contact Municipal Clerk Kiernan to ensure scheduling of the ceremony.</li> </ul>
	<b>g) Everett Field Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Town Manager mentioned that new plan updates are forthcoming. Jess sent a message that the VEC wants to be in receipt of updated plans for our review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates when they become available.</li> </ul>
5.	<b>Ordinance Updates</b>	
	<b>a) Tree Ordinance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Jess spoke with Zoning code official and was made aware that hundreds of trees are being removed without mitigation due to a hole in our ordinance. Trees that are functioning are being termed as dead, and are not being replaced.</li> <li>○ Of over 600 tree removals, only 10 were replaced in 2024. We need to revisit the ordinance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jess sent Mgr. O'Sullivan an email requesting a discussion.</li> <li>• Updates when they are available.</li> </ul>
6.	<b>Plan Review</b>	
	<b>a) 61 Hillside Avenue</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Applicant seeks to add an attached garage to home frontage (over current impervious surface) and plans to remove a portion of the back patio.</li> <li>○ The net impervious surface addition was 80 ft<sup>2</sup> and does not trigger stormwater mitigation for a minor development. The PRC noted that the Applicant was over the 40% allowable coverage (proposing an increase from 44.7% to 45.9%) and therefore recommended that the Applicant install stormwater BMPs voluntarily.</li> <li>○ Recommended to include plantings from official planting list, and adherence to low impact development checklist.</li> <li>○ <b>MOTION to approve VEC PRC recommendations for 61 Hillside Avenue:</b> Sarah; <b>Second:</b> Walt.</li> <li>○ <b>APPROVAL:</b> All other Members Present AYE.</li> <li>○ <b>ABSTAIN:</b> None.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VEC PRC memo was emailed to the appropriate Board prior to this meeting.</li> </ul>

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	<p><b>b) 36 Westover Road</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Applicant seeks to install fencing that exceeds the height requirement in the front yard (corner lot that shares a side on Pompton Avenue).</li> <li>○ PRC inquires whether any tree removals are planned and where mitigation will occur.</li> <li>○ PRC recommends that care be taken around large tree in rear yard, when placing fence posts in the ground. This could disturb the roots and dripline of the tree.</li> <li>○ PRC recommends adherence to low impact development checklist.</li> <li>○ <b>MOTION to approve VEC PRC recommendations for 36 Westover Road: Adam; Second: Kelly.</b></li> <li>○ <b>APPROVAL:</b> All other Members Present AYE.</li> <li>○ <b>ABSTAIN:</b> None.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VEC PRC memo was emailed to the appropriate Board prior to this meeting.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>c) 15 Wilton Terrace</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Applicant seeks variances to add pool and related patios, retaining walls, etc. for an overall addition of 1,924 ft<sup>2</sup> of new impervious surface.</li> <li>○ Applicant's plans include a bioretention basin for stormwater mitigation, but plans did not include a planting list. The VEC recommended testimony be given to discuss planned plantings.</li> <li>○ A large 18-inch oak tree in the rear of the lot is planned for removal to make way for a retaining wall. The PRC recommended rethinking the wall alignment to allow this large tree to remain.</li> <li>○ PRC also recommended to use open paver system to allow for increased stormwater infiltration.</li> <li>○ PRC sent low impact development checklist and recommended adherence.</li> <li>○ <b>MOTION to approve VEC PRC recommendations for 36 Westover Road: Walter; Second: Adam.</b></li> <li>○ <b>APPROVAL:</b> All other Members Present AYE.</li> <li>○ <b>ABSTAIN:</b> None.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VEC PRC memo was emailed to the appropriate Board prior to this meeting.</li> </ul>
7.	<b>New Business</b>	
	<p><b>a) Planting list for Landscapes, Rain Gardens, and Bioretention Basins.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Jess began development of a list (largely compiling Rutgers recommendations and those from other valuable NJ sites).</li> <li>○ The list has been forwarded to both the Zoning Code Official and Mgr. O'Sullivan so that more discussion may occur.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion at next meeting.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>b) 2025 Memo for Recommended Plantings List</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Each year, the VEC sends a memo to the Council regarding recommended changes to the existing planting list.</li> <li>○ Members review the memo, which contains no updates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jessica will email the memo to the Council tomorrow.</li> </ul>
8.	<p><b>Adjournment: 8:29 p.m.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Next Meeting Wednesday, February 12, 2025.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Via Internet Conference.</li> </ul>
9.	<p><b>Meeting Minutes Approved: 2/12/2025.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Jessica Pearson, Chair, Verona Environmental Commission</li> </ul>	