



Verona Environmental Commission

600 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, New Jersey 07044

**VEC Public Meeting at the Verona Community Center – September 18, 2013
Started at 7:30 pm - Adjourned at 9:00 pm**

Members present: Gerard Shimonaski, Gloria Machnowski, James Loudon, Larry Lonergan, Virginia Citrano, Anthony Saltalamacchia, Jessica Pearson and Council Liaison Kevin Ryan.

MINUTES

I. Members approved May 5th and June 19th, 2013 minutes.

II. Members approved VEC report for ECEC newsletter, Fall 2013 (attached).

III. Members talked about Council commitment to use organic lawn care in Township property:

- ⤴ On June 20, 2013, a few days before school was over, a chemical pesticides application took place in Town Square without closing the area to the public or HBW students. No advance notification was provided, and no product information or date of application was posted.
- ⤴ On June 21st Gloria contacted Verona's authorities about this. She was told that the town had no knowledge that TruGreen was working in those areas and that it was an unacceptable mistake.
- ⤴ Kevin hopes that this will not happen again and explained that the Town sent one public works employee, Gary Grasso, for pesticide training and he was designated to supervise contractor work.

Regarding the schools:

- ⤴ Mr. McDevitt notified the public of a pesticide application to control poison ivy scheduled for F.N. Brown School last June.
- ⤴ So the VEC contacted McDevitt with information about environmentally friendly alternatives.
- ⤴ The pesticide application was canceled due to rain. Meanwhile McDevitt researched the alternatives and ordered horticultural vinegar. Then he notified the public about the use of vinegar in Verona School District.

Regarding Verona Pool:

- ⤴ On June 19 Verona Recreation sent a note stating “the perimeter fence at the Verona Community Pool will be sprayed to eliminate the poison ivy on Friday, June 21st, 2013. The Pool will open for the season on Saturday, June 22, 2013.”
- ⤴ Immediately after receiving the note the VEC contacted Mr. Cunningham encouraging him to use alternatives, since children walk barefoot, sit and lay down on the pool lawns. Glyphosate-based chemical pesticides like

Roudup are acutely toxic to humans. Glyphosate has been called by the EPA "extremely persistent" and half lives of over 100 days have been measured in field tests.

- ⤴ Nevertheless the pesticide application on the Pool took place as planned on June 21st and the pool opened for the season the following day.
- ⤴ During the August 12 Council Meeting, Martin mentioned that in the future the town will be using vinegar to control poison ivy at Verona Pool.

IV. VEC members' terms were renewed and new appointments took place by Resolution #111 during the September 16th Council Meeting. Jerry gave Gloria the Standing Rules and he will check if Larry Lonergan can vote in the VEC. Jerry agreed to become Vice-Chair and Jessica agreed to be the Secretary for the 2013-2015 period.

VEC current roster:

Name	Position	Term Expires
Gloria Machnowski	Chairwoman & Webmaster	06/30/16
Gerard Shimonaski	Vice-Chairman & Treasurer	06/30/14
Virginia M. Citrano	Commissioner	06/30/14
James Loudon	Commissioner	06/30/16
Anthony Saltalamacchia	Commissioner & HBW Environ. Club Advisor	06/30/14
Kerry Bass	Commissioner	06/30/16
Jessica Pearson	Secretary - Alternate #1	06/30/15
Larry Lonergan	Planning Board	06/30/16
Kevin Ryan	Council Liaison	

V. All agreed to put together a presentation about the program "Sustainable Jersey" to be presented to the Mayor and Council. Gloria will draft the presentation. The VEC recommends to register Verona in this program as soon as possible.

- ⤴ There is no registration or certification fee.
- ⤴ Participation gives you access to training, events and grants.
- ⤴ More information at www.sustainablejersey.com.
- ⤴ Kevin suggested to contact the Mayor and Council members requesting to include this presentation in the Council meeting.

VI. The VEC Idle Free Verona poster contest will be held on Wednesday, October 9 during Walk to School Day.

- ⤴ Martin confirmed that we have \$50 for each of the 5 winners from all 4 Public Elementary Schools and HBW and agreed to have the award ceremony at 7 pm during the Nov. 4th Council Meeting.
- ⤴ Martin suggested to expand the program to Our Lady of the Lake and The Children's Institute. The VEC will expand the program next year if we have enough volunteers. Virginia suggested to include VHS as well (Graphic Design and Environmental Club students, etc.).
- ⤴ We designed and printed flyers and contacted all participating schools' principals to request them to include this in their digital bulletins.
- ⤴ Forte will include the flyer in the school district "Friday Folder".

- ⤴ Steve Neale included the event in the township's Web site and VTV.
- ⤴ Ryan announced the event at the Sept. 16th Council meeting and he will mention it again during the October 7th Council Meeting.
- ⤴ The event is in the VEC Web site and the flyers are already posted around town (Community Center, Library, schools, Post Office, Verona Park, etc).
- ⤴ Tony will set up the exhibit at HBW, Gloria will set it up at Forest and F.N. Brown, Virginia at Laning and Jerry at Brookdale.

VII. Update on VEC's 20 year anniversary commemoration:

- ⤴ While Gloria and Mr. Cunningham were planning to plant the VEC tree by the Community Center's main entrance, 2 Bradford Pear trees were planted there by mistake because "the Master Plan only allows pear trees to be planted on Bloomfield Ave".
- ⤴ The VEC is not sure about that rule since Bradford Pear trees have a very weak branching structure.
- ⤴ Cunningham met with Chuck Molinaro and they suggested to leave the pear trees, and plant a shade tree in front of the playground.
- ⤴ Jim recommended to plant an Oak tree or a male Honey Locust.
- ⤴ Cunningham and Molinaro chose a White Oak, a native slow growing tree.
- ⤴ Mr. Martin agreed to plant the tree during last Spring but we are not sure if the township will pay for it.
- ⤴ Gloria will do the follow up and get estimates on the tree plaque so Ryan can check if the township will pay for it.
- ⤴ Jim suggested to include in the plaque "Quercus alba", the White Oak scientific name. He will try to provide a watering bag for the tree.

VIII. The commission decided to put together a presentation on Single Stream recycling based on Chatham experience. The VEC will also review Waste Industries' contract and our recycling ordinance to comply with state rules.

IX. Update about VEC comments for the Board of Adjustment and Planning Board:

- ⤴ Jerry, Virginia and Jim will continue in charge of studding and writing the VEC comments. Jessica offered to help as well.
- ⤴ Gloria mentioned that ideally those comments will be discussed during VEC meetings. If there is not enough time, then the comments will be send by email to all VEC members to get their feedback before submission.

X. Steep Slope Ordinance: since steep slope is mentioned in the Master Plan but never became an ordinance, Jerry will submit a draft to Helb to be presented to Council Members for consideration.

XI. VEC member Kerry Bass couldn't attend but she submitted the following matter: for the annual VHS band competition (October 6th) parents were asked for cardboard tray donations & Kerry volunteered to get them at Costco, upon doing that, they said they need 1,000. They're expecting a huge crowd. Kerry started thinking about the trash situation and suggested to coordinate trash stations with the town: bottle containers, trash containers and cardboard recycling containers, along with some scheduled pickups throughout. Gloria will discuss with Mr. McDevitt.

Attachment to item II
VEC report for ECEC newsletter, Fall 2013

The Verona Environmental Commission (VEC) is celebrating its 20 Year Anniversary. To commemorate the occasion the commission is planning to plant a native shade tree and place a plaque by the Community Center's playground this month.

The VEC is running its 5th Annual Poster Contest "Idle Free Verona" on Walk to School Day, October 9th. The contest, aimed to raise awareness for cleaner air, is opened to students from all public elementary schools in Verona and H. B. Whitehorne Middle School. The commission invites students to learn about the dangers of vehicle idling by watching the ANJEC winner video "Go Idle Free Verona". Students are encouraged to incorporate recycled materials into their creations. Their artwork will be exhibited at the schools and at the Verona Public Library. Winners will receive \$50 dollars during an awards ceremony in Town Hall on November 4th.

The VEC is also working with the township and schools to switch from synthetic pesticides to organic landscaping care, especially on the fields where children play. During the summer Verona schools started testing horticultural vinegar to control poison ivy at the playgrounds. The Township just announced that they will use vinegar at Verona Pool as well, instead of glyphosate based chemical pesticides.

Other VEC projects include gathering support to adopt a Steep Slope Ordinance, registering the township with the Sustainable Jersey program; and switching to single stream recycling in Verona. The VEC will participate in the December's local Fair in the Square. For more information please visit the commission's Web site at www.veronaec.org