



Verona Environmental Commission

600 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, New Jersey 07044

VEC Public Meeting at the Verona Community Center – November 21, 2013
Started at 7:30 pm - Adjourned at 9:15 pm

Members present: Gerard Shimonaski, Gloria Machnowski, Larry Lonergan, Anthony Saltamacchia, Jessica Pearson, James Loudon and Council Liaison Kevin Ryan.
Guest: Lucas Freschi, President of the Verona High School Environmental Club and VHS Greenhouse manager.

MINUTES

I. Members approved October 16th, 2013 minutes.

II. Members approved a draft of a Sleep Slop ordinance for Verona and requested Kevin Ryan to introduce it. Kevin asked for some background information. Jerry and Gloria explained that the 2009 Verona Master Plan calls for such legislation. The draft is consistent with NJ State legislation and the NJDEP steep slope model ordinance. The NJDEP notes that municipalities may include more restrictions or restrictions for lesser slopes at their discretion, as long as the minimum requirements in their model are met.

This ordinance will empower local authorities to protect residents from improper development of steep slopes. Larry asked for examples of properties in Verona in which such legislation would apply and Jerry mentioned several cases. Jess will email Kevin the list of neighboring towns that have similar legislation, such as Cedar Grove, Clifton, Montclair, Bloomfield and West Orange.

III. The Nov. 4 Idle Free Verona awards at Town Hall went well. Kevin took care of the introduction. He explained the many benefits of the VEC contest and presented a VEC new video showing many of the 2013 entries. The video is currently on Verona TV. Bob Manley presented the award certificates and a \$50 dollars check to each winner. Tony took down the exhibit at HBW and Gloria took care of the elementary schools and set up the exhibit at the Verona Library. Lucas offered to help running this program at the VHS next year.

IV. Tony and Gloria presented the program Sustainable Jersey during the Nov. 18 Council meeting and provided a sample resolution. The council's feedback was very positive and the resolution will be up for vote on December. Soon Verona will become the 400th municipality in the state to join the program and the 20th Essex County municipality. Sustainable Jersey was launched in 2009. It is a certification program for municipalities that want to go green while saving money.

V. The VEC will participate in Fair in the Square on December 7th. Members agreed with Jerry's idea to have a sign up sheet for the Green Team. Gloria and Jim will create a display to present the program Sustainable Jersey to residents. Tony will help setting up and several members volunteered to man the table.

VI. Gloria called Mr. Martin regarding the recycling contracts requested by the VEC and suggesting to stop curbside pick up of corrugated cardboard with regular garbage and to place additional signage at the Recycling Center to avoid contamination. Verona got a letter from Atlantic Coast Fibers about contamination of recyclables that could lead to fines of \$97 per ton. Mr. Martin and Mr. Helb on speaker phone mentioned:

- 1) Martin said that additional signs could be useful, but Helb noted that there is no contamination at the recycling center and therefore additional signage is not needed.
- 2) Martin explained that he will not provide the VEC with the recycling contracts and if we have any questions we can ask the town engineer.
- 3) Helb said that they like to encourage people to recycle but not to police them, and that usually those boxes that people put on the street are filled with garbage anyway and are just a few, and that cardboard is actually good to burn since they make energy with it at the incinerator.
- 4) Gloria mentioned that not everybody reads the recycling brochure but people see their neighbors' cardboard being pick up with regular garbage so the number of residents dumping boxes at the curb is increasing, specially during the holidays.
- 5) Gloria added that corrugated cardboard is one of Essex County mandatory recycling items so Verona shouldn't burn it or pick it up with regular garbage. At this point Martin said that the attorney was in the other line so Helb will call later. He never did.

So Virginia filled out an OPRA request at Town Hall. Kevin promised to obtain all the materials requested by the VEC so the commission can actually review them and make informed recommendations as mandated by Verona's code.

VII. Gloria called Chris Riviello, the Atlantic Coast manager that send the memo about contamination to Martin. Atlantic Coast Fibers takes our recyclables at the Recycling Center. Rivello provided the commission with their guidelines.

The VEC noticed that the 2013 Township Brochure says that only plastic #1 and #2 is accepted at the Verona Recycling Center. But Riviello says that they also take #5: "We take all #5 containers except Gasoline and Chemical containers. Containers are supposed to be rinsed out to eliminate the food and liquid contamination."

And the township's brochure says "All other cardboard such as chip-board, cereal boxes, juice drink boxes and other non-corrugated cardboard is to be placed in your garbage for collection."

http://www.veronanj.org/pdf/DPW/VeronaNJ_Northside2013.pdf

But Riviello noted that "all Chipboard (Cereal Boxes, Paper towel roll cores) can go with the Mix paper. Juice boxes and milk cartons should be kept out."

The commission will update its website with this information. The VEC would like to review the new 2014 recycling brochure before is printed. Kevin will obtain the brochure and he will address this issue at the next council meeting.

VIII. The VEC submitted comments to the Board of Adjustment for plans of a new single-family estate proposed for 17 Belleclaire Place.

IX. Jerry placed the plaque by the tree planted at the VCC to commemorate the 20 year anniversary of the commission. The tree was planted leaning towards the sidewalk and the commission requested Hillcrest Farms and Jim Cunningham to fix it. Jim contacted Molinaro to check on it.

X. Lucas Freschi explained that four mature evergreen trees were recently cut down at VHS without notifying the school community. He is concern with the lost of trees and he would like to know who was the arborist who approved it. He explained that three looked pretty healthy and it's unusual that so many trees could die at the same time. Jim explained that dozens of new trees would need to be planted to recover the biomass of each mature tree that was removed. A 12 inch diameter 30 feet tall pine tree weighs about 3 tons, if you cut it down you'll have to plant at least 40 young evergreens that weight about 150 pounds each to hopefully recover the biomass that you previously had. Jim suggested to contact the BOE and ask what is the remediation plan in place, and how many evergreens and other trees will be planted to recover the biomass that we previously had. Lucas mentioned that he will bring up this matter at the upcoming BOE meeting and that he would like to work on other projects with the VEC. Gloria suggested him to write a list of proposed projects.