



Verona Environmental Commission

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

VEC Public Meeting: March 18 at 7:30 pm – VCC Annex Building, 2nd floor.

Attendees: Gloria Machnowski, James Loudon, Anthony Saltalamacchia, Virginia Citrano, Jessica Pearson, Julia Capuano, Martin Golan and Council Liaison Kevin Ryan. **Guest:** Steve Pope.

MINUTES

I. Members approved February 18, 2015 minutes.

II. 42 Grove Ave. Project: Gloria, Jim and Kevin met Martin and Helb during the morning. VEC members gave details of the proposed items: benches, garbage can, aluminum cast sign, interpretative sign, trail markers, etc., and showed a mock-up of the project. Martin and Helb liked the proposal and agreed on the following:

- ✦ Martin will have a title search done and send a letter to the adjacent property owners notifying them the current plans, and inviting them to voice their suggestions.
- ✦ Helb will provide a map of the property showing legal boundaries, and Jim will use it to produce his design.
- ✦ The Juniors approved to donate \$2,000. Julie Ostering from the Verona Historical Society told Gloria that their trustees will vote and probably approve to match the Juniors' contribution with another \$2,000.
- ✦ The Juniors and the Historical Society (if they approve to contribute) could present donations at the first or second Council meeting in April.
- ✦ The VEC will organize a cleanup of the property (date to be decided).

Jim recommended to avoid planting any bushes susceptible to deer damage and to be mindful of safety and accessibility matters. Members would like to adhere to sustainable design and installation guidelines.

III. Peckman Woods/River April 11 cleanup. The VEC requested a wheelbarrow, a hand-truck, a folding table, tools and cleaning supplies, and a mulch delivery. The town manager confirmed that DPW will provide assistance as usual. DPW will pick up the collected items.

- ✦ Gloria made a poster and flyer for the event, Jim printed the posters to be placed around town. The VEC also printed and laminated at Staples a new poster for the trail showcase that includes the new trail map and QR code linked to the online guide.
- ✦ The event is posted on the VEC website and announcements were sent to the Verona Cedar Grove Times, to MyVeronaNJ and to Steve Neale for VTV, the township calendar and website.
- ✦ Dr. Lanzo, F.N. Brown principal, will email the flyer to the school community.
- ✦ Julia and Mr. Cascone have permission slips to distribute at VHS. Mr. Cesa will post the flyer on the TV screens located throughout the high school through April 11th. He

thanked the commission for the continued cooperation and support of the VHS Environmental Club. The event is also posted at the schools' Friday Folder.

- ▲ Montclair University students were also invited to participate.
- ▲ Gloria showed the geocache containers with the official stickers, pens, log books and a travel bug that the VEC purchased at Geocaching.com. Each Travel Bug has its own unique tracking number stamped on it.

IV. VHS Environmental Club report by Julia Capuano: Julia requested a composter to be purchased for the club and used while gardening outdoors and in the greenhouse. Gloria will contact the VHS SCA and Paul McDevitt to see who can take care of it. The VHS Beautification Committee could use it while taking care of the school's landscape as well. There are no news about the trees that the SCA was planning to install last Fall. Gloria will contact the SCA and Paul to see what is the planting schedule and what are the recommended locations.

V. HBW Environmental Club report: Tony explained that students are developing a script to produce a video detailing the recycling procedures at the school. Students are also working on informational posters for the cafeteria. The science Teacher, Mrs. Thomas, was interested on growing vegetables with the students. Gloria mentioned that the SCA Beautification Committee could help purchasing a raised bed to be installed in back of the school, for an organic vegetable garden. A possible location is by the fence on Gould Street, near the field irrigation box. We are also investigating the possibility of installing a water spigot there. Tony will coordinate with Mrs. Thomas. On December 2014 the VEC purchased a compost bin to do composting demonstrations at fair in the square. After the fair we stored the bin in back of HBW to do future composting demonstrations.

VI. Steep Slope Ordinance (SSO) update. The VEC drafted a resolution over a year ago and recommend the SSO to the governing body for adoption. The VEC is asking the township professional expertise to review it. The VEC continues seeking commitment from elected and appointed officials to adopt and enforce the SSO. Larry sent an email informing the following: he raised this issue to the chairman and counsel for the planning board. There was no time available to discuss the matter. He was told it will be on the docket as time will allow. Right now, there is a pending application that takes three to four hours of testimony at each hearing. Larry added that hopefully the agenda will open up after March 26. VEC members don't want to keep waiting, sooner or later more applications will come before the board with plans involving more steep slope areas. Kevin agrees and continues pushing for an effective SSO. Regulations for development on and disturbance of steep slopes can prevent erosion and reduce the risk to damage property and infrastructure, harm water quality, and degrade wildlife habitat. These regulations can also preserve the aesthetic character of visually prominent hillsides by discouraging vegetative clearing and excessive earthwork to accommodate development.

VII. VEC participation in Verona Green Fair. Gloria mentioned that Steve Neale doesn't have a confirmed date yet. Verona resident Steve Pope works at www.orangemountainenergy.com a company dedicated to educate businesses looking to implement sustainable initiatives, whether to save cost or simply to raise their profile as a good steward of the environment. Steve is interested on participating on the green fair and he is already in contact with Steve Neale and he joined the green team.