



Verona Environmental Commission

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

Verona Environmental Commission Meeting, June 10, began at 7:30 P.M., 2nd floor of the Annex Building in the Verona Community Center, 880 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona N.J.

Attendees: Gloria Machnowski (Chairwoman), Anthony Saltalamacchia (Vice Chairman), Virginia Citrano, Jessica Pearson (Treasurer), Julia Capuano (VHS Liaison), Chris Stark, and Council Liaison Kevin Ryan. Guests: Kerri Bass and Steve Bass.

MINUTES:

1. Call to Order and Roll Call. Chairperson reads notice of Open Public Meetings law. Notice of this meeting was sent 48 hours in advance to the Star Ledger and the Verona Cedar Grove Times. The meeting was also posted on the Verona Township website and the VEC website.

2. Members approved May 20, 2015 minutes.

3. Peckman Trail: ANJEC Grant Final Report. On May 23rd Virginia, Jess, Gloria and Martin planted a dogwood tree by the Peckman. The tree was purchased from Hillcrest Farms with the last \$100 from the ANJEC grant, with free delivery and a \$50 discount. Jessica contacted Mr. Laracy and requested all the vouchers related to the ANJEC open space grant for the final report that Gloria sent to Kerry Miller on May 27. ANJEC approved the report and will mail the town the rest of the grant money.

4. Nature Preserve and Historic Park plans: 42 Grove Ave.

Deed: The VEC has the deed of the property, which was owned by the Wheaton family until 1966 when they stipulated a deed restriction, the lot can be used only for municipal purposes such as a park. The house of Dr. Whitehorne burned in the 1960's. In 1975 the property was sold to Verona Township by the Congregation Beth Ahm (the Jewish Community Center of Verona) for \$65,000.

Signage: The Juniors and Historical Society made a few changes to the text and approved them. Bob Williams supplied original pictures that Gloria scanned to include them in the wayside exhibit. One of the pictures is a 1911 postcard of Grove Avenue taken from Bloomfield Ave. where you can see the grove of trees and Verona's Firehouse and Borough Hall building. The VEC is planning to order from Envirosigns a wayside exhibit panel 24 by 36 inches, 1/8" DuraReader dHPL, with a 24"x36" base, NPS Style Cantilever Exhibit Base. 45 degree angle, black texture powder coat, for \$1,012 (includes Wrapping/Crating/Shipping). That estimate doesn't include the artwork, design layout, and digital image restoration of the original pictures, ranging from \$45 to \$85 per hour. Gloria is donating those services. The panel is removable once installed, so it can be replaced in the future or have a panel for each

season, etc. The VEC is planning to order a cast aluminum historic marker from Sewah Studios. Same text both sides. The sign size is 24"H x 18"W and comes with a mounting post that is seven feet long, octagonal extruded aluminum. With three feet post insertion in the ground, the bottom of the marker sits four feet above grade. Total marker cost \$1,200 including post and shipping. Gloria sent the specifications to Helb, Martin and Ryan. The VEC is waiting for Mr. Martin's authorization to order both signs and coordinate the purchases with Mr. Laracy, who submits the town tax exempt form to the vendors.

Park Benches: the VEC already purchased 2 park benches from the town vendor, Wabash Valley Manufacturing, for the price of one with the Memorial Day sale. Mr. Laracy sent a fax to Wabash Valley authorizing Virginia Citrano to pay with her credit card since the township only uses checks and the sale required a credit card payment. The town will reimburse Virginia with the money donated by the Juniors and Historical Society. The benches will be delivered to DPW in care of Mr. Molinaro during regular business hours. Members suggested to use 2 light benches to test location before spray painting the final position for installation. Molinaro will be pouring small unobtrusive rectangles for bench footings, two under each bench bolstering the front and back legs.

Site Plan: Jim completed the design, it replaces the current gravel parking spot with a brick path (Jessica and Jack offered to install it). The wayside exhibit will be placed by the end of that path, and the historical marker will be installed by the sidewalk with a flower bed. The brick path will connect the sidewalk with the old stone path. Mr. Knight, who lives at 40 Grove Ave., didn't want any bushes planted near his front garden, so Jim placed them farther back, following the tree line.

Garbage Can: it will be installed over a bricks pad between the sidewalk and the street, on the northeastern corner of the right of way, away from neighboring homes and easily accessible to pick-up. Mr. Molinaro agreed.

Driveway: There will be a little disturbance to the gentle slopes of the property as possible. Chuck said that he will bury the 6' stabilization 48" down and cover with top soil to support gardens. The existing driveway will be closed and the DPW will be adding curbing to the driveway cut and remove the existing asphalt driveway under gravel on the left side of the park property, making it easier to form the brick walkway. We need to mark the area with spray paint. The brick walkway will occur a few feet off of the southerly property line to grant pedestrian privacy to the neighboring resident, as requested by Mr. Helb. The Wayside sign measures 24x 36 and will require two footings. Chuck is aware of the wayside sign construction and also will bury the footings so that the brick path can continue under the wayside sign with no observable concrete pads.

At the end of the Brick Walkway (bricks to be supplied by the Hilltop Conservancy with the permission of the Essex County Sheriff's Dept), there is an existing slate pathway. We'll repair it with similar materials, the trail entrance will be located at the end of that slate pathway, no stepping stones needed. A short, narrow, sustainable dirt trail is marked already, it avoids low-wet areas and loops back at the stream. There is a family of 5 foxes living in the back woods, proposed sign at the end of the short trail: "Nature Preserve - No trespassing", to protect wildlife and neighbors.

June 20 Cleanup: the VEC marked the cleanup area with yellow tape in the other side of the

stream (not even half way to the back property line) to concentrate the cleanup efforts and protect wildlife and the huge patch of skunk cabbage and jack-in-the-pulpits at the back / west side. The cleanup was advertised on the commission's website, social media, schools' Friday folder, etc. Julia has the permission slips for VHS and flyers. The Juniors will have a meeting soon and they will invite their members to participate.

New Plantings: native understory trees and shrubs that we could plant are flowering dogwood, serviceberry, spicebush, ironwood, blackhaw, arrowwood, redbud, etc. Shrubs that we have free access to via the Hilltop Conservancy: Button Bushes. We'd been offered 3 Japanese Maple Trees (not native, but they tend to do well) from Al and Anita De Old. They are now 4 to 6 feet tall. Shade Tree Chairperson recommended to transplant on March 2016.

Mr. James Benjamin from 55 Fairview Ave. contacted Gloria and sent her the survey of his property, Lot-5 of Block 78. His lot adjoins the township property and he wants to make sure that people don't walk on his property. He and his neighbor, Mrs. Beverly LaRiccica want to protect wildlife and they support the nature preserve plan. Gloria met with the neighbors and explained that the VEC requested the town manager to send a letter to all adjacent neighbors announcing the plans back on December 2014.

Gloria sent Mr. Helb the survey from Mr. Benjamin and requested him to flag the township lot limits. She met Chuck, Bob Dickison from Shade Tree C. at the site and shared with them and Helb Jim's design and the VEC suggestions.

5. Verona Green Fair outcome: Stark, Golan, Pearson and Machnowski were in charge of the VEC table during the fair on May 30th in the town center. The VEC played the recycling game with visitors, and distributed recycling bins, barrels and white pine tree saplings. Fair participants included Liberty Science Center TechniArt, PAWS of Montclair, NJ Electric Auto Association, Morgan's Farm, Moms Clean Air Force, Verona Spine & Wellness, Verona Yoga, Alternative Fuel Education by Ron Grosinger, US Green Building Council of NJ and Essex County Master Gardeners among many others. Local organizations included the DPW with E-Waste Collection, VMAC & Verona Police with Unwanted Medicine Drop-off, Verona Library with a book swap, Hilltop Conservancy, Verona Girl Scout Troop 21221, Verona Health Department and Recreation Department. There was live music all day, including Matt Hartke. Food was provided by the Thai Elephant. Pedal Montclair and Learning Express donated items for giveaways. The VEC made 2 videos at the fair, which are posted on the website.

6. Environmental Club reports: Saltalamacchia explained that the HBW recycling system is going very well. But Julia Capuano mentioned that it's not working at VHS, custodians use black garbage bags in the recycling bins and students think that it's garbage and put all kind of mixed up garbage in the bins. Students are not being directed or informed to use the bins correctly. Perhaps a 3 bin system similar to the one currently used in the Verona Community Center will work better. Julia mentioned that after the Environmental Club does all the sorting, the recyclable materials are not collected so there is no room to put it. Therefore the VHS Environmental Club is losing members because they want to do other environmental projects, instead of spending all their time sorting other students' garbage. Julia also would like to know where are the VHS recyclable materials going. Is Ragonese picking up the paper? Is the corrugated cardboard taken to the Verona Recycling Center? Where is the commingle going? Julia also wants to know if the Compost Bin was purchased, and if it's in the school. She would like to use it by the green house. She also suggested to use the courtyard as an area

for students to read or have lunch outdoors. Virginia suggested that benches could be installed, perhaps the benches that are currently located in the front of the school, and need to be relocated during construction, or picnic tables. Julia also suggested to grow some herbs and cold weather crops in the courtyard, she volunteers at Morgan Farms and could install a small raised bed there. Gloria will contact Mr. Mc.Devitt and Mr. Dionisio with all these questions.

7. Steep Slope Ordinance update: Mr. Lonergan was not present at the meeting. Mr. Ryan mentioned that with the new configuration of the Town Council there will be a better chance of working on implementing this ordinance in Verona.

8. Next Meeting: July 15 - 7:30 pm at the VCC Annex Building, 2nd floor. Adjournment.