



## Verona Environmental Commission

600 Bloomfield Avenue  
Verona, New Jersey 07044  
[www.veronaec.org](http://www.veronaec.org)

Minutes of the Verona Environmental Commission Regular Meeting on July 19, 7:00 P.M., Conference Room, Verona Community Center, 880 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, N.J.  
Attendees: Gloria Machnowski (Chairwoman), Members Jessica Pearson, Sean DiBartolo, Martin Golan, Walter Steinmann (Alternate I) and Frank Ceccacci (Alternate II). Members absent: Anthony Saltalamacchia (Vice Chair), Sarah O'Farrell, Michael Foley and Council Liaison, Mayor Kevin Ryan. Members of the Public: Tim Kiernan.

### MINUTES:

1. Chairperson calls the meeting to order and reads the notice of Open Public Meetings Act. There is a quorum to go ahead and hold an official meeting.
2. Minutes from the June 21<sup>st</sup> 2017 meeting were approved by members.
3. Open Streets Festival: Superintendent of Schools Rui Dionisio proposed to join forces and hold the event together on October 8, instead of August 13. This will give more time to organize it and do pre-registration via the Recreation Department. Gloria talked with Steve about having the same stage used at the Green Fair and a climbing tower (sponsored by Investor's Bank). Jessica asked Walter about musicians available to play at the event. VHS bands will probably perform during the event.

Town Ride: the route includes the first block of the West Essex Trail; Steve mentioned that we don't need a special permit for that. Gloria asked to check with Town Attorney, as well as the insurance requirement, Steve will check but thinks that a waiver of liability will suffice. The course includes crossing over the Peckman River via the pedestrian bridge in Franklin Street. Gloria mentioned that marshals will be needed (a few volunteers) and recommended having members of the police or fire department, rescue squad on bikes leading the ride. Steve agreed and contacted the Verona Police Dept. they really like the idea and wants to be fully involved. They actually just applied for a \$10,000 grant for a Bike Rodeo, marketing materials/handouts, bike repair kits for them to perform the safety checks, bounce houses and other kids activities. If they actually get it, the event will basically be paid for and we can supplement any other expenses through the town. They would love to lead the group family ride as well. Gloria contacted all vendors to re-schedule: Cyclecraft, Empanada Lady and Green Point Jucery confirmed that they are coming. Geordie Smith also confirmed that he'll help with cycling skills clinic and setting up an Obstacle Course. We can also have a parent's on Kids bikes race, bike mechanics, NJ cycling information tables, free give-a-ways (reusable water bottles). Gloria requested to have no idling during the event and access to VHS parking lot, bathroom, front lawn, and front driveway for kids biking, scooting, rollerblading as well. The VHS student council wants to have a fundraiser on Sampson Ave., with food trucks, the touch a truck program (Fire Department, Police Department, and Rescue Squad) and school

bands playing. Mr. Dionisio welcomed the idea of having the Open Street Festival at the same time, with Fairview Ave. closed, he will talk to the SCA. The SCA has some reservations about partnering on this and hosting the open streets on the same day. Mr. Dionisio agree that it should be held on the same day as it would be a great community event. He is going to go back to the SCA to ease some of their concerns and hopefully they agree to keep everything on the same day. Their main concern was they thought it might be too much going on at the same time. We told him we don't want to interfere with the event in any way and we aren't looking to take any of their donations at all.

Frank mentioned that perhaps the school fundraiser would take away the focus of the Open Street festival. Sean likes the fact that the police department is involved. Jessica mentioned that it is important to partner with as many organizations as possible to ensure the event takes place every year. Martin agreed. Walter proposed to invite the cub scouts.

Walk-Bike to School Day Poster Contest (Oct. 4): we are planning to host the contest as we do every year since 2009. We encourage schools to walk and ride to school together and talk about pedestrian and bicycle safety. The poster contest is open to all Verona public school students. Students choosing to participate bring their posters as they walked to school. All posters will be exhibited at the schools and entered into the contest. Winners will receive \$50 during an Award Ceremony at Town Hall. This year theme will Climate Change and what can Verona do to help, examples: install bike lanes to encourage more biking and less driving to reduce green house emissions. Members discussed this years' contest theme. Jessica proposed "Coming Out of Fossil Fuels" or something similar. Walter suggested to have a more general theme, that includes avoiding the use of plastic bags, using rakes instead of leaf blowers, etc. Members proposed: "It begins with you", "Do your part", "How would you fight Climate Change". Gloria suggested to use the word "Stop" instead of "Fight". Tim liked the idea and suggested to use the stop octagon sign on the flyer design. All members approved the theme "How can we stop Climate Change in Verona?".

#### 4. Update:

- Natural Resource Inventory: The process to create the new Master Plan will start in 2019; therefore the new NRI needs to be completed before then, ideally within a year from today's date. The township still wants to do it with the Land Conservancy but they are still waiting for estimates from other vendors recommended also by ANJEC. Kratzer Environmental Services will submit an estimate, hopefully soon. Jessica mentioned that this is a very important tool for the plan review work that the Commission does, it will empower the Commission and supply important information about the Township's natural resources, including its wildlife. She explained that Gloria is adamant of doing this study with the Land Conservancy because they have plenty of experience and very good credentials. Members briefly talked about the upcoming August 10<sup>th</sup> meeting regarding the proposed school on South Prospect Street.

- West Essex Trail: The area near Aqua Products (which was cleaned up recently during the West Essex Trail Cleanup) is being littered again, and there are big items such as wooden pallets on the woods again. The VEC already notified Tara Casella from Essex County Parks. There is a new app to report and help stop illegal dumping in public lands in New Jersey: <http://stopdumping.nj.gov> - Frank offered to visit Aqua Products again and ask for their cooperation maintaining the area clean, before using the app. All VEC members agreed. Frank sent a note to Tripod, at the HR department. Walter asked if they own or rent the property. GIJO LLC owns the property.

- Grove Park plantings, benches and display: Steve likes the idea to engrave the plaques of the benches in Grove Park, honoring Jerry Shimonaski and Anne G. Stires. Tina from C and J Trophies said the material is too hard for them to engrave it but they can attach a durable plastic with the text for \$15 each. Cirasella's Fine Jewelry charges over \$100 to engrave each. Steve agreed to go with C and J Trophies (VEC will pay with ) . Gloria mentioned that Mayor Ryan wants Town Council approval before submitting the requisition to purchase; therefore Gloria contacted all Town Council Members by email. Jessica will contact Jerry's wife, Signa, to ask her for a bio to write a press release. The Commission already have Anne's bio.

- Green Infrastructure, impervious cover reduction: We didn't receive the new draft from Chris Perez for the Rain Garden in Site B (near pear trees in the VCC). He mentioned that nothing will change in the details and the cost previously quoted will be similar (see below). One of the most expensive costs is for excavation and removal of soil. If these can be handled by the Township, then it will be an enormous savings. Steve Neale mentioned that Atlantic Irrigation did all the sprinklers in town, maybe the VCC sprinklers were installed in house; he recommended talking to Chuck Molinaro and mentioned Hillcrest could donate some of the native plants required for the project. We called and emailed Chris a few times but were not able to get in touch with him yet. Sean sent him photographs of the VCC site and scanned plans as well.

Members talked about the role of Michael Foley as VEC liaison with the Planning Board. He doesn't have enough time available to attend VEC meetings and do research to advocate for the VEC, because he is busy with the planning board, but being a member of both is a requirement, so it is a difficult position to hold.

- Endangered Species Art Project: the VEC didn't receive the code compliance information yet for the Peregrine Falcon Mural. But Sarah checked with Downtown Millburn Development Alliance about their mural: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/essex/millburn-shorthills/2017/06/14/third-millburn-live-event-should-biggie/390564001/> She spoke with Nettie. In a nutshell their mural cost \$18,000. Their concern was insurance and liability; thus that is why they ultimately went with Overall Murals based in Brooklyn. Nettie said the business owners in their development zone paid for the mural through their property taxes and fundraising. They are currently having a "Selfie Contest" at the mural to promote the downtown shopping area. If we have any more questions they are more than willing to help us out. Gloria contacted Stephanie Nerbak, the Communications Director at the NJ State Council on the Arts. Stephanie included the call for artists for the VEC Mural Project in their Opportunities for the Field online newsletter: [http://nj.gov/state/njsca/dos\\_njsca\\_opportunities-for-the-field.html](http://nj.gov/state/njsca/dos_njsca_opportunities-for-the-field.html)

Hal Sadler, a painter living in Montclair, contacted Gloria. Here are some of his paintings: [www.halsadler.com](http://www.halsadler.com) – He provided the following estimate: 20' X 40' (estimated size), remove any loose material, power-wash clean, apply masonry conditioner. Apply water-based latex primer. Apply GOLDEN Acrylic Paints to surface. Apply GOLDEN MSA Varnish\* for durability and protection. The mural will last in good condition for 5 to 10 years. Time estimate to complete mural: 1 month - Cost estimate INCLUDES materials. It is calculated at \$20 per square foot. Total estimate: \$16,000.00 – Gloria and Sarah think that it will be better to focus instead on involving VHS students to do window painting of vacant stores with endangered animals theme, perhaps during the Spring. Steve

Neale proposed to do this perhaps with Sustainable Verona. Members agreed to focus on window painting. This will also bring attention to vacant properties.

- Organic Community Garden at VHS: The required soil test was not done yet. Gloria requested again LandTek Group site plans (historic fill boundaries) to work on the layout proposal. Steve mentioned an intern is researching available grants. Members recommended to attend the BOE and Town Council joint meeting to inquire about this initiative in October.

5. Recommended actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Verona government: Gloria talked with Steve about the ENERGY STAR program and the Green Fleet initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Steve mentioned that Sustainable Verona member Christine Liaukus is helping research the ENERGY STAR program for municipal buildings. Regarding the Green Fleet, he is researching EV stations as well as purchasing hybrids for DPW and Code Enforcement. We also talked about implementing a No-Idling policy for municipal operations. The town looked into Fleet Management software in the past but back then it was too expensive. The first and last Verona municipal fleet inventory was performed in 2014 and recommendations included purchasing electric or hybrid vehicles as well as eliminating unnecessary vehicles and unnecessary trips, sharing vehicles among staff members or departments and conducting municipal business by walking, biking, or transit whenever possible. Tim and Frank talked about policies to record odometer information. Members reviewed and approved the following draft recommending the governing body to adopt a resolution stating its commitment to implement green infrastructure and reduce impervious area in the Township of Verona.

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July 5, 2017

Dear Verona Mayor Kevin Ryan, Town Council and Town Manager Matt Cavallo,  
The Verona Environmental Commission (VEC) **recommends the governing body of the Township of Verona to adopt a resolution stating its commitment to implement green infrastructure and reduce impervious area in the township at least a 10 percent, in order to repair our waterways, reduce flooding, and minimize erosion.** There are many reasons for this. Please see the explanation below for details.

The VEC reviewed the Impervious Cover Assessment prepared for Verona Township by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program. We sent the study to Mrs. Jennifer Kiernan to be distributed to all Town Council members on April 17. The assesment is also posted on our website, veronaec.org and you can download it here:  
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BwlnMRyHmstWb3VaNGluaUNta3c>

New Jersey is one of the most developed states in the country. **Currently, the state has the highest percent of impervious cover in the country at 12.1% of its total area.** Many of these impervious surfaces are directly connected to local waterways. The primary cause of the pollution, flooding, and erosion problems is the quantity of impervious surfaces draining directly to local waterways. To repair our waterways, reduce flooding, and stop erosion, stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces has to be better managed.

**Verona Township Impervious Cover Analysis shows that a total of 82.5% of the municipality's land use is classified as urban. Based upon the 2012 NJDEP land use/land cover data, approximately 31.5% of Verona Township has impervious cover. This level of impervious cover suggests that the streams in Verona Township are likely**

## non-supporting.

There are sensitive streams, impacted streams, and non-supporting streams.

- **Sensitive streams** typically have a watershed impervious surface cover from 0-10%.
- **Impacted streams** have a watershed impervious cover ranging from 11-25% and typically show clear signs of degradation from urbanization.
- **Non-supporting streams** have a watershed impervious cover of greater than 25%; at this high level of impervious cover, streams are simply conduits for stormwater flow and no longer support a diverse stream community.

Water resources are typically managed on a watershed/subwatershed basis; therefore an impervious cover analysis was performed for each subwatershed within Verona Township. On a subwatershed basis, impervious cover ranges from 6.0% in the Upper Passaic River subwatershed to 36.0% in the Second River subwatershed. Evaluating impervious cover on a subwatershed basis allows the municipality to focus impervious cover reduction or disconnection efforts in the subwatersheds where frequent flooding occurs.

The cumulative effect of these impervious surfaces and thousands of connected downspouts reduces the amount of water that can infiltrate into soils and greatly increases the volume and rate of runoff that flows to waterways. Stormwater runoff volumes (specific to Verona Township, Essex County) associated with impervious surfaces were calculated for the following storms: the New Jersey water quality design storm of 1.25 inches of rain, an annual rainfall of 44 inches, the 2-year design storm (3.4 inches of rain), the 10-year design storm (5.2 inches of rain), and the 100-year design storm (8.7 inches of rain). A substantial amount of rainwater drains from impervious surfaces in Verona Township. For example, if the stormwater runoff from one water quality storm (1.25 inches of rain) in the Second River subwatershed was harvested and purified, it could supply water to 171 homes for one year. Green infrastructure is an approach to stormwater management that is cost-effective, sustainable, and environmentally friendly. Green infrastructure projects capture, filter, absorb, and reuse stormwater to maintain or mimic natural systems and to treat runoff as a resource.

As a general principal, green infrastructure practices use soil and vegetation to recycle stormwater runoff through infiltration and evapotranspiration. When used as components of a stormwater management system, green infrastructure practices such as bioretention, green roofs, porous pavement, rain gardens, and vegetated swales can produce a variety of environmental benefits. In addition to effectively retaining and infiltrating rainfall, these technologies can simultaneously help filter air pollutants, reduce energy demands, mitigate urban heat islands, and sequester carbon while also providing communities with aesthetic and natural resource benefits (USEPA, 2013).

The next step is to set a reduction goal for impervious area in each subwatershed. **Based upon the Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Water Resources Program's experience, a 10% reduction would be a reasonably achievable reduction for these subwatersheds in Verona Township.**

Once impervious surfaces have been identified, the next steps for managing impervious surfaces are to:

1. Eliminate surfaces that are not necessary. For example, a paved courtyard at a public school could be converted to a grassed area.

2. Reduce or convert impervious surfaces. There may be surfaces that are required to be hardened, such as roadways or parking lots, but could be made smaller and still be functional. A parking lot that has two-way car ways could be converted to one-way car ways. There also are permeable paving materials such as porous asphalt, pervious concrete, or permeable paving stones that could replace impermeable paving materials.

3. Disconnect impervious surfaces from flowing directly to local waterways.

While it may be difficult to eliminate paved areas or replace paved areas with permeable pavement, it is relatively easy to identify impervious surfaces that can be disconnected using green infrastructure practices. Disconnecting an impervious surface from a storm sewer system or a water body results in an "impervious area reduction". For all practical purposes, disconnecting an impervious surface from a storm sewer system or a water body is an "impervious area reduction".

The RCE Water Resources Program recommends that all green infrastructure practices that are installed to disconnect impervious surfaces should be designed for the 2-year design storm (3.4 inches of rain over 24-hours). Although this results in management practices that are slightly over-designed by NJDEP standards, which require systems to be designed for the New Jersey water quality storm (1.25 inches of rain over 2-hours), these systems will be able to handle the increase in storm intensities that are expected to occur due to climate change. By designing these management practices for the 2-year design storm, these practices will be able to manage 95% of the annual rainfall volume.

**Therefore the Verona Environmental Commission recommends to implement green infrastructure and reduce impervious area in the Township of Verona at least a 10 percent, in order to repair our waterways, reduce flooding, and minimize erosion.**

Regards,  
The Verona Environmental Commission

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6. Residential, commercial and institutional recycling in Verona: HBW Science teacher Carol Wells Thomas asked if we have posters of the visual list, she saw it on Facebook and she would like to use them at HBW. Gloria talked to Steve, he is putting together a new flyer based on Gloria's, with more information. Once it is finished we'll make copies to post at all schools. We could propose to include this flyer in the school manuals/website as well. Walter mentioned that it is incredible the amount of useful things that people get rid of during bulk day. He proposed to have a Swap Station. Members talked about Free Cycle. Sean asked if Verona has any rules in the township's code about the legality of taking materials from disposed recycling or regular garbage. Apparently Verona doesn't have such rules in place. Gloria mentioned that it is illegal in NYC to collect cans from the recycling bags at the curb, but it is very popular. All members agreed to advertise the many options that residents have to recycle different items. Walter suggested researching the possibility to recommend the town and schools using Bio Solvents instead of other chemicals solvents for cleaning purposes. Bio-based solvents and solvent blends derived from corn, soybeans, citrus fruits and other renewable feedstocks are sustainable and environmentally friendly.

7. Bike Parking: Verona received about \$20,000 from Clean Communities grants, the bicycle racks could be paid with a small portion of this money. Gloria requested estimates and sent them to Steve, he asked to request one more estimate for the 36 racks with the galvanized

powder coated combination, color black to match parking meter. DPW will verify poles' diameter of 3 inches to order correct brackets. In addition, Gloria will request a separate estimate for 10 inverted U racks to be installed at the pool, VCC, etc.

Adjournment – Next Meeting September 20th, 2017.