



Verona Environmental Commission

600 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, New Jersey 07044

www.veronaec.org

Minutes of the Verona Environmental Commission Regular Meeting on February 21, 2018 starting at 7:30 P.M., at the Conference Room, Verona Community Center, 880 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona N.J.

Attendees: Gloria Machnowski (Chairwoman), Anthony Saltalamacchia (Vice Chairman), Sarah Yauch O'Farrell, Martin Golan, Jessica Pearson, Sean DiBartolo, Walter Steinmann (Alternate I, Frank Ceccacci (Alternate II). Guests: Sustainable Verona Chairman Steve Neale, Julia Bresnan (NJWAP Watershed Ambassador WMA 4) and Verona Town Councilman Jack McEvoy.

1. The Chairperson called the meeting to order and read the notice of Open Public Meetings Act. There was a quorum to hold an official meeting.
 2. Minutes from the January 17th, 2018 meeting were approved by members. The motion was moved by Tony, seconded by Martin, and approved by all present members.
 3. The Chairperson opened the floor to public participation, the motion was moved by Sarah, seconded by Walter, and approved by all present members. Steve Neale discussed several updates with members. Mayor Ryan is out of town, and he asked Steve to come to our meeting to provide an update on the Mayor's Climate Summit. They both attended to the summit in Rutgers University, New Brunswick on Feb. 3rd. Mayors and community leaders across New Jersey have taken up the challenge of addressing climate change and implementing sustainability practices at a local level. The day consisted of three panels: What We Must Achieve: Understanding Paris, Kyoto, and New Jersey's Global Warming Response Act; From Commitment to Action: How to Become a Sustainable Energy Community Today; and Resources for Change. Speakers included Jeanne Herb (Rutgers Climate Institute), Randy Solomon (Sustainable Jersey), Ed Potosnak (New Jersey League of Conservation Voters Education Fund), Jennifer Coffey (Association of NJ Environmental Commissions) and Robert E. Kopp, Ph.D. (Rutgers Institute of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences).
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Sustainable Jersey offer a Roots for Rivers Reforestation Grant and Technical Assistance Program, which supports municipal and school district efforts to undertake floodplain reforestation initiatives on public or private land. This grant requires to identify rivers or streams running through the municipality and look for areas along the banks with these features:
 - No woody vegetation or sparsely planted woody vegetation
 - Mowed lawns or impermeable pavement
 - Invasive or non-native grasses.
 - Signs of erosion
 - Close proximity to paved roads

Program participants will receive technical assistance to design planting projects and funding to cover materials (trees and protection) associated with plantings. Verona Township is eligible to participate. Projects costing between \$1,000 and \$20,000 are eligible.

About a week ago Gloria sent to Steve a list of possible sites. Steve contacted the Town Assistant Engineer, Mike DiCarlo, and they both liked the proposed site at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Sean showed this location on the screen during the meeting. It's a mowed grass lawn located between the plant parking lot and the Peckman River. (about 0.2 to 0.3 acres, approximately 180 ft long by 60 to 80 ft wide).

Other sites that Steve and Mike considered for this grant but discarded for several reasons included the wooded area behind F.N. Brown Elementary School, around Prisoner's Pond where it's all Japanese knotweed along Whiterock Road, and near the new parking lot of the Liberty / Freedom fields, along the pond. Gloria sent the grant information to the Verona Park Conservancy, any lawn area by the lake in Verona Park qualifies for this grant as well.

- The Partners for Health Grant for \$20,000 is about Healthy Eating and Healthy Community. Verona is applying to install bicycle racks (mostly on existing parking meter posts, \$8,500) and an Organic Community Garden at the H.B. Whitehorse Middle School (\$11,500). Rutgers tested the soil free of charge, the results were good. Mike DiCarlo designed the community garden with 65 raised beds, this will be presented to the Board of Education. A survey will help gather information about residents' interest. Frank asked if the garden could be ready for this year's planting season, Steve mentioned that this could be possible. Sarah said that using the Recreation Department registration system to sign up for the plots is a good idea, but she agreed on the need to have a dedicated group running the garden.
- Verona didn't get the Sustainable Jersey \$30,000 grant for 3 EV stations. There is another grant for \$20,000 for EV stations due on the 28th.
- Verona signed an agreement with the Land Conservancy of NJ to create a new Natural Resource Inventory. Verona will pay \$10,000 to The Land Conservancy, which is able to keep the costs for these services low thanks to a grant from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. The agreement starts on November 15, 2017 and ends on November 14, 2018. The first draft is due on March 15th, and the final draft is due on November 1st. Once it is ready they will have a presentation at a town council meeting. Steve mentioned that Verona will receive a wildlife and threatened species list from the NJDEP soon.
- Volunteer Night was cancelled due to lack of response from organizations. It will be rescheduled for March or April. Sarah suggested to have supervised open gym for children during the event.
- The VEC recommended adopting a resolution to explore the Sustainable Essex Alliance Community Aggregation program in December. Sustainable Verona did a presentation to the Town Council and the Resolution was adopted in January. An ordinance will be needed to join the program. Montclair joined the Coalition. Steve mentioned that the electricity supplier will probably be Gabel or Good Energy, while the infrastructure and maintenance will remain in the hands of PSE&G.

4. Tony mentioned that the Sustainable Verona for Schools' Green Team met on January 24th. The next meeting will be at the end of April. Joe Trause, director of the Verona Public Schools buildings and grounds purchased some color coded recycling bins. They will put together a recycling policy for the schools to share with the school community. The points for any action approved in our district application

will automatically show up in the applications of all six schools. Actions that are labeled "school only," have to be done separately by each school in its own application. Actions that are not labeled school or district may be done by either the district or by individual schools.

Rui Dionisio approved to add No Idling signs at all schools, they'll adopt a resolution probably at the next BOE meeting on the 27th, and they'll send a letter to all parents. Sustainable Verona got car Anti Idling magnets for those who sign the pledge. Walter mentioned that it is very common to see several vehicles idling around the schools in Verona.

5. According to the 2011 Essex County Recycling & Solid Waste Tonnage Data (unaudited) Verona's MSW Minus Vegetative Waste* Recycling Rate was 22.29% while W. Caldwell was 43.42%. Last year VEC members requested to have access to more recent Tonnage Reports, and wanted to know who is the current Municipal Recycling Coordinator in Verona. The VEC also proposed to collaborate with the CRP to conduct waste audits at schools and municipal buildings, like the New Brunswick Recycling Coordinator does, this is a Sustainable Jersey action. Therefore Gloria contacted Matt Cavallo in November 2017 and he directed the request to Lenny Waterman, the current CRP. Jack mentioned that Lenny is new in the CRP position and may need some time to put that information together.

Gloria added that Princeton adopted a refuse and recycling ordinance on February 13, 2017, which includes Recycling of Construction and Demolition Waste.

<http://www.princetonnj.gov/ordinances/2017/ord-2017-07.pdf>

Verona resident Paul Mathewson have been working with architects and contractors about recycling carpet and ceiling tiles. He would love to find a way to work with the town as well to reduce bulk garbage pick up materials and increase recycling. He works with a company, Carpet Cycle, located in Newark. Also for construction waste recycle, companies like Cooper Tank accepts construction waste such as drywall and sort it for recycling. Jack will contact Paul.

5- Upcoming Events:

- The Commission teamed up with the Verona Park Conservancy to clean up the lake in Verona Park probably in March. Gloria has a net with a long handle that extends and Julia will bring some more and offered garbage bags and gloves from the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission. VPC President Charles Heyer will let us know the date for the cleanup and he'll request a row boat from Essex County.
- Tom Freeman, Planning Board Chairman, approved Sean's presentation on behalf of the VEC, regarding stormwater review, at the Planning Board meeting on February 22 at the Verona Community Center. The meeting starts at 7:30 pm. Ashley Neale, Planning Board Secretary, confirmed that Ms. Critchley, Mr. Lonergan, Mr. Mathewson, Mr. Kirby, Ms. Collins, Mr. De Old, and Mr. Neale have stated they will be in attendance. The presentation is based on the ANJEC Webinar "Complying with NJ Stormwater Regulations". Sean ran through his slide deck and members provided feedback.

David Peifer, Project Director at ANJEC, reviewed Verona's stormwater ordinance and recommended to consider lowering the thresholds from 1 ac. disturbance or 1/4 ac. of new impervious to involve more of the typical development that takes place in a more built-up community. Members pointed out that Verona's Chapter 123: Stormwater Management Ordinance applies only to "major developments that provide for disturbance of land of greater than one or more acres of land that require preliminary or final site plan or subdivision review" - In the other hand, Cranford, NJ - Chapter 364: Stormwater Management Ordinance applies not only to major developments, but also to "All development plans, building additions,

driveway widening, new patios, pools, garages, sheds, and any residential projects that are below the threshold of major developments, if they are neither a site plan nor subdivision and increase impervious cover 300 square feet or more". Newark's ordinance applies to Major Development disturbing one-half (1/2) acre or more land.

Jessica mentioned that since 2006 the Stormwater Management rules, N.J.A.C. 7:8, establish design and performance standards for management of stormwater that address water quality, water quantity and recharge. These standards are to be met on the site of the proposed development and, to the maximum extent practicable, using nonstructural stormwater management strategies. "To the maximum extent practicable, the standards in N.J.A.C. 7:8-5.4 and 5.5 shall be met by incorporating nonstructural stormwater management strategies at N.J.A.C. 7:8-5.3 into the design. The person submitting an application for review shall identify the nonstructural strategies incorporated into the design of the project. If the applicant contends that it is not feasible for engineering, environmental, or safety reasons to incorporate any nonstructural stormwater management strategies identified in (b) below into the design of a particular project, the applicant shall identify the strategy and provide a basis for the contention". http://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/rules/njac7_8.pdf - Jack mention the importance of Green Infrastructure such as disconnecting techniques to reduce stormwater runoff, and added that an email was sent to the Plan of Adjustment Board members inviting them to attend Sean's presentation.

- Tree Giveaway / Grove Park Cleanup is scheduled for April 21st to celebrate Earth Day.
- West Essex Trail Cleanup is scheduled for May 5.
- Green Fair: May 19 from 11 am to 4:00 pm (Rain date May 20). Kelly Drury and Monica Vincent are members of the Green Team and they've been working on coordinating a compost bin sale during the Green Fair. Residents will pre-order the compost bins online and pick up at the Green Fair. Montclair Sustainability Officer Gray Russell recommended a distributor, Jeff Brown of BrandBuilders, LLC, who sells the Earth Machine for \$50. It is easy to transport and assemble, and they would support education opportunities for the residents. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_Bex-4os1A
Verona will have an Open Streets event on Gould Street as part of the Green Fair so kids can ride and do bike mechanic and helmet inspections. We are planning on getting an additional Green Fair sign made up to put out on Gould.
- The Peckman River Cleanup is scheduled for June 2nd.

6. The Assistant Engineer Mike DeCarlo is currently designing a new parking lot for Verona Township, located at the end of Park Place, next to H. B. Whitehorne Middle School, by the Peckman River. VEC members don't know if trees will be removed for this project. The Town Council asked for plans and an estimate for a "green parking lot" (permeable asphalt, bioswales, curb cuts, etc.). The VEC would like Christopher Perez from Rutgers, to visit the site and hopefully come up with some good ideas regarding Green Infrastructure for Stormwater Management.. Sean will contact Chris.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm. The next meeting is on March 21st, 2018.