

Members Present (Quorum Established at Four or More Members)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jessica Pearson (Chair/Planning Board Liaison) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Walter Steinmann <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sean DiBartolo (Vice Chair/Plan Review) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Erdal Turnacioglu <input type="checkbox"/> Sarah Yauch O'Farrell <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adam Bulger (Alternate I) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Auteri <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christopher Tamburro (Gov. Body Liaison) <input type="checkbox"/> Fuad Dahan		
	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
1.	Call to Order by Jess: a) Open Public Meetings Act Statement. b) Roll Call performed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None.
2.	Public Comment Period: Jack Davis, Verona NJ Jack, an Eagle Scout candidate discussed some potential projects and park areas within Verona where installations might be possible, including Peckman Park, Grove Park, and the Community Center. Other areas discussed are under County or BOE jurisdiction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Jack Davis.
3.	Approval of January 10, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOTION to Approve: Mike; Second: Sean. APPROVAL: All Members Present AYE. Abstentions: None. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sean will email approved minutes to Township Clerk Kiernan and Public Information Officer Northrop and post them to the VEC website.
4.	Updates:	
	a) Recycling Assembly Elementary Schools/Poster Contest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assembly dates have been secured for Tuesday 4/9/2024 at Brookdale and Wednesday 4/10/2024, for Forest Avenue. We are awaiting hearing back from Laning Avenue. Jess and Sarah tweaked the presentation to include a little more information on car idling, but the thrust of the assembly is based on recycling and reducing plastic waste. We have already received all 66 posters from FN Brown; the final due date is 3/15/2024. The awards ceremony: the Council's only meeting in April is 4/8/2024. We will secure this date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poster contest due date: 3/15/2024. Jess will email Municipal Clerk Kiernan to reserve 4/8/2024 for the Awards Ceremony.
	b) Tree Giveaway for Earth Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are waiting to hear from the State as to how many seedlings we will receive. Councilwoman Holland was contacted, and her scouting organizations were invited to the cleanup event to assess and fix the fairy trail. The cleanup will take place at Grove Park on Saturday 4/20/24 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. with a rain date of Sunday, 4/21/24. Everyone should wear their VEC shirts; we need a new group photo. Cece adds that more students would likely participate in our cleanups and events if it was known that they could earn volunteer hours. The VEC will give students Certificates of Service when they attend and help at our events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up at next meeting Sean will speak with the Cub Scouts and BSA Troop Mike will speak with the Daisy Scouts.

	<p>c) Peckman Kiosk Plans /Cleanup Schedule</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need to organize the kiosk rehabilitation. The exterior of the Kiosk is only part of what needs to be updated. ○ Jess and Walter will compile a short list of historic information for the trail and a short statement about the ongoing erosion and wetlands development due to runoff, continual flood events and the rising water table. ○ Need mapping to be completed and Eagle Scout installation pictures and data points. (Sean) ○ Installation with new lock, new inserts and new plexiglass should occur at our National Trails Day cleanup: 6/1/2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Once weather gets a little better, will assess the lock on the back of kiosk ● Will purchase a few brushes and outdoor dark colored stain. ● Need information and pictures to draft the Eagle Scout information. Jess will contact Bob Prout for further data.
	<p>d) Everett Field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plans for Everett have been changed to include grass turf. However, many other issues remain. ○ There are well over 20 trees slated for removal but only 13 trees are shown on a recent survey for replacement. ○ The plans continue to disturb the steep slopes well beyond the allowance limits in our zoning code, and trees within those slopes are slated for removal. The trees that remain will experience fatal root damage due to the proposed 14-foot-high retaining wall construction. ○ The playground plans will encompass 3,200 ft² and will use pour-in-place plastic, which is a more impervious surface and known to contain PFOAs. The VEC felt that green infrastructure to aid with field drainage would be a better option for that area. ○ The field and planned parking area have yet to undergo soil testing to assess the feasibility of the permeable parking proposal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Updates at each meeting.
	<p>e) Sustainable Verona</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SV is finalizing Silver Certification uploads. ○ The rules of the 35-point stormwater action change in the past week to include certain items not found in our updated ordinance. ○ Jess and Kerry are discussing a webinar on recycling to feature Essex County's Wayne DeFeo, recycling and environmental consultant. This will likely occur in March. ○ There Interest in scheduling an Earth Day event with the Verona Library. This may include an EV tutorial and/or a home energy conservation tutorial. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Updates at each meeting.
	<p>f) Junior Commissioners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nia: Idea of getting the public engaged- photo contest. She discussed a Bird and or species photo contest that led to a compilation by Cornell University. ○ Cece: If community service hours are available for students, she recommends that we publicize this to get more participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Updates at each meeting. ● Jess ensured both VJCs that they can contact VEC members with questions or ideas anytime.

5.	<p>Ordinance Updates</p> <p>a) Stormwater Management Ordinance Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stormwater Ordinance was introduced on February 4, 2024 and referred to the Planning Board for a consistency review with the Master Plan. The Code will be adopted into Verona’s Zoning Code. The Planning Board hearing is 2/22/2024 and upon their positive assessment, the Council can hold a second reading at their 3/11/2024 meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update at March meeting
	<p>b) Verona Tree Ordinance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Verona’s Tree Ordinance will be reviewed for consistency with the State’s Ordinance. ○ Jess will be meeting with the deputy Manager soon on this item and Sean will join. ○ During a DPW discussion at the 2/12/24 Budget meeting, there was a recommendation to cease using Forester services. The VEC disagrees with this, noting that without a forester, Verona would have no recourse when live trees are miscategorized and removed. Only an expert can make these determinations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Updates as they become available.
6.	<p>Plan Review</p> <p>a) 144 Elmwood Road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applicant proposes to remove certain impervious surface, while adding two new additions, patios, and a new driveway. ○ The Applicant will be removing a multi-trunked birch tree in order to build out their plans. The VEC recommended replacement with a large shade tree from the recommended planting list found in Verona’s Zoning Code. ○ The Applicant proposes to add over 1,200 ft² of new impervious surface and is required to comply with Verona’s Stormwater Ordinance for minor developments. The VEC PRC recommended a rain garden, a small bioretention basin, additional trees, and shrubs and or a permeable paving system for the proposed driveway. ○ Recommended disconnecting downspouts to run over permeable portions of the property. ○ MOTION to approve VEC PRC recommendations for 144 Elmwood Road: Jess; Second: Mike. ○ APPROVAL: All other Members Present AYE. ○ ABSTAIN: None. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VEC PRC memo was emailed to the appropriate Board prior to this meeting.
7.	<p>New Business</p> <p>a) VEC Newsletter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discussed the benefits of more educational outreach. ○ Formed a newsletter for review by the Commission for data, ideas on who should draft articles, subject matter, etc. ○ Adam edited the articles. ○ Spoke with Verona’s Public Information Officer Northrop who confirmed that she would send our newsletter out using Verona’s constant contact system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jess will send the final copy to the Public Information Officer Northrop for distribution in March. ● Follow up at next meeting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The VEC prefers that our newsletter goes out independent of any other Verona newsletter. ○ Discussed doing a profile on the Junior Commissioners for the Summer Issue, among other reports. ○ Also discussed doing a profile on VEC members in each issue. ○ Upcoming events will continue to be listed at the end of each newsletter. ○ Sean suggests that our Winter Issue include a compressed version of our Annual Report. 	
	<p>b) ANJEC Webinars schedule</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stormwater: Building Cleaner Communities through Stormwater Education. Thursday, 2/29/2024 12 p.m. ○ ANJEC Fundamentals: 3/12, 3/13, and 3/14/2024. Highly recommended for all to attend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jess recommends all members to attend the basics webinars in March via Internet Conference.
	<p>c) Scout awards and installation information compilation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sean recommends that this should occur while we are collecting information for the kiosk signage, but should encompass all of Verona (not just the Peckman Trail) for upload to our website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No actions necessary
8.	<p>Adjournment: 8:26 p.m. Next Meeting Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 7 p.m.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via Internet Conference.
9.	<p>Meeting Minutes Approved: 3/13/2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jessica Pearson, Chair, Verona Environmental Commission 	