

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Yauch O'Farrell	<input type="checkbox"/> Adam Bulger (Alternate I)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Auteri	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christopher Tamburro (Gov. Body Liaison)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fuad Dahan		
	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
1.	Call to Order by Jess: a) Open Public Meetings Act Statement. b) Roll Call performed.	• None.
2.	Public Comment Period: The meeting was joined by Junior Commissioners Cece and Nia.	• No members of the public were present.
3.	Approval of February 14, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes: • MOTION to Approve: Sean; Second: Sarah. • APPROVAL: All Members Present AYE. • Abstentions: 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. Both Assemblies are scheduled for 9 a.m. ○ We have received some posters from Forest Avenue and posters from all FN Brown eligible students and are awaiting the closing date of 3/15/24 for the rest of them. ○ The awards ceremony: the Council's only meeting in April is 4/8/2024. We will secure this date. A video showcasing all of the submissions is in production. 	<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"> ○ The State is giving us 300 seedlings (species unknown) for the give-away. ○ The cleanup will take place at Grove Park on Saturday 4/20/24 from 9 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. 	• Attendance is encouraged.
	c) Peckman Kiosk Plans /Cleanup Schedule <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 discussed 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) 	<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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Installation may not occur at the National Trails Day cleanup: 6/1/2024, but we need to continue production for installation sometime later this year. ○ The kiosk requires stain application, a new lock, the new poster and new plexiglass for completion. 	
	<p>d) Everett Field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No new updates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates at each meeting.
	<p>e) Newsletter: Summer 2024 focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Spring Newsletter was sent to 1959 email addresses. ○ Sarah has compiled a long list of resources for people to tap into when cleaning house, or looking to get rid of used items. ○ Thought we could do a member highlight: Sean? ○ If possible, do a Verona Jr. Highlight Juniors- Adam. ○ Sarah is creating a Water Conservation article. ○ Erdal is interested in drafting a Legal article. ○ Cece- Carbon Footprint of celebrities; will work with Sarah ○ Nia asked if the VEC could publish the Ornithology data from Cornell's data- direct the public. We may place this on the summer edition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles to start development. • Jess will find out who to get water usage data from- send to Fuad
	<p>f) Sustainable Verona</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SV has submitted Round 1 Silver Certification uploads to Sustainable Jersey. ○ A Recycling webinar is scheduled for March 20 at 7 pm via Zoom. It will feature Essex County's Wayne DeFeo, recycling and environmental consultant and Len Waterman, Verona's recycling coordinator. ○ Scheduled an Energy Efficiency Presentation on Saturday, 4/20/2024 at 3 p.m. at the Verona Library. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates at each meeting.
	<p>g) Junior Commissioners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nia: Interested in publicizing Cornell University's Ornithological data and inviting residents to log bird sightings. ○ Cece: Iterated her idea to show carbon footprint for celebrities; it may further interest/engage the public. 	<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"> ○ The Council held a second reading at their 3/11/2024 meeting and the ordinance was adopted. ○ It will become adopted into the Verona Zoning code and effective by the beginning of April 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further updates.
	<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 and Sean met with the Deputy Manager and discussed options for updates. ○ There was a recommendation to cease using forester services. The VEC disagrees with this, noting that without a forester, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates as they become available.

	<p>Verona would have no recourse when live trees are miscategorized and removed. Only an expert can make these determinations. However, the Deputy Manager suggested that Verona remove all exemptions for tree replacements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This would mean that replacements must occur for all trees that are considered “dead, dying, leaning, and hazardous”. His suggestion was to allow for five tree removals in a period of 5 years before any application would need to be heard by the Verona Planning Board. ○ The Deputy Manager added that he recommends that tree replacement fees be stepped to begin at a cheaper cost and graduate up (i.e.: \$250 for the first three, \$300 for the second tree, etc.) Jessica emphasized that the Township may lose money at those prices, because it costs more than \$250 for a tree and much more for that same tree to be planted in a public area of the town. She asked that the Deputy Manager research pricing prior to adding this into a draft ordinance. 	
6.	<p>Plan Review</p>	
	<p>a) 698-700 Bloomfield Avenue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applicant proposes to remove a grassy area in the rear of the lot to create three new parking spaces. The area is greater than 400 ft² and therefore requires stormwater mitigation. ○ The VEC PRC requested that the Applicant testify on any soil contamination and remediation processes to occur on the site, as it was home to a Dry Cleaners for over 60 years. ○ Recommended disconnecting downspouts to run over permeable portions of the property. ○ MOTION to approve VEC PRC recommendations for 698-700 Bloomfield Avenue: Sean; Second: Walter. ○ 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.
	<p>b) 68 Forest Avenue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applicant seeks to add an inground pool and related patios in a yard that currently exceeds allowable coverage. Applicant seeks to remove one tree (size unknown) and exceed coverage by over 20%. ○ The VEC PRC noted that the plans showed no green infrastructure to be installed for mitigation for stormwater, nor any tree replacement plans. ○ Sean pointed out that the proposed drywell’s elevation may be detrimental to the property’s basement, which has a lower elevation. Water may be capable of traveling into the home’s basement. ○ We recommended that the Applicant supply testimony to both green infrastructure for the site and tree replacement values based upon the DPM of the tree slated for removal. ○ MOTION to approve VEC PRC recommendations for 68 Forest Avenue: Jess; Second: Sarah. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VEC PRC memo was emailed to the appropriate Board prior to this meeting.

**Regular Meeting Minutes:
Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 7 p.m.
Via Internet Conferencing**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ APPROVAL: All other Members Present AYE. ○ ABSTAIN: None. 	
7.	New Business	
	<p>a) Recycling Webinar: March 20 @ 7 pm via Zoom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Webinar to be cohosted with Sustainable Verona’s Green Team. ○ The Presenter: Wayne DeFeo, Essex County’s Solid Waste and Recycling Coordinator and Len Waterman: Verona’s Recycling Coordinator. ○ Login Meeting ID: 958 9240 6932 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jess encourages member attendance.
	<p>b) Ornithology Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nia asked if the VEC could publish the Ornithology data from Cornell’s study. ○ The link to Cornell may be added to the Summer Newsletter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jess will review data for public participation.
	<p>c) Upcoming Event Dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Saturday, 4/6/2024 from 9 to 11 a.m.: Verona Park Children’s Garden Prep (near Tennis Courts) ○ 4/8/2024 @ 7 p.m.: Verona Town Council Meeting Poster Awards Ceremony. ○ 4/9/2024 @ 8:45 a.m.: Brookdale Recycle/No-Idle Assembly ○ 4/10/2024 @ 8:45 a.m.: Forest Recycling/No-Idle Assembly ○ 4/20/2024 (Rain date 4/21/2024) from 9 to 11 a.m.: Grove Park Cleanup and Tree Giveaway ○ 4/20/2024 @ 3 p.m.: Home Energy Conservation presentation by Sustainable Verona at the Verona Public Library ○ 4/27/2024 @ 11 a.m.: Shade Tree Commission Arbor Day Tree Planting at Liberty Field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No actions necessary
8.	<p>Adjournment: 8:27 p.m. Next Meeting Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 7 p.m.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via Internet Conference.
9.	<p>Meeting Minutes Approved: 4/10/2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jessica Pearson, Chair, Verona Environmental Commission 	