



Verona Environmental Commission

600 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, New Jersey 07044

Minutes of the Verona Environmental Commission Regular Meeting on May 17, 2017 - 7:00 P.M., conference room, Verona Community Center, 880 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona N.J.

Attendees: Gloria Machnowski (Chairwoman), Anthony Saltalamacchia (Vice Chairman), Jessica Pearson, Martin Golan, Sarah Yauch O'Farrell, Sean DiBartolo, Walter Steinmann, Frank Ceccacci and Mayor Mayor Kevin Ryan (Council Liaison).

1. Chairperson calls the meeting to order and reads the notice of Open Public Meetings law.
2. Minutes from the April 19, 2017 meeting were approved by all present members. Jessica recommended to abbreviate future minutes. Sean likes to include all significant information. Members agreed to both suggestions.
3. Events:
 - The VEC did a cleanup and distributed 300 tree seedlings with planting instructions at Grove Park on April 22, as part of the New Jersey Tree Recovery Campaign. The Commission divided the trees into 60 packs of 5 trees each. Species included Dogwoods, White Pines and Black Gum trees. DPW delivered supplies. Gloria thanked Jessica, Sarah, Walter, Tony, and Mayor Ryan for helping at the event. Volunteers also did trail maintenance and re-routed a section that was blocked by a big fallen tree. The VEC received a total of \$60 in donations from residents. Frank asked what kind of garbage was collected. Walter mentioned that the group removed an old couch, car tires, metal pipes, a backpack, and other trash.
 - The VEC will participate in the Verona Green Fair, on May 20, from 11 am to 4 pm at the Civic Center. The VEC will distribute recycling bins and barrels to residents that didn't receive them last year, and will recruit volunteers for the Peckman Cleanup. Jessica mentioned that the bins are usually distributed by 2 pm. Walter will bring a big frog for kids to play with. Sarah will play a recycling game with kids: built the tallest plastic tower, and have a display on the 7 types of plastics. Edward Selimi, an HBW 8th Grader, will display a bicycle that he built almost entirely from used bike parts. He'll have it on a trainer so people can give it a try.
 - The Peckman Cleanup behind F.N. Brown School is scheduled for June 3 from 9 am to 12 noon. Gloria coordinated details with DPW, the BOE, Dr. Lanzo, and Joe Trause. She visited the trail, there are a few logs and a fallen trees on the trail. The group will do trail maintenance and re-install the bat house. There is some rusty football equipment near the trail entrance. Some wooden boards were over one of the service berries planted by the VEC. The board walk and foot bridge needs some maintenance as well. Sarah mentioned that she contacted F.N.Brown mom Dina, she leads "Verona Kids Rock", a local group of kids that do volunteer work and they will participate in the cleanup. Gloria contacted the Volunteer

Coordinator at Montclair State University and several teachers at VHS. Posters will be displayed at all local schools, around town and the flyer will be included in the School District's Friday Folder.

- Gloria met with Steve Neale yesterday to go over the details of several VEC projects, as recommended by Matt Cavallo. Steve will disseminate any needed information to Cavallo, Helb or other town employees for final approval when necessary.
- Regarding the Verona Open Streets Festival, August 13 is not yet confirmed with Essex County, but Officer Steve DePoe agreed to close to vehicular traffic Fairview Ave. from Franklin Street to Hillwood Terrace, with access to the West Essex Trail, and have Sampson Dr. only open to vehicles to park in the VHS parking lot for the event. They proposed to have during the event the "Touch a Truck" program with the Rescue Squad and Fire Department vehicles open for kids to go in and a fundraiser. Trucks will be parked on the parking lot.

Gloria checked with Towne Scoop Ice Cream Truck, Empanada Lady Truck, and Green Point Jucery. They are all available on August 13. Geordie Smith from the Hilltop Conservancy confirmed that Cyclecraft will come to the festival to do bike safety inspections. We can also invite the Electric Spokes to demo their bikes and a few others.

The VEC is considering to have a short family friendly ride, maybe a 3 mile loop starting and ending at the festival in front of VHS, and take riders on a short section of the West Essex Trail, and over the Peckman River via the footbridge on Franklin St. The VEC will propose to run the event registration through the Recreation Department's website. The event needs to be approved by the BOE and Essex County. Steve is working on it.

Tony mentioned that there are bathrooms by the VHS boys locker room, outside the main building and are open all the time. The VEC is also looking for a sponsor to rent a climbing tower. Jess suggested to have live music instead. Frank said that we could also have an announcer and play music, he mentioned that Montclair is having several biking events. Gloria noted that we do not have enough volunteers to run more events. Sarah likes the idea of having per-registration. The VEC could make T-shirts for participants to use during the bike ride, reusable water bottles, etc. Before going any further the location and date need to be approved.

4. Green Infrastructure: there is no new information regarding the Community Garden. In regards to the rain garden, Gloria received approval to move ahead to get plans together. Any plans from Rutgers or Sean can be sent to Steve and he will get them to Helb to go over. Specifically we got approved to put together plans for site "B", by the pear trees. The former flower bed that was along the building was paved. Last month Gloria went to Helb's office and picked up the site and utility plans, which are not "as built" drawings. Sean scanned them and sent them to Christopher Perez who is working on the design plans and will have a draft ready soon, maybe on Monday, May 22nd. The VEC asked him to create a detailed plan with cost estimate and list of plants There are sprinklers in that area, not included in the plans. There are no drawings of the sprinklers or information about who installed them. Sean mentioned that usually sprinklers are installed 6 inches below the ground, not very deep. Jessica mentioned that sprinklers are also easy to fix. Sean explained that the area is on a slope, so we may need to construct a small berm along the down slope side of the garden, and it would require a downspout (or two) to be tunneled under the sidewalk. Sean also sent

to Chris some photos of Site B in its current condition.

5. Members would like to receive a copy of the Library renovation plans to study and make recommendations regarding the use of green infrastructure and other environmentally sound components. Gloria will request the plans.

6. Commissioners talked about VEC comments submitted to the Board of Adjustment, regarding an application to install a pool in a slope located at 50 Sunset Ave. This is the first time that the Steep Slope Ordinance applies to an application in Verona. Sean found discrepancies on the improved lot coverage calculations from the applicant. Due to the size of the land disturbance the VEC recommended the BOA to request the applicant to provide additional information required for major disturbances, such as erodibility potential of exposed soils; length, steepness and surface roughness of exposed slopes; resistance of soil to compaction and stability of soil aggregates; high-water table, water infiltration capacity and capacity of soil profile.

The application was approved last night by the BOA. Mayor Ryan said that if neighbors don't complain, the BOA can grant a variance and plans move forward. Gloria mentioned that the VEC spent 10 years advocating for a Steep Slope Ordinance and now that we have it we should use it. Tony recommended to circulate information to educate neighbors regarding the Steep Slope Ordinance. Walter mentioned that neighbors within 200 feet receive notification. Tony added that perhaps neighbors should be better informed regarding the adverse consequences of such disturbances. The VEC recommended to meet with the Board of Adjustment Chairman. Their members and minutes are not listed on the township's website, Gloria will contact Kelly Lawrence, at the Building Department to find out who is the Chairman and arrange a meeting. Sean asked how the Steep Slope Ordinance was presented. Mayor Ryan explained that it is a two step process, after introduction people can come up during public participation and ask questions. Gloria mentioned that the VEC discussed the ordinance at a Planning Board public meeting and presented suggestions, since the approved draft was the PB draft, not the VEC draft.

The VEC recommends using a permeable material under the new exercising equipment that will be installed at the Verona Community Center.

7. Cycling Infrastructure for Verona: Gloria mentioned that there are no news regarding the bike lanes. But the bicycle racks to be attached to parking meters were fully approved by Matt Cavallo. He asked to find a grant to pay for it. Kathleen Smith, Program Director of Partners for Health Foundation told Gloria that they would be happy to review a small grant application for bike racks for Verona. Steve Neale will work on that. Creative Metal Works, Madrax and Belson Outdoors, Inc. are some of the vendors of bike racks that attach to existing meter poles. Inverted "U" type for other locations: <https://www.sarisparking.com/product/bike-dock>

Montclair installed Creative Metal Works racks years ago: Merrill Denney from Creative Metalworks LLC - creativemetalworksllc.com – gave Gloria the following prices:
BOBR Weight: 12 lbs. each

1 -10	\$153.50	(list price)
11-49	\$144.30	(-6%)
50-99	\$121.95	(-21%)
100-149	\$118.19	(-23%)
150+	\$115.12	(-25%)

Once we have a specific number of units we can ask for an estimate including shipping costs. Options: galvanized or powder coated. They can powder coat over the galvanizing if needed. Once we get into larger quantities of 20 or more, the pricing above doesn't change unless they powder coat over the galvanizing. Smaller quantities have a flat rate to galvanize the group of \$200 (minimum charge).

In order to ask for quotes we need to know how many bike racks we need and where. So Gloria created an inventory of all the parking meters located in Bloomfield Avenue with pictures and notes. She submitted this to Steve, 36 locations were selected from the list, 19 are located on the north-side of Bloomfield Ave. and 17 on the south-side.

A few locations were selected for 8 inverted U racks, including the Verona Community Center Verona Pool, New Fields, 530 Bloomfield Ave. , and 1 Cumberland Ave. (by corner new Cafe / Bakery, 464 Bloomfield Ave.) Another inverted U possible location, not listed: 287 Bloomfield Ave. by 7 Eleven. We'll get estimates once the number of racks is confirmed.

8. Verona's new Natural Resource Inventory: Verona applied for a \$10,000 grant from Sustainable Jersey for a new NRI last January but didn't get the grant. Steve and Matt Cavallo were considering to use the Land Conservancy of New Jersey <http://tlc-nj.org>, an environmental non-profit organization, their municipal services program is award-winning. Mr. Helb asked to get estimates from other two vendors. Gloria gave Steve some other options recommended by ANJEC: Amy S. Greene in Flemington 908-788-9676 and Kratzer Environmental Services in Frenchtown 908-996-2576. They didn't provide estimates yet. Mayor Ryan mentioned that getting a few estimates is standard government practice. Members recommended to use the Land Conservancy. Jessica mentioned that it is important to have a good NRI since the upcoming Master Plan will rely on the NRI. Tony asked if there are exceptions to the bidding process since we are not looking for the cheapest vendor in this case. Mayor Ryan mentioned that one case to make an exception would be the need for fast procurement procedure, and this could be the case. Sean added that usually two weeks to provide an estimate is enough time for a consultant firm. Members recommended to find out what is the timeline for this project.

9. Members talked about the Impervious Cover Assessment prepared for Verona Township by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program. Currently, New Jersey 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. 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. The literature suggests a link between impervious cover and stream ecosystem impairment starting at approximately 10% impervious surface cover. 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. 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 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. 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".

Once impervious surfaces have been identified, the next steps for managing impervious surfaces are to 1) eliminate surfaces that are not necessary, 2) reduce or convert impervious surfaces to pervious surfaces, and 3) disconnect impervious surfaces from flowing directly to local waterways. Many of the highly effective disconnection practices are inexpensive. The entire community can be engaged in implementing these disconnection practices.

10. Endangered Species Mural Project: The VEC is working on a proposal to paint a mural of a Peregrine Falcon (endangered in our state) on the wall of the Mirror and Glass building located at 666 Bloomfield Ave. Gloria contacted local artist Susanna Baker, who will help find a lead artist for this project. The idea is to do a community project. Steve Neale also suggested to use vacant store front windows to do something similar to the Halloween window painting but instead of HBW students, with VHS students and endangered local animals. Susanna mentioned they put out a call for a bicycle mural at the Bloomfield new bike depot – and they paid a \$500 stipend for the mural, but it was an indoor mural. The VEC didn't receive information about code for compliance. Canine Designs has two walls painted with cats and dogs, Sarah offered to visit them to get more information.

11. Public Participation: None.

Adjournment – Next Meeting June 21st, 2017.