



## Verona Environmental Commission

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

Minutes of the Verona Environmental Commission Regular Meeting on January 17, 2018 starting at 7:00 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, Sean DiBartolo, Walter Steinmann (Alternate I), and Mayor Kevin Ryan (Council Liaison).

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. The Chairperson opened the floor to public participation, the motion was moved by Sarah, seconded by Martin, and approved by all present members. There were no comments from the public.

3. Minutes from the December 20th, 2017 meeting were approved by members. The motion was moved by Tony, seconded by Martin, and approved by all present members.

#### 4. Updates:

- Steven Neale was appointed to the Planning Board as the designated Township Employee for a term expiring December 31, 2018. Mr. Helb is no longer in the Planning Board and he is no longer the Town Engineer. The Township Manager appointed Glenn Beckmeyer, P.E. as Township Engineer for a term expiring December 31, 2018. Verona has a full time Assistant Engineer, Mr. Mike DeCarlo.

- Tony Saltalamacchia announced that a new water bottle filling station is being installed at H. B. Whitehorne Middle School. Using refill stations and reusable bottles not only reduces waste and plastic pollution, but can also save money.

- The township will apply for a Healthy Community Grant for \$20,000 to install bike racks on existing parking meter poles and an organic community garden. Soil testing results at possible sites for a community garden at VHS and HBW are good and show no contamination. Rutgers' did the tests for free, with X Ray on site. The Township will present a proposal to the BOE. These will also be funded by renting plots. Free watering, but renter supplies the rest. Must sign an agreement to use only organic growing practices.

- EV Car Share Grant: Verona will soon know if we got the \$30,000 grant for the 2 charging stations at the Community Center and one at Town Hall for a total of 6 cars. Another grant has opened up for \$20,000, so if we don't get the grant for \$30,000 there is another option for funding. Green Spot is making progress with towns along the Bloomfield Ave. corridor, the price of car charging to consumers is still to be determined, but it will probably be at or close to cost.

- Anti Idling Campaign: over 100 people signed our anti idling pledge at the fair in the square and online. Rui Dionisio approved to install no-idling signs at the schools that don't have them. We recommended the anti-idling street signs that are available from the NJDEP starting at \$15. Along with the installation, the BOE will also send out a letter to all parents and the media educating the public about the signs and the effects of idling. Hopefully this will help to severely cut back the idling we all see at the schools on a daily basis.

- Waste Reduction and Recycling Programs - Plastic Pollution

Gloria contacted Ms. Ramos, VHS Biology Teacher (and Marine Biology Club Adviser). Ms. Ramos would love to show the video "Story of Bottled Water" and "Story of Stuff" and the photos of plastic pollution that Gloria took at Verona Park on December. Her Marine Bio students did a beach clean up and just had their first presentation to two of Verona grammar schools. They discuss a lot about plastic pollution and their harm to marine life. Most of Verona is within the Watershed Management Area 4. The VEC collaborated with Julia Bresnan, the NJWAP Watershed Ambassador for WMA 4, from NNDEP. Julia will do a presentation to Ms. Ramos' class on Jan. 26th at 11 am. Ms. Ramos will begin the paperwork for the school to approve it.

- To raise awareness of radon, the Environmental Protection Agency designated January as Radon Action Month in 1999. You can't see, smell or taste radon, but it could be present at a dangerous level in your home. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer deaths among nonsmokers in America and claims the lives of about 21,000 Americans each year. The EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General urge all Americans to protect their health by testing their homes, schools and other buildings for radon. Exposure to radon is a preventable health risk and testing radon levels in your home can help prevent unnecessary exposure. If a high radon level is detected in your home, you can take steps to fix the problem to protect yourself and your family. Many radon test kits can be found online or in home improvement stores.

Montclair is giving away free radon test kits. Walter mentioned that Montclair has more radon problems than Verona. Verona sits in an intermediate radon zone. Gloria contacted [koehler.larainne@epa.gov](mailto:koehler.larainne@epa.gov) two weeks ago, they fund a grant to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection which has programs for municipalities to purchase test kits. Anita Kopera runs that program, and Anita sent Gloria the requirements for the grant, which is basically municipal contact info, and Gloria sent that to Steve Neale. They also have grants for schools, so Gloria forwarded that information to Joe Trause, Director of Facilities of Verona Public Schools.

- Natural Resource Inventory

Verona has signed the agreement and is moving forward with the Land Conservancy of NJ to create a new NRI. Mayor Ryan mentioned that once it is ready they will have a presentation during a town council meeting. Walter asked if it will include animal species' surveys, and suggested that we could involve residents and invite them to participate in local wildlife surveys. Other members asked if we could receive a copy of the NRI proposal. Gloria will request a copy.

- Sustainable Essex Alliance Community Aggregation Coalition: Sustainable Verona did a presentation to the Town Council. The VEC recommended to adopt a resolution to explore the program, back on December. The Resolution was adopted by the Town Council on January 8th. This is a two-step process, now that the resolution was adopted, an ordinance will be needed to join the program. It is important to distribute information to avoid misconceptions about service, pricing, billing, etc. The Coalition will have a dedicated website with a Frequently Asked Questions section.

- Pedestrian and Cyclist safety education

Verona resident Dina Lilley expressed interest in Pedestrian and Cyclist safety education, she attended a VEC meeting with her daughter. Gloria put her in contact with the New Jersey Safe Routes to School Resource (SRTS) Center, a project of the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center, NJ Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration.

The Center is housed at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, they offer free assistance to schools. <http://www.saferoutesnj.org/contact/>

Dina Lilley is also an F N Brown mom who organized the Verona Kids Rock bike ride to FNB last year. She called the New Jersey SRTS Resource Center and they put her in contact with Lisa Lee (Manager, Bike & Pedestrian Programs), from EZ ride Essex County Safe Routes to School Coordinator, who is responsible for conducting safety education in the elementary schools.

Dina talked to Dr. Lanzo, FN Brown principal, and they had a meeting. Last week F.N. Brown hosted an EZride assembly about pedestrian safety. Children were excited to listen to safety tips for pedestrians for both kids and adults. Verona Police attended as well. EZ ride provides free presentations, also available for the middle and high school. Tony will get in touch with them to see how the Safe Routes to School Coordinator can help at the HBW middle school level.

According to Safe Routes to School, a comprehensive program should include bicycle and pedestrian safety education curriculum, structured for appropriate grade...pedestrian safety courses or programs will be most effective with K-3rd grades, and bicycle safety courses or programs will be most effective with 4-8th grades.

- Tthe VEC organized a tour of the EPA's Edison Environmental Center permeable pavement parking lots and rain gardens. Amy Rowe and Tom O'Connor gave the tour. Several Verona authorities attended, including the Verona Town Manager and the new Verona Assistant Engineer, Mike DeCarlo. Mike is currently designing a new parking lot for Verona Township, located at the end of Park Place, next to H. B. Whitehorne Middle School and the Peckman River. The Town Council asked for plans and an estimate for a "green parking lot" (permeable asphalt, bioswales, curb cuts, etc.). Gloria contacted Chis Perez to see if he is available to visit the site with Mike, to offer his expertise and advise regarding Green Infrastructure.

## 5. Upcoming Events:

- Third Annual Volunteer Night: Tuesday February 27th from 7-9pm in the Community Center Ballroom, a social gathering with more refreshments and possibly a wine and cheese type of

event. The township is changing the format to make it more inviting for residents. At the VEC table we will have a sign up form for the Spring cleanups at Grove Park and at the West Essex Trail, and a pledge to reduce Plastic Pollution, by using reusable bottles and reusable bags. We could give a reusable bag or a reusable bottle to those who sign the pledge. On December 20 we purchased via Amazon, 50 reusable grocery bags (\$90), 30 reusable BPA free 24 oz water bottles (\$82.58) and 4 pens made from recycled water bottles (\$4.79). Total spent \$177.70 - We only paid taxes on the pens \$0.33 cents. Free shipping and handling.

Sarah suggested to have supervised open gym during that night so there is something for kids to do as well. Mayor Ryan suggested to rent real wine glasses instead of using disposable plastic glasses, to reduce waste. Gloria will forward these suggestions.

- Tree Giveaway / Grove Park Cleanup, Saturday, April 21st - 9 am to 12 noon.
- West Essex Trail Cleanup, Saturday, May 5 - 9 am to 12 noon.
- Verona's 4th Annual Green Fair will be held outside on Saturday, May 19, 2018 from 11am-4pm in the Verona Civic Center Square. It's the same day as Arts & Crafts Fair in Verona Park, not the same day as the garage sale. The fair will feature live music, a wide variety of vendors. Rain date Sunday, May 20. VEC members approved to send in the Participation Form, for a space for a tent. Gloria mentioned that we don't need to borrow a tent anymore, she received a tent as a family present to use at these type of events. There will be more children's activities (bouncy house, mechanical surfboard). We'll have four bands (including Tom's Green Machine), and probably Turtleback Zoo and TerraCycle.
- Peckman River Cleanup, June 2nd - 9 am to 12 noon.
- Members talked about the significant amount of plastic pollution and other debris in the lake at Verona Park. Gloria proposed to help the Verona Park Conservancy to clean it up. Mayor Ryan mentioned that there is a meeting at the boathouse tomorrow night. Gloria will contact the VPC President Charles Heyer. Sarah suggested to also team up with Essex County Parks and ask for their support in this effort.

6. New Business: Sean took the ANJEC Webinar titled, "Complying with NJ Stormwater Regulations" and gave a report to the members.

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jQM8M-VZu-1kHqnhXUOd\\_dARMSjTqpc0?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jQM8M-VZu-1kHqnhXUOd_dARMSjTqpc0?usp=sharing)  
Our stormwater ordinance can be found at <https://ecode360.com/12271164>

On behalf of the VEC, Sean would like to give a presentation to the Planning Board about this topic. Tony made a motion to approve the presentation, seconded by Sarah, and approved by all present members. Gloria will contact Mr. Tom Freeman, the Planning Board Chairman. Mayor Ryan also mentioned that there is an opening in the Board of Adjustment and anybody interested should send resumes to Mr. Cavallo.

Adjournment – Next Meeting February 21st, 2018.