



Verona Environmental Commission

600 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, New Jersey 07044

www.veronaec.org

Minutes of the Verona Environmental Commission Regular Meeting on Tuesday, March 27, 2018 starting at 7 pm, at the Conference Room, Verona Community Center, 880 Bloomfield Ave., Verona N.J.

Attendees: Gloria Machnowski (Chairwoman), Anthony Saltalamacchia (Vice Chairman), Jessica Pearson, Martin Golan, Sean DiBartolo, Walter Steinmann, Frank Ceccacci, and Mayor Kevin Ryan (Council Liaison).
Guest: Julia Bresnan (NJWAP Watershed Ambassador WMA 4).

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. The VEC monthly meeting previously scheduled for March 21 was cancelled and rescheduled for March 27, due to inclement weather.

2. The floor opened to public participation, the motion was moved by Jessica, seconded by Sean, and approved by all. NJWAP Watershed Ambassador Julia Bresnan informed members that she brought garbage bags and working gloves donated by the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission. In addition Julia brought a long handled net that the Commission borrowed for the lake cleanup, to be returned after the event.

3. Minutes from the February 21st, 2018 meeting were approved by members. The motion was moved by Sean, seconded by Walter, and approved by all present members.

4. Updates

- Sean participated in the ANJEC webinar "Asking the Right Questions in Stormwater Review" and gave a presentation to the Planning Board in February, which is posted on the VEC's website. Sarah, Jessica and Gloria also attended. The VEC is a member of ANJEC, so Gloria sent a list of questions that came up during the presentation to ANJEC, and Project Director David Peifer provided answers. Gloria shared David's info with the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment, and notified them that all reviewers of stormwater management plan applications are now required to view this training before July 2018, and record keep attendance. The E-Tool can be found on ANJEC's website [anjec.org](http://www.nj.gov/dep/stormwater/training.htm) as well as Rutgers' and NJDEP's website <http://www.nj.gov/dep/stormwater/training.htm>

Regarding Verona's stormwater ordinance, Sean mentioned that board members were receptive to the suggestion to consider reducing the thresholds from 1 ac. to $\frac{1}{4}$ acre of disturbance to involve more of the typical development that takes place in a more built-up community. Jessica added that we all grew up with what's known as "gray infrastructure", the most traditional option, in which pipes, tunnels, and wastewater treatment plants play a key role in collecting, and treating the sewage and stormwater prior to discharge, but this is not enough anymore. "Green infrastructure", such as rain gardens and permeable pavement, which mimics the natural water cycle, can complement and make the "gray" one more cost-efficient reducing runoff and the volume of stormwater collected, and avoiding overflows during heavy rain events.

Jessica encourage members to read more about it on their own time, and explained that non-structural methods are the preferred default approach (to the "maximum extent practicable") in the NJDEP Stormwater rule. David Peifer's email confirms that fact and explains that relief from this requirement is only allowed for engineering, safety or environmental reasons, not costs. He also mentioned that non-structural strategies provide better use of scarce space: many forms of what we call green stormwater infrastructure qualify as non-structural and avoiding critical areas on-site like wetlands, floodplains, stream corridors, forested areas and complying with the groundwater recharge requirements in the DEP stormwater rule should influence site design. In many cases, the green approaches are cheaper and use less land than conventional "gray infrastructure" approach. For example, porous paving does cost more on a square foot basis than regular asphalt due primarily to the cost of constructing the underlying gravel bed. But, no catch basins, curbing or connecting pipe need be installed to manage the non-existent run-off.

During the presentation planning board members also asked "Why should Verona require developers to design for 100 year storms when that water goes into old town infrastructure that was designed, in many cases, just for 25 year storms". David Peifer answered the following: Because it is the rule. Controlling regional flooding, in the 100 year storm is the objective. If the 100 year facilities hold the flow from a 100 year storm, they release it at a lower rate and in a smaller volume over a longer time. The total volume will ultimately discharge but over a longer time period. The size of basin outlets is variable but is conditioned by the size of the receiving downstream pipe or stream channel. Only if the 100 year facilities are topping (spilling) over is the flow rate and volume greater than the design of the structure, so the pipe it enters is seeing only a portion of the total volume at any given time, but for a longer time. All of this will be questioned in the next several decades as climate change increases the severity and frequency of storm events. also, keep in mind that as one moves downstream in a pipe system, the pipes generally increase in size to serve a larger drainage area. Green facilities never are effective enough to control the 100 year storm, but are much more effective on the smaller storms and have the added benefit of renovating water quality. Most non-point pollution enters streams from small storms that may or may not cause flooding. The most damaging condition for a stream is the "bank-full" condition when volumes are large, but not large enough to enter the floodplain. Velocities are high in this condition leading to bank erosion and bed scour leading to habitat destruction.

Jessica mentioned that Verona is a Tier A Municipality (located within the more urbanized regions of the state) and as of January 2018 there are new requirements for MS4 Permitting Tier A municipalities. Jessica sent Gloria the information last week. An MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) is a conveyance or system of conveyances owned or operated by a municipality that carries stormwater that ultimately discharges to waters of the state (including both surface water and groundwater) as defined in N.J.A.C. 7:14A-1.2. The MS4 includes pipes, curbs, gutters, ditches, man made channels, storm drains, catch basins, municipal streets, basins (surface/subsurface) or roads with drainage systems that are not combined sewers and are not part of a publicly owned treatment works (e.g. sewage treatment system).

Guidance materials (http://www.nj.gov/dep/dwq/tier_a_guidance.htm) show that there is room to modify and add optional measures to our stormwater code. The town also has to make elements of the MS4 program available to the public upon request and post copies of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SPPP), MSWMP & related ordinances on the municipal website. There are also new educational requirements and stormwater management design review training. The Town must have a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and designate a Municipal Stormwater Program Coordinator. More information is available at http://www.nj.gov/dep/dwq/pdf/tier_a_crosswalk_2009-2018.pdf http://www.nj.gov/dep/dwq/pdf/tier_a_FAQ.pdf

Gloria contacted Town Manager Matt Cavallo, he explained that Verona is already working with Mott McDonald, who wrote the regulations for the DEP, on getting up to speed with the new required permitting requirements. Frank pointed out that development will continue in Verona and the Commission needs an active liaison with the Planning Board, somebody able to attend VEC meetings. Mayor Ryan pointed out that to have a liaison VEC member in the Planning Board is a State mandate, Mike Foley is the VEC's liaison but unfortunately he has been absent for several months. Mike works for FEMA, and he is required to travel for work. Jessica noted that Mike does a great job at the Planning Board, and if needed she volunteered to serve as liaison. Gloria recommended that Jessica becomes the Planning Board liaison. Mayor Ryan mentioned that now there is a form on the township's website to apply to serve in boards, commissions and committees. The Municipal Clerk, Mrs. Kiernan, keeps record of this. Mayor Ryan added that Mike's term expires at the end of June, and he will contact him to check on his availability to serve in the VEC.

- Regarding the Roots for River Reforestation grant, Gloria participated in the grant webinar on Feb. 22, prepared the grant application and visited the site with Bob Dickison, Mike DeCarlo and Watershed Ambassador Julia Bresnan. Walter and Steve also visited the site. As Steve mentioned during the VEC's meeting in February, he and Mike DeCarlo, the Town Assistant Engineer, liked the proposed site at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Unfortunately the Plant Operator, Jeff Sonntag explained that the proposed site will not work out. There are two main lines, one is a transmission line running for the lower end of the treatment plant up along the fence line into the (ATB) advanced treatment building. The second line is the Effluent discharge line, which is located out the (ATB) then runs down across the parking lot to the Peckman River. Jeff mentioned other possible locations for trees to be planted but those locations won't fit into this grant.

- ANJEC is now accepting applications from environmental commissions for grants of up to \$1500 each for local open space stewardship projects. Based on information provided by the township and Rutgers, Gloria put together a proposed application requesting \$1,497 to install a Rain Garden in the grass area west of the Verona Community Center main entrance to capture and infiltrate runoff from existing downspout. The Grant from ANJEC provides 50% of the project cost -so the township will have to cover the other 50% - but that includes excavation, soil and mulch that DPW could provide. The VEC also has some donations (about \$2,000), so the Commission could cover some costs if needed. Jessica mentioned that Gloria prepared great reports for the ANJEC OSS Grant that the Commission got in 2014.

The application due date is April 13, 2018, in addition to the application, applicants must submit a scanned, dated and signed letter from the municipal manager or administrator indicating endorsement of the application and assuring payment of any additional costs that are included in the budget.

Helb provided the site and utility plan last year. He liked the proposed site and mentioned that the plans are not "as-built" and don't reflect the sprinkler system which is also in the area (there are no plans available for the sprinkler system). Chris Perez from Rutgers designed the rain garden and also provided a planting schedule and estimate. Gloria sent the information to Mike DeCarlo and Steve Neale. Steve mentioned the rain garden would be a great use for this grant and said that we should be able to find the other half necessary or even get a lot of materials donated hopefully.

Gloria presented the application and members unanimously approved to send it to ANJEC, and request the letter of endorsement from the town. The motion was moved by Sean, and seconded by Jessica.

- Sean contacted Steven Neale, Christopher Perez and Mike DeCarlo to visit the site for a new parking lot at the end of Park Pl. near the Peckman River. Mike thinks having a meeting about this would be great. He feels it

might be best to hold off for a while. He is in the processes of having this site surveyed, once the weather cooperates. Once he gets this site surveyed he can implement a conceptual design we would then have something to look at and talk about. We could also get a better understanding of how much impervious coverages we are going to have. Gloria is concerned about proximity to the Peckman River. She recommended to preserve existing trees and enhance the riparian buffer as much as possible. Scientific studies show that forest buffers should be at least 30 meters, or nearly 100 feet, wide to adequately protect streams. This is what the science is saying. Sean added that the site is certainly within the floodplain.

- Verona's MSW Recycling Rate: 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%, etc. Gloria presented data from 2016 that Lenny Waterman, the township's new CRP sent her recently. Members were surprised by the amount of oil contaminated soil recorded that year. Mayor Ryan mentioned that probably on 2016 started the remediation of the soil contaminated area at VHS. Walter volunteered to study this data to come up with ideas to collaborate with Lenny to increase recycling. For example, the New Brunswick Recycling Coordinator informs businesses, conducts waste audits at schools, municipal buildings, etc. to determine the items that can be reduced, reused, recycled, or composted, and make recommendations to meet Essex County 50% MSW recycling goal.

Walter will also talk to Paul Mathewson (Verona resident and Planning Board member) about recycling carpet and ceiling tiles, he works with Carpet Cycle in Newark. Also for construction waste recycle, Cooper Tank accepts construction waste and sort it for recycling, they recycle drywall, etc. Paul would love to find a way to reduce bulk garbage pick up by providing alternatives to recycle several items.

- Natural Resource Inventory: Commissioners would like to see the first draft. Gloria will request it.

- Sustainable Jersey's Essex Hub has a new name, the Sustainable Essex Alliance. SEA's new co-Chairs are Carolee Bol from Glen Ridge and Tracey Woods of Maplewood. The outgoing SEA Chair, Steve Neale, helped increasing the visibility of this hub with a new logo and Facebook page. This committee will regularly get together to set the direction for the hub. For example, in the past, they planned events on energy, waste, leadership development, capacity building, social networking. The SEA Energy Aggregation Committee, a six-town collaborative effort to group purchase renewable energy for residents, came out of the steering committee. The SEA's steering committee has representatives from each town. The upcoming steering committee meeting is in mid March. Martin Golan volunteered to attend as VEC representative.

- Official Email Addresses / VeronaEC.org Domain

Due to compliance with security and public records retention policies along with best practices, the IT Department will be issuing official email addresses to each member of the Environmental Commission. Verona Town Manager Matt Cavallo requested to link the VeronaEC.org domain to the Township's Google account in order to give the members @VeronaEC.org email addresses that are archived appropriately in the same account as Township Officials emails. Once in place, all communication between Township Officials and Professionals, Board Secretaries, membership of the Boards/Commissions should be conducted using the official email addresses only. This is being done to ensure that official emails and communications are archived according to State guidelines and are accessible in case of Open Public Records Act/Freedom of Information Act requests and any legal proceedings that might occur.

Gloria is working with Michael McCormack, Verona's IT Manager to prove ownership of VeronaEC.org domain and transfer permission for email services. That is generated on the IT side in the admin tool for Google Apps for Govt. The Commission's Website domain name veronaec.org expires on 10/31/2019. Namecheap.com is

the registrar. The process to transition the mail server for the domain does not require a transfer of ownership, they need only prove to Google that the change has been approved. This will not affect the content, editing or management functions of the website, just the emails. Once the entries are complete and the DNS catches up, Gmail services will begin. McCormack will send member login information and temporary passwords. The new emails will be used for internal and external communications pertaining to the VEC. Sean requested guidelines on the use of this new email address, Gloria will request this from Mr. Cavallo and the IT department. Mayor Ryan mentioned that basically content on those emails will be public record, and should not be online discussions between 4 or more VEC members via email, but it is fine to send the agenda, minutes and other information to all members. Jessica pointed out that this is why the plan review group has only 3 members.

5. Upcoming Events:

- Volunteer Night was cancelled due to lack of response from participants. It will be probably rescheduled for April or May, we didn't receive a new date yet.
- Verona Park / Lake Cleanup is April 14 from 9 am to 11 am. Commissioners will meet at 8:30 am by the boathouse to set up. Charles Heyer, Verona Park Conservancy President called Gloria, they met and talked about the cleanup, they'll have a tent and the VEC we'll have one too. They will have coffee and bagels for volunteers, usually they get 15 people, and give maps of Verona Park to assign areas to clean. They don't use the Essex County Parks Waiver that the VEC and Sustainable Verona use. The VEC will concentrate on cleaning up the lake. Essex County will provide a rowboat. Walter and Tony volunteer to row the boat. Gloria will bring her long handled net in addition to Julia's, and a tent, garbage bags and gloves donated by Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission and NJ Clean Communities. The VEC is asking people to bring their own water and grabber tools, nets or leaf rakes.
- Earth Day Tree Giveaway / Grove Park Cleanup, April 21st - 9 am to 12 noon. The Tree Recovery Campaign had more requests than trees to give out, so the VEC will not receive free bare root seedlings this year. Their tube seedling program still has trees (greenhouse grown in 8" recyclable tubes). Gloria ordered 3 boxes (3 different tree species) before they run out. Each box will have 98 seedlings and cost \$35 including shipping (total \$105). Species are chosen and sent based on region (they have oaks, Eastern white pine, Norway spruce, and Eastern redbud in limited quantities). The VEC will make copies of the planting instructions to give with packs of 6 seedlings (2 of each species) -it's estimated that 2 seedlings survive for every 5 planted. Jessica will help man the table and said that Sarah can help but needs to leave at 10 am. Gloria mentioned that ideally at least 2 members will be needed for 3 shifts of one hour each. She added that Bill Knight contacted her about a few hazardous trees in the park. Gloria called Chuck Molinaro about it.
- Michael DeCarlo registered for the NJ Clean Communities cleanup challenge. The dates are from March 1 to April 30th. He requested supplies for Verona Park Cleanup and Grove Park Cleanup.
- The VEC decided to have the West Essex Trail Cleanup during the fall, on September 15 or 22, before the leaves actually fall. The Commission could team up with Sustainable Verona or the Cedar Grove Environmental Commission then. Frank said that he will continue cleaning up the litter in the trail during the summer, up to the Peckman Bridge.
- Green Fair, May 19 from 11am-4pm: an Open Streets event on Gould St. will be part of the Green Fair so kids can ride. Cycle Craft is coming to do bike mechanic inspections. Electric Spokes was invited too. The Essex Offroad MTB kids team will attend and help. The Verona Police Department will participate and provide closing hours and plan for Gould St. Frank volunteered to help Gloria organize the activities on Gould.

- Gloria received an email from ANJEC on May 15 offering Free Milkweed Plants to the first 25 Environmental Commissions who contacted Pinelands Nursery. Their "Milkweed for Monarchs" program donates a flat of 50 common milkweed plugs and a mixed flat of other wildflowers to 25 environmental commission in New Jersey. The plants should be installed on township property, such as at a library, school or municipal building. Gloria immediately contacted Pinelands Nursery, Fran Chismar told her they will ship them out in May.

- Peckman Trail / River Cleanup, June 2nd (National Trails Day - 50th anniversary)

The Verona Environmental Commission is planning to host the Annual Peckman River, trails and woods Cleanup from 9 am to 12 noon on Saturday, June 2nd, 2018. Volunteers will meet at the trail entrance behind F.N.Brown School at 9am. Gloria contacted the School Principal, Dr. Lanzo, Superintendent of Schools Rui Dionisio and Director of Facilities Joe Trause to check with them. 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System Act, which will be celebrated this year on Saturday, June 2nd. To assist in the promotion, the NJ Recreational Trails Program will be compiling a list of events for National Trails Day, which will be happening throughout New Jersey on public and private trails. Their form must be submitted no later than April 15th.

6. New Business:

- Gloria showed Commissioners the Checkout Bag Ordinance presentation that she put together with Green Team member Marie-Agnes Michellod and Steve Neale, Chairman of Sustainable Verona. Jessica pointed out that she read the presentation several times and it is very good, she added that she can not improve it since it is very well done. Martin suggested to spell "10 cent" and Sean recommended to clarify some facts and elaborate -for example "Over eighty other communities are covered by similar laws" -in the world, the US, or NJ? Gloria will send the recommendations to Steve Neale.

- The Hilltop Conservancy Prisoner's Pond Forest Restoration Project is on March 31 from 9am-Noon. Meet at uphill parking lot on White Rock Road adjacent to fields. The objective is to work as a team to remove foreign invasive plant species with a focus on Brush Honeysuckle. This will help to clear land for future planting of native trees. Bush Honeysuckle is a woody stemmed bush that grows up to 7 feet tall. If you have questions please contact David Freschi, Project Leader at freschi.david@gmail.com

Adjournment – Next Meeting April 18th, 2018.