

Avalon Environmental Commission
May 17, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by Chairwoman Rothman.

Pledge of allegiance.

Chairwoman Rothman read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement.

Roll call: **Present:** Dave Coskey, Kevin Coyle, Claire Driscoll, Joe Dvorak, Steve Malyszka, Donna Rothman, and Beth Tipping
 Absent: Brian Reynolds

A motion to approve the minutes from the April 19, 2022 meeting was made by Claire Driscoll and seconded by Dave Coskey. Approved by all.

Website Videos: Two videos overviewing the Grasses in Classes program and the Armacost Park Pollinator Garden lecture series with Pat Sutton were shown and well received by all members. Dave Coskey was thanked for a job well done on the videos. Both videos will be posted to the new Environmental Commission website.

Review of walk through Armacost Park: Donna Rothman reported a walking tour around Armacost Park recently took place with members of the Environmental Commission, Councilmembers, and other Avalon Borough officials for the purpose of evaluating the park. The walking tour consisted of a perimeter walk as well as a walk through the interior of the northeast section where the vines were previously maintained. An overabundance of invasive and nuisance plants were observed throughout the walk. During a luncheon following the walk, observations during the tour and the history of the park were discussed. In conclusion, the overwhelming consensus all attendees was that restoration of the park is a pressing need. A report will be prepared and submitted to Borough Council.

Armacost Park Pipe: Steve Malyszka gave a background on the history of the pipe at Armacost Park, noting a pipe was installed while Mayor Armacost was in office. The area was modified for a pond, parking lots, and a playground. Since then, the pipe has failed and the pond has drained, aiding to the park's detriment. The County of Cape May is about to undertake a repaving and restructuring of Ocean Drive. There are hopes to reinstall a pipe under Ocean Drive to restore back bay water flow to the park.

Thomas Thornton indicated the Borough of Avalon has chosen to undertake the 78th Street pump station project in advance of the County's reconstruction of Ocean Drive. The project, which includes many drainage improvements to the area, was recently bid, and includes a supplemental bid item of a dual pipe to be placed under Ocean Drive so that a pipe can be in place in advance of any park restoration to avoid moratorium restrictions. Seven bids were received, with the supplemental bid item falling within the \$130,000 range. When designing the drainage pipe, other engineers who have accomplished goals similar to that of Armacost Park were consulted, and recommendations were given for maximum phragmite control. It was determined to design the project with two 30-inch pipes with the expectation to place the pipes near the sub rail fence. A report of bids will be submitted to Council for discussion at the May 25, 2022 Council Meeting. If Council elects to award the supplemental bid item, the pipes must be installed by October 27, 2022 to avoid hindrance with the County's project. At this point, the pipes will not be connected to any other drainage improvements until the rest of the Armacost Park Restoration Project is designed and undertaken.

Steve Malyszka expressed concerns about the pipe size, and noted the primary function of the pipe is to control flow to the park while considering the impact to the wetlands. Thomas Thornton agreed and explained designing a project for Armacost Park will be a lengthy process, as Council will need regular reports and updates during the planning process, and there will be a coordination of experts from Mott MacDonald, Lomax Consulting Group, and other biology experts.

Discussion took place regarding the data needed for the project, similar projects and their success rates, the history of the park and the pipe, potential project specifications and requirements for the project, as well as needed drawings, hydrology and topography of the area, with all agreeing to form a committee overseeing this task with Steve Malyszka as the Chair of the committee.

Review of Boova DVMP Project: Aaron Baker explained the Environmental Commission reviewed and approved plans for this DVMP at the April 19, 2022 meeting. Since then, landscaping bids were received, with the cost of the project landing in the range of \$7,000 to \$10,000. The sponsors of the project have expressed concerns with regards to the cost of the project and has requested a phase-in of the project, with the planting of the Leyland cypress living fence to be installed first, and a second phase being to remove the vines and replacing the vegetation.

Potential solutions to this request were discussed, with all agreeing that both phases are mandatory for a successful project, and that all money for the project should be received up front. A motion to require up-front payment in full with phases to be determined, if necessary, at a later date was approved by all.

Overview of April activities: Donna Rothman overviewed all events during a very busy April for the Environmental Commission, including Community Connections where a water wheel game was hosted to promote water conservation knowledge; the Grasses in Classes program, which the school has expressed interest in continuing; the rain barrel program; and the tree seedling program. She thanked all members of the Environmental Commission for their volunteer efforts and indicated all programs were successfully completed.

Cancellations of June and July Meetings: Donna Rothman announced her inability to attend the June and July Environmental Commission meetings, and asked if any member would be interested in presiding over the meetings. All agreed to cancel both meetings. She reminded everyone of the Surfside Park Lecture Series and Pollinator Garden lecture series, both of which will be begin in June.

ERI Grant: Donna Rothman reported the RFP has been finished, and a letter has been received from the Borough approving the RFP in its form. An application has been submitted for the ANJEC grant for this type of program in the amount of \$1,500. The winner will be announced this month.

Pollinator Garden: Donna Rothman indicated the Pollinator Garden is in need of maintenance; therefore, weeding for the garden will begin soon, and encouraged all to volunteer.

Tree Committee: Joe Dvorak noted preparation for the fall plantings is beginning. A meeting with the Department of Public Works will take place shortly.

Armacost Park: Steve Malyszka expressed interest in seeing reports from the park after vine cutting was undertaken at the park in the past, with Aaron Baker indicating he will look for the reports and provide them, if found.

Bay Park Marina: Jamie McDermott reported Council approved additional design services for this project at the May 11, 2022 Council Meeting.

Adjournment at 5:07 pm.