

Avalon Environmental Commission
October 17, 2023

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, Brian Reynolds, Donna Rothman and Jamie McDermott

Absent: Victoria Deever

A motion to approve the minutes from the September 19, 2023 meeting was made by Jamie McDermott and seconded by Joe Dvorak. Approved by all.

Review of DVMP Project and Landscape Plans: Aaron Baker presented proposed DVMP plans for three new projects, as follows:

4099 Bayberry Road: This property had a project originally approved in 2022; however, this maintenance project includes a new expanded project area farther to the south of the original project area. It is recommended to begin work in the spring, which will include touch ups of the previous project area, as well. All pruning will follow the best management practices.

A motion to approve this DVMP project was made by Claire Driscoll and seconded by Joe Dvorak. Approved by all.

72nd to 73rd Street: This project was initiated by the property owner of 150 72nd Street with a project area requiring the removal of 70 Japanese Black Pines, which will be replaced by 145 plants, including cedars, bayberry, and beach plum. A small portion of this project area was visited in 2012. Since then, there has been some Japanese Black Pine regrowth; therefore, this project will include some maintenance pruning, as well. Some irrigation will be required, which will target certain shrubs and trees.

A motion to approve this DVMP project was made by Kevin Coyle and seconded by Dave Coskey. Approved by all.

Dave Coskey suggested using the DVMP program to educate landscapers regarding planting native vegetation throughout the Borough, with discussion following amongst the present members regarding methods that can be used to promote and encourage the use of native plants in landscaping.

78th Street: This project will remove 12 Japanese Black Pines, conduct maintenance pruning, and will replace removed trees with native vegetation, primarily shrubbery. Unfortunately, in this area of the dune system, tree growth is difficult, as the close proximity of the ocean contributes to a harsh environment. This project will be irrigated by the project sponsor.

A motion to approve this DVMP project was made by Brian Reynolds and seconded by Kevin Coyle. Approved by all.

Avalon Pollinator Garden Maintenance: Donna Rothman introduced Jack McDonough from Rutgers University to discuss his recent time consulting at the Pollinator Garden.

Jack McDonough gave an overview of his background and experience as a naturalist, educator, and student at Rutgers University, which qualify him to consult and work in Avalon's Pollinator Garden. In the Pollinator Garden, there is an abundance of mug wart, which is difficult to eradicate in certain sections, as it grows near low-growth native plants. He detailed the removal methods used in the Pollinator Garden, as well as what vegetation was planted in an effort to offset the mug wart. He recommended salt hay bedding during the winter to inhibit the growth of mug wart. Phragmites are also a concern, and it is recommended to track phragmite growth.

Discussion took place regarding appropriate plants for that location, how to best help the native plants succeed, educating the public, and what can be done to promote self-sufficiency of the plants within the Pollinator Garden.

Review of Meeting Dates for 2024: Donna Rothman distributed a list of the proposed Environmental Commission meeting dates for 2024, and asked those members present to review and discuss. All present members agreed with the proposed dates, and approved the publication of the meeting dates for 2024 in the December 6, 2023 edition of the Cape May County Herald.

Updates: Donna Rothman announced the survey of Environmental Issues has been reviewed approved by the Mayor, with some minor changes, such as substituting the word "issues" with "topics". AHLOA has offered to assist with the format of the survey, as well as placing the survey on their website. There will be volunteers needed to help tabulate responses. The survey will be primarily distributed via email to those receiving email updates from AHLOA.

Armacost Park: Dave Coskey reported work on the educational video about Armacost Park is ongoing.

Bay Park: Jamie McDermott indicated the roof color of the permanent structures at Bay Park Marina are to remain the planned Avalon blue, as that was determined and approved by Borough Council.

Tree Committee: Joe Dvorak explained work has begun to prune Borough trees and plant new ones, where necessary. There are hopes to have a Public Works Department employee trained appropriately as it pertains to the care and maintenance of trees to help promote successful future plantings.

Event Updates: Donna Rothman announced the following upcoming events, and encouraged all to attend: Dune Grass planting on October 21, with a rain date of October 22; butterfly tagging at Avalon Elementary School on October 24 at 10:35 am.

Claire Driscoll added the Grasses in Classes culm planting will take place on December 8.

Donna Rothman also noted the 2024 budget is in process, as well as a proposed project list. She will distribute when the documents are ready for review.

Public Comments: None.

Adjournment at 5:15 pm.