

**FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2016**

**March 2017**

**2016 Environmental Commission**

**Walter Andrews, Chairman**  
**Paul Walitsky, Vice Chairman**  
**Cecile MacIvor**  
**Dianne Pydeski**  
**Arnold Schmidt**  
**David Triggs**  
**Arnold Vernick**  
**John Clyde**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

### **ANNUAL REPORT**

#### **2016**

In accordance with the provisions of Ordinance No.676 adopted in August 1974, establishing an Environmental Commission for the Township of Franklin, the Environmental Commission is pleased to submit this annual report for calendar year 2016 to the Mayor and Township Council. The organization, responsibilities, powers and activities of the Commission adhere to the provisions of the Ordinance as well as the State legislation (NJSA 40:56A) passed in 1968, governing the establishment of environmental commissions.

#### **Powers and Responsibilities**

The state statute and municipal ordinance outline a broad range of powers and responsibilities for the Environmental Commission to help preserve and protect the environmental wellbeing of the Township. Principal powers and responsibilities include:

- Promote the conservation and development of the natural resources of the Township
- Advise the Mayor and Council and other municipal officials on environmental issues effecting the Township
- Inform and advise the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment regarding the environmental impact of proposals for development
- Investigate environmental and natural resource issues for the Township and recommend solutions
- Inform residents on environmental matters and ways to help protect the environment
- Interact with neighboring Commissions and other organizations concerning regional and state environmental issues
- Develop and maintain an inventory of the environmental resources and land use constraints of the Township.

#### **Activities and Accomplishments**

The Environmental Commission held a total of 17 regular official meetings, with one cancellation, during 2016, meeting either monthly or bi-monthly throughout the year. Minutes documenting the activities of each meeting were recorded and posted on the Township website. Principal activities and accomplishments for the year were as follows:

- Reviewed and commented on a total of 41 site plans for proposed residential and commercial development within the Township. This total is consistent with the number of site plans reviewed annually since 2009, which varied from 36 to 48 plans.
- Continued to support and work with the Township staff to provide Environmental Commission information for posting on the Township website.
- Co-sponsored and participated with the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association in a cleanup along Weston Canal Rd and Weston Rd along the D&R Canal on April 16th. A total of about 20 volunteers participated in the cleanup, which removed a significant quantity of debris from the area. This was our Earth Day Event.
- Co-sponsored Fight The Bite campaign administered by Michele Samarya-Timm, Somerset County Health Department. It's main focus was intensive testing for anthropod (mosquito and tick) borne disease, including not only the Zika virus and Lyme disease, but also dengue and chikungunya. She had assorted hand out materials and a media platform which included a program on the Township cable TV station.
- Continued to support the operation of the two community gardens that the Commission constructed in 2010 and 2011, in Naaman Williams Park and at the Pine Grove Manor School. The gardens have 34 and 47 plots respectively that were used by residents for growing fruit and vegetables. A new garden, Common Ground, was added in 2016.
- Provided input to appropriate Township officials regarding environmental issues affecting the Township.
- Developed a plan to fund the purchase of banner stock, design and printing of a Franklin Township Environmental Commission Banner with Township seal. This new banner was used for Franklin Day 2016 and is planned for use at future events supported by the Commission.
- Continued to support the Township's participation in the Sustainable Jersey program. Several Environmental Commission members are serving on the Township's Green Team, which is being chaired by Councilman Theodore Chase. The silver recertification that the Township received in November 2016 is valid until June 2019. Silver certification was the result of extraordinary efforts by all involved. The award ceremony in Atlantic City, showing Township officials accepting the Silver certification, was front page news in the May issue of the Franklin Times.
- Pledged to support the New Jersey Wildlife Action Plan which was passed by Council.
- Continued to represent the Township in the Sustainable Raritan River program sponsored by the Rutgers University Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy. Several members of the Environmental Commission are serving on the program's working groups.
- Co-sponsored a workshop with the New Jersey Water Supply Authority on April 16th in the Municipal Building, to instruct and assist residents in the construction of rain barrels for their homes. A total of 15 rain barrels were constructed and purchased by the people that attended the workshop.

- Participated in Franklin Day on September 17<sup>th</sup> in Colonial Park. The Franklin Township recycling flyer and Environmental Commission flyer were updated for hand-out at the event. In addition, Fight The Bite material, free LED bulbs donated by Phillips, and other hand-outs were made available to the public.
- Reviewed and commented on a proposed update of the C-1 stream ordinance. The Commission's comments emphasized describing and regulating *undisturbed* land close to streams, not existing back yards, parking lots, etc. The approved updated ordinance reflected the Commission's comments.
- Continued to support a Commission developed and approved resolution on climate change made at the August 17, 2015 meeting. The resolution was based on a draft developed by the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters.
- Commission member, John Clyde, thanked everyone who was present at the naming of the trail at Griggstown Grasslands for his late son, which was constructed by him.
- Continued to support the Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission and NJDEP in their program to dredge and remove sediment from the bottom of the canal.
- Continued to participate in a program sponsored by Rutgers University on Green Infrastructure Design, focusing on reducing impervious cover. The program surveyed opportunities for impervious cover reduction in municipalities along the Raritan River, including three sites in Franklin.

### **Expenditures**

The Environmental Commission spent a total of \$290 in 2016 for annual membership in the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC). In addition, \$137 was spent for the new Environmental Commission banner.

### **Membership**

There were no changes in Commission membership in 2016. Two members and one alternate were reappointed in January. The Commission operated with one Alternate Member throughout the year, as the second Alternate Member resigned and was not replaced..