

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

2018

January 2019

2018 Environmental Commission

Walter Andrews, Chairman
Paul Walitsky, Vice Chairman
Cecile MacIvor
Dianne Pydeski
Arnold Schmidt
David Triggs
Stanislav Jaracz
Mary Lauko
John Clyde

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 2018 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 18 regular official meetings during 2018, meeting either monthly or bi-monthly throughout the year. Minutes documenting the activities of each meeting were recorded, approved and posted on the Township website. Principal activities and accomplishments for the year were as follows:

- Reviewed and commented on a total of 28 site plans for proposed residential and commercial development within the Township. This total is a little lower than what has been consistent with the number of site plans reviewed annually since 2009, which varied from 36 to 48 plans, though more than in 2017 (18).
- 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 Mile Run below DeRussey's Brook on April 14th. A total of about 25 volunteers participated in the cleanup, which removed a significant quantity of debris from the area. This was our Earth Day Event.
- Held Deer Seminar on 5/21/18. Assessing Forest Health in Central New Jersey: Impacts of Deer and Invasive Plant Species. Presented by Dr. Jay Kelly, Biology Professor at Raritan Valley Community College. Dr. Kelly's research showed that abundant deer grazing changed the ecology of forest by eliminating normal growth which allowed invasive plant species to flourish and destroy normal bird and other animal species habits. The deer then move to other forest repeating the cycle. Dr. Kelly's power point presentation is posted on our website.
- 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 24 plots respectively that were used by residents for growing fruit and vegetables. The Naaman Williams Park garden was expanded in 2016.
- Provided input to appropriate Township officials regarding environmental issues affecting the Township.
- Maintained support of the Environmental Commission resolution on support for the Paris Accord. The resolution was sent to the Mayor in 2017.
- 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 Dec. 31, 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.

- Continued 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.
- Planned a Build A Rain Barrel workshop with the New Jersey Watershed Institute for September however, it had to be canceled due to low registration. A new rain barrel workshop is being planned for 2019.
- Participated in 5th Annual Franklin Day on September 22 in Colonial Park. The Somerset County recycling flyer and Environmental Commission flyer were hand-outs at the event. In addition, Beyond the Curb Recycling fliers, 500 free LED bulbs donated by Phillips, Electric Vehicle (EV) information and other hand-outs were made available to the public. Further, the Commission sponsored the demonstration of an Electric Vehicle (EV) being used to power the pump of an inflatable bounce platform for the kids. It also showed the use of clean electric vs gas powered generators in a kids playground. The demonstration also showed how a personal EV could be used as a power source in cases of major power outage.
- Selected 2018 Environmental Stewardship Awardees. The group/business award went to the Franklin Township Board of Education (BOE) for its planning and construction of the LEED Gold Certified, Claremont Elementary School. The individual award went to a retired member, John Clyde, a longtime member of the Environmental Commission who planned our annual stream cleanups in the local watersheds. John was noted for his coordination, passion and dedication to the annual event. The awards plaques were presented at the November 27th Township Council Meeting.
- 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.
- 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.
- Continued support of the Commission's Resolution against the Compressor Station/EIS.
- The Commission continues to support the N. J. Legislature as it considers a ban on plastic bags.
- Based on the Commission's recommendation, the Township purchased five (5) Chevrolet Bolt EVs and six (6) dual plug charging stations in December. One dual charging station has been installed for use by the public in the Municipal Building

parking lot while another is installed at the Department of Public Works. Others have been installed in the parking lot adjacent to the Inspectors Office, but are not yet operational because paving was not completed in 2018.

Expenditures

The Environmental Commission spent a total of \$310 in 2018 for annual membership in the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) and for plaques for the Environmental Stewardship awards.

Membership

There were some changes in Commission membership in 2018. Two members and one alternate were reappointed in January. The Commission operated with two Alternate Members throughout the year. One member (Jenny Kershner) resigned in September, because of work obligations, and was replaced with a new member (Stan Jaracz).