

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT
2015

JANUARY 2016

2016 Environmental Commission

Walter Andrews, Chairman
Paul Walitsky, Vice Chairman
Cecile MacIvor
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Arnold Schmidt
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ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

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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 2015 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 16 regular official meetings during 2015, 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 46 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 Mile Run northward from Hamilton Street on April 18th. A total of about 20 volunteers participated in the cleanup, which removed a significant quantity of debris from the area.
- Co-sponsored a Green Initiative Seminar on May 15th, held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building. The seminar was developed and managed by the service fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha.
- 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.
- Provided input to appropriate Township officials regarding environmental issues affecting the Township.
- 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 bronze recertification that the Township received in November 2013 is valid until June 2016.
- Sponsored a presentation on May 4th by the Executive Director of the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team on invasive species in New Jersey and how residents can control them.
- 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 25th in the Municipal Building, to instruct and assist residents in the construction of rain barrels for their homes. A total of 26 rain barrels were constructed and purchased by the people that attended the workshop.
- Participated in Franklin Day on September 19th in Colonial Park. The Franklin Township recycling flyer and Environmental Commission flyer were revised and updated for hand-out at the event.
- Sponsored a presentation on battery back-up for solar power by A.F.Mensah, Inc. at the October 19th Commission meeting. The presentation was attended by approximately 15 residents.
- Developed and approved a resolution on climate change at the August 17th meeting. The resolution was based on a draft developed by the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters.

- Participated in a visit to The Willow School in Gladstone, New Jersey to tour the facility and learn about the many environmentally conscious programs and improvements that led to its LEED certification.
- Continued to support the Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission and NJDEP in their program to dredge and remove sediment from the bottom of the canal.
- Participated 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 2015 for annual membership in the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC).

Membership

There were no changes in Commission membership in 2015. One member and one alternate were reappointed in January. Timothy Biercz resigned from the Alternate Member position at the end of the year, as he has moved out of Franklin Township.