

February 11, 2014

To: Abelardo Conesa

Fr: Lee Farnham, Ewing Environmental Commission

Subj: Subject paragraphs for Annual Report.

Abelardo, Here are short paragraphs on different EEC activities during 2013.

I've edited what I sent to Jim McManimon for the CFMP Annual Report for 2013

- A. New Jersey Shade Tree Federation.** The Environmental Commission pays the \$95 yearly membership and receives five memberships in return. The Environmental Commission members in 2013 were Dan Burke, LLA, Lee Farnham and Joe Mirabella. The Ewing Township members were Tom Elder and Kris Olson.

Each year the NJSTF requires core-training for one Township employee, and an EEC member. Dan Burke, LLA, was core-trained over two days at the NJSTF annual meeting in October, making four (Joe Mirabella, Arti Sahni, Joe Schmeltz) members of the Environmental Commission to have received the core- training since 2011. (EEC members in 2014 are Dan Burke, LLA, Joe Mirabella and Joe Schmeltz. Township members are Tom Elder and Kris Olson).
- B. Tree of the Month.** Started in late 2011 to stimulate general interest in trees among Ewing residents, this Environmental Commission project provides our local, free, newspaper (The Ewing Observer) with a timely column on a local tree specimen of interest. Ann Farnham, LLA, a consultant to the Environmental Commission, writes the text while member Joe Schmeltz provides the photo. Emphasis is given to native species. The Ewing Observer published twelve Trees of the Month in 2013, our best year yet!

Trees published in 2013, starting with January, were: Japanese Cedar; Norway Spruce; Blue Atlas Cedar; Tulip Tree; Star Magnolia; Sweetgum; American Beech; River Birch; Japanese Katsura; Red Maple; Eastern White Pine and Fraser Fir.

This program lends itself to a regional or state-wide initiative, and the Environmental Commission is talking with the New Jersey Association of Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) about their interest in sponsoring the program over a wider range.

(I've got to make pdfs of the some of the monthly columns. You should include one as a sample).
- C. Tree Planting Program.** According to information from Bill Brash, Head of the Mercer County Soil Conservation District, and a Certified Arborist, Ewing Township's tree canopy is 27.4% in a State where the average township tree canopy coverage is 40%! When DEP announced the CSIP Tree Planting Grants of \$20,000 early in 2013, Ewing Township applied for a \$20,000 grant to cover the planting of 70 trees in two parks that had been particularly hard hit by Hurricane Sandy, and a microburst a few months before Sandy.

With Bill Brash as a consultant, the EEC coordinated a Township application (Jim McManimon provided Township input), but our intensive, combined, efforts went for naught as we did not get the grant.

The need for improving our tree canopy still exists (and is even more of a priority now), so we will do it again in 2014 if the CSIP Tree Planting Grants are again offered.

- D. Continuing Education Units (CEUs).** Part of the Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP) requires Townships to earn 8 CEUs a year, regardless of whom in the Township earns them - members of the Environmental Commission, regular citizens, or others.

We are fortunate to have two members of our community, one a member of the Environmental Commission in 2013, who are Licensed Landscape Architects (LLAs). LLAs have annual educational requirements and both Dan Burke, LLA and Ann Farnham, LLA have each earned more CEUs than necessary to fulfill the annual commitment. Ann's 17 CEUs and Dan's 12.5 gave us a total far above the requirement.

They earned them by going to CEU granting training at Bowman's Hill, PA, Bartlett Tree seminars in Morristown and Philadelphia, and at various tree-oriented seminars given at arboretums in NJ and PA. We expect to use their CEUs for years to come.

- E. Johnson Trolley Trail Grant under Recreational Trails Program.**

In early 2012 the Township was awarded a \$24,000 grant from the Federal Recreational Trails Program, to be administered by the NJDEP. In 2013, thanks to intensive effort by Jim McManimon, Business Administrator, and Tom Elder, Supervisor in the DPW, great strides were made in upgrading the existing trail. The plan has always been to have the finished trail look just like what Lawrenceville Township did with their section a few years ago, so we used their plans and designs on the section we were upgrading, with very satisfying results.

First, County equipment came in and laid down a sub-base which was then covered with millings from streets being repaired. After that a 2" cover of stone dust was applied to the half-mile length to provide the final surface. At the north end where it crosses Shabakunk Creek to join the Lawrenceville portion, a split-rail fence was placed on both sides, mirroring what Lawrenceville had done. Grass seed was planted along the trail last fall, and a large boulder placed at The Whitehead Road Extension entrance (it will bear a plaque giving the history of the Johnson Trolley Trail). With an anticipated finish date of early Fall, 2014 the remaining tasks include planting of low-maintenance shrubs and grasses at certain parts of the trail; design, manufacture and placing of the plaque; and, some refurbishing of the bridge over Shabakunk Creek.

- F. New Environmental Commission logo extended to ceramic coffee cups.**

The EEC got a new logo in 2012, as the result of a logo contest organized by the Ewing Arts Council. The result was so good that Lee Farnham commissioned three dozen coffee cups with the new logo in 2013, and then sold them at cost to EEC members. Some were gifted to supporters of the EEC locally and elsewhere. If the EEC were ever to form a non-profit "Friends of the Environmental Commission," this is precisely the type of product that could be sold to raise funds to cover operating expenses....which would help relieve the Township of its annual costs.

- G. New Jersey Association of Environmental Commissions (ANJEC)**

ANJEC is critical to the success of the EEC as it is a constant resource for research, training, webinars, seminars and other areas of support critical to an environmental commission of volunteers. Our annual membership fee includes the workshop plan, which means that we can attend ANJEC seminars anywhere in NJ at no additional charge, which we do numerous times. In addition, ANJEC's quarterly publication publicizes projects done locally for all its members to learn of, and our Tree of the Month got publicity that way recently. We look forward to playing a role in helping ANJEC improve its regional exposure, perhaps through a roadshow being sponsored in Ewing during 2014. Lee Farnham has been an ANJEC trustee since 2012.