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Joseph Murphy, Council President
Leslie Summiel, Vice President
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Hal Rapp, Secretary
Peter Boughton, Past Chair
Ann Farnham
Helaine Liwacz
James Castelize, 1st Alternate
Van Cotter, 2nd Alternate

EWING TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

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January 24, 2010

The Honorable Mayor Jack Ball
Ewing Township
2 Jake Garzio Drive
Ewing NJ 08628

Dear Mayor Ball

Subject: 2009 Ewing Environmental Commission (EC) Report

Executive Summary:

The EC began 2009 with two new members and so emphasized training. Most EC members attended, on their own time and with no Township monies expended, several relevant seminars and public information sessions on various aspects of alternate energy, sustainability, green building and climate throughout the year, informing others in Ewing on salient points. We ended 2009 year by again successfully replacing two members.

Action items moved: Council resolutions on Sustainable Ewing and the Green Team (GT) were obtained, a tree replacement ordinance was collaboratively advanced and the Sustainable Ewing Green Team was initiated as an Advisory Committee to the Mayor. More will be needed in 2010.

Active relationships were begun or kept with the College of New Jersey (TCNJ), the Township Recycling Coordinator, Ewing High School (EHS) Science Club and Advisor, Ewing Township Redevelopment Authority/Olden Avenue Redevelopment Plan (ETRA/OARP) and the Planning Board (PB).

Collaborations:

Dialogues were held with six Ewing leaders at EC meetings in 2009. Council President Wollert, Business Administrator Thompson, Mayor Ball, Councilman Cox, Ewing Citizens Chair George Steward, Environmental Justice advocate Valorie Caffee, and energy-efficiently-designed Independent Living founder Rebecca Lynn participated in our meetings. The Chair and Vice Chair also held several discussions with the Mayor and Business Administrator.

Mayors Meeting on TCNJ Energy Efficiency:

Several from the EC actively supported the June Mayor's meeting TCNJ energy efficiency upgrades as informed by Curt Heuring.

OARP

ETRA's revised OARP was supported at the PB, Site Review (SR), Council and public outreach sessions at Pennington Road and Prospect Heights fire halls by Pete and Hal (full names in header).

Economic Development Commission (EDC)

EDC meetings in October and November were attended by John and Pete after both had conversations with the Chair. [Ultimately, the EDC Chair stated he had no interest in collaborating.]

TCNJ Collaboration

Lisa Bradley initiated collaboration between TCNJ Political Science Professor Bill Ball and his class with the EC where students interviewed Ewing people that EC members suggested on quality of life environmental issues, and wrote team papers that were posted. Ball called attention to the new Web instructions for Sustainable Jersey. Sustainable Lawrence had been a draw for former EC Chair Erin Indelicato; however, the new Web information provided a tipping point.

Sustainable Ewing

The Mayor recommended the EC concentrate on recycling and Sustainable Jersey and put the latter proposal in writing, including potential members and their charge. John hosted an ANJEC "Sustainable NJ" Webinar at his home with Pete, Lee, Hal M and Hal R attending. Members of the EC including Lisa met regularly to forge the effort. The EC appeared before Council twice in favor of Sustainable Ewing and Green Team resolutions authorized and advised by the Mayor: both unanimously passed though with comment by one Council person that no monies be spent. An inaugural GT meeting was held May 27, led by John and advised by Pete, Lee, Lisa and Hal R.

Green Building

Rebecca Lynn discussed her green independent living facility. On September 30 some EC members joined the GT on a tour of her buildings. The EC wishes Ewing to adopt green building ordinances and codes.

Solar Energy

Presentations in June and October by Abiding Presence Lutheran, on successful installation of ground-mount solar panel arrays, were attended by five EC members. In April, Councilman Cox shared information on installing solar on or near Township buildings. Advanced Solar Products of Ringoes provided him estimates to place panels on the Senior & Community Center, Municipal building and Hollowbrook Community Center to provide about half the electricity required. The EC expressed unanimous support and offered to support a proposal when brought before Council.

Wind Energy

A wind symposium on July 23 at TCNJ sponsored by Asst Prof of ME Lisa Grega and organized by the BPU was attended by Pete. Newer, more efficient, smaller wind turbines may become feasible in this area soon. The EC wishes to promote a forward-looking ordinance allowing consideration thereof.

Earth Day/Arbor Day

Two educational displays behind the glass outside Council Chambers in April created by Hal M and Lisa included a composting poster prepared by a teacher and students at Antheil School.

Community Fest

During October 10 Community Day at TCNJ, EC members Lisa, Hal R, Pete, John and Helaine staffed an active and lively table, sharing space and materials with Recycling Coordinator Tom Elder, Watershed Ambassador Angela Adams and the EHS Science Club mentored by teacher Kevin Kolans. A joint raffle based on an environmental questionnaire devised by Ann led to awards of Trenton Thunder baseball and Trenton Devils ice hockey tickets coordinated by Helaine, as well as EHS Science Club T-shirts.

Climate Project presentation:

EHS hosted an honors assemblies for 125 advanced science students in May where Dr. Dan Steinberg presented the Climate Project's climate change slide show; thanks to Lee engendering a collaboration between the Climate Project and K-12 Science Advisor Dr. Don Wahlers.

Recycling

In February, we submitted a letter to the Mayor in support of a new Recycling Coordinator. Lee also attended a recycling seminar at Rider U on June 5.

Volunteer Stream Monitoring

Watershed Ambassador Jason Hirst presented stream monitoring and the importance of watershed protection at the February EC meeting. He shared local data from a recent stream monitoring visit and training. Helaine and Hal M recruited two TCNJ Water Watch students whom Jason trained. The students expanded the stream monitoring they had been performing on the campus. Water Watch students without guidance were writing a project plan for more detailed monitoring. Additional equipment for chemical monitoring was being sought from Rutgers Eco Complex in Columbus, NJ.

Hal M. and Helaine helped four volunteers complete a two-session training in September (classroom) and November (in the field). Both also took part in the annual two-day volunteer water monitoring conference at Rutgers Eco Complex in Columbus in November.

Ordinances

Lee drafted a steep Slopes Ordinance as a supporting member of the GT.

Ann led a team effort to improve a tree replacement ordinance initiated by Scott, and incorporated two prior ordinances. The draft was then authorized by Business Administrator Thompson to be commented on by Attorney Hartsough. His comments were incorporated, then the revised ordinance passed through the Construction Official for review by the PB. Outlook remains uncertain.

Invasive Asian Water Chestnut

Starting in July, Ann diligently applied professional expertise to attempt a multi-party effort to acknowledge, delineate, fund and eradicate a serious infestation of Asian water chestnut on Gold Run Creek at the Katzenbach School for the Deaf pond (a State property) brought to our attention by former EC Chair David Parris, to whom it was reported by a concerned local fisherman. This effort is most challenging due to funding and responsibility issues, however the DEP ramped up concerns in January 2010. It is the first known Ewing manifestation of a multi-state regional invasion that snuffs out fish habitat and lowers the recreational value of lakes and streams. Ann provided a report with photos on the water chestnut in Gold Run. The pond is clogged with the plant. It cannot be mechanically eradicated; biological and chemical methods are possible. The Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team referenced three companies that do professional control. Ann contacted one, Dr. Souza of Princeton Hydro, who provided an evaluation and \$20k cost estimate plus several years of follow up to eradicate. This effort is ongoing.

Multi-modal Transportation Planning

Council and Administration were encouraged to approach NJ DOT, for a vetted planning firm to perform a Township-wide multi-modal transportation planning study with federal monies, and no Township monies required. Council passed a required resolution in 2009. We hope Council will finalize application in 2010.

Ewing remains represented on the Mercer County Executive's Bicyclist and Pedestrian Task Force by Pete. Several surrounding towns are actively developing trails but Ewing lags. The EC will use the experience of surrounding communities to determine how Ewing can progress in this area.

Open Space Funding

The EC, coached by former member and D&R Greenway Land Trust staffer Aimee Williams, believes modest reliable funding would ensure recreational and environmental projects in Ewing. As with nearby towns and the County, a small open space assessment would be viable provided Ewing resolves, the voters approve a referendum and Council enacts an ordinance. Having steady local funds would increase matching funds from grants. Landowners wanting to preserve their land have come to our attention. Discussions with knowledgeable proponents, including with advocate Freeholder and Ewing resident Lucy Walter, began on ways to garner support. A workshop on local ballot measures by The Trust for Public Land (who helped Hopewell and Hunterdon pass Open Space in 2008) in March was attended by Pete and Lisa. Another ongoing effort to persuade cautious elected officials.

Neighboring Commissions

Pete contacted Chairs Mike Hunninghake and Brian Friedlich of Bordentown and Lawrence ECs in March and June on working together. He was placed on Bordentown's active email notice list. Collaborations with neighboring ECs on common interest areas will hopefully advance past the talking stage in 2010.

Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) and other training

Pete, Lisa, Harold, John and Helaine attended the ANJEC basic training for Environmental Commissioners on March 14 in Tinton Falls. The fee was covered by the extra \$60 paid with annual dues. ANJEC provides a vital link to the 500 other ECs in New Jersey that over the past five years has proven very beneficial.

Land Conservation Rally

Urged by former member Aimee Williams, Pete and Lisa attended New Brunswick on March 7 with speakers, workshops and booths. Pete also attended the March 6 tour of urban park and recreational development initiatives in Newark area. Only personal monies were expended. Keynoters included Congressman Holt and DEP Commissioner Mauriello. Helpful contacts were initiated.

Environmental Justice (EJ)

Pete attended the Third Statewide Peoples Congress on June 13 at TESC in Trenton focused on green jobs.

Township Web Presence

With the more open Ewing website, EC items including event pictures and text were posted by Lynn Robbins, volunteer EC advocate on the Mayor's website committee, and IT consultant Rich Kapes.

Urban Leadership

A selective urban leadership program by ANJEC called "Leading Green", recognizing the urban character of Ewing, accepted Lisa. An overnight and six Saturdays in six months in six communities had six focal areas. Her participation earned 3-5 hours of free ANJEC workshops for the EC for 2010. Top topics are recycling and upgrading the Environmental Resource Inventory element of the Master Plan.

Wachovia Foundation Monies Earned for Volunteering

For the 5th year running, Lee earned \$100 for the EC from his employer, Wachovia Foundation. The program ended with takeover of his firm by Wells-Fargo.

Membership Changes

Hal Rapp, newly appointed in January 2009, has filled Scott's shoes as Secretary.

Lisa began and ended her tenure in 2009, resigning from increased job responsibilities, but took several trainings and helped catalyze and shape the new GT. She also took an active role at Community Days.

Scott Butterfield ended 10-years membership, several as Secretary, as elected to a series of leadership positions in his professional society. Thank you, Mayor, for his Proclamation.

From three qualified candidates, the Mayor selected alternates Jim Castelize and Van Cotter for 2010.

Respectfully submitted by

Peter J. Boughton, 2009 EC Chair

Copies:

PB Chair R. Owen

ETRA Chair R. Kull

2009 and 2010 Council Presidents K. Wollert & J. Murphy

2010 EC Chair L. Farnham