



EWING
ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMISSION



EWING TOWNSHIP NJ

MAYOR

Bert Steinmann

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Hilary Hyser

Kevin Baxter

Jennifer Keyes- Maloney

David Schroth

Kathy Wollert

2 Garzio Drive

Ewing, NJ 08628

609-883-2900



JOHNSON TROLLEY TRAIL BRIDGE LINKING LAWRENCE & EWING TOWNSHIPS

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Respectfully Submitted by the members of the commission:

Lee Farnham, Chair; John Hoegl Vice Chair

Peter Boughton, Harold Moeller, Joe Mirabella

Jo Ann Povia, Arti Sahni, Joe Schmeltz

EWING ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Commission Members

2012 began with the arrival of new members Joe Schmeltz and Barbara Treacy, replacing Van Cotter, PhD who retired from FMC Corporation and moved out of state, and Ann Farnham, LLA, who resigned as a full member of the commission, but generously agreed to serve the commission as a consultant.

Joe Schmeltz, for many years the County Naturalist of Mercer County and founder of their wildlife program, was also the incoming President of Ewing's Kiwanis Club. Barbara Treacy, an Employment and Training Specialist for the State of NJ, brought long-time interest in the environment and much enthusiasm to our group. Joe and Barbara joined Chairman Lee Farnham, Vice-Chairman John Hoegl and members Pet Boughton, Joe Mirabella, Hal Moeller Jo Ann Povia and Arti Sahni.

The commission logged over 900 volunteer hours in 2012.

Ewing Arts Commission sponsors contest for new EEC logo

In early 2012 Joseph Mirabella, EEC member and also on the Arts Commission, told us that the Arts Commission agreed to sponsor a contest to design a new logo for the EEC.

Lisa Snyder, Principal and founder of Elle*Eye Design, LLC submitted the winning bid, which can be seen on the cover of this report. What's really clever about Lisa's design is that it's an example of global reach with local touch (the foot outline looks like New Jersey); in addition, it includes green for vegetation and forests, blue for water and sky, and adds a Ladybug for integrated pest management!

At a gala awards ceremony in September, Mayor Steinmann presented Lisa with a certificate of appreciation, witnessed by EEC and Arts Commission members. Later we celebrated with a carrot cake whose frosting replicated the wonderful new logo.

Trail activity in 2012

Pete Boughton again took the lead on coordinating trail activity.

As part of our Johnson Trolley Trail (JTT) project, Pete organized several clean-ups on the part of the JTT, which is scheduled to be upgraded in 2013.

Members of the EEC, along with Ewing High School students from the Key Club, picked up trash along the JTT, cut back overhanging brush, and sprayed Round-Up on invasive Japanese Knotweed.

In addition to the JTT project, Pete headed several other clean-ups along the train tracks behind NJ DOT, going west towards Sylvia Street. Key Club students led by their advisor, Patrick Hurley, turned out in force...there must've been ten of them, and contributed more than 50 volunteer hours for these clean-ups.

None of these activities would have been possible without the excellent support of Township employees, organized by Jim McManimon, Township Administrator. Each time we had a clean-up the Township provided bags, gloves and materials to make our job easier, and then carted away all the trash collected. It was a real community effort that will be repeated in coming years.

Water Chestnut Patrol (Invasive Species)



GEORG SCHRAMAYR

For several years the EEC has been patrolling Gold Run, from the Katzenbach School to the Delaware River, for invasive Water Chestnuts (trapa natans). This is an aquatic plant that cannot be allowed to gain a foothold, for it will take over....quickly. Our secret weapon in battle is Maddie Mirabella, the only known Water Chestnut Retriever in the state!

Here's how it works: We walk down Gold Run with Maddie leading the way. If she sees a Water Chestnut she freezes, and we pull it up for disposal. She has been so successful that in all water chestnut searches throughout the year

by Joe Mirabella (her owner), Ann and Lee Farnham, Hal Moeller, Jennifer Keyes-Maloney, Arti Sahni and Pete Boughton, only ONE was found. It was lurking in Gold Run where it winds around the third green of the Trenton Country Club, but it didn't last long once Maddie spied it. This program will continue in 2013, and there's talk of Maddie training over the winter to become a Golf Ball Retriever too.

Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP)

With help from a \$3,000 grant through DEP in early 2011, the EEC developed a CFMP (a first for Ewing Township) guided by Bill Brash, Executive Director of the Mercer County Soil Conservation District, and a Certified Tree Expert (CTE).

Once our plan was completed, filed and accepted by DEP (mid-January, 2012), we were then eligible to apply for grants that would allow us to fund some of the priorities identified in our plan: public tree inventory, hazard tree assessment, Township tree ordinance, etc. Unfortunately, due to State budget constraints, no grants were available in 2012.

Nevertheless, Joe Schmeltz was able to attend two days of core-training at the NJ Shade Tree Federation's annual meeting. He joins Joe Mirabella and Arti Sahni, who attended the 2011 meeting, as core trained EEC members. Township employee Kris Olsen also attended the 2012 core-training. Our key training requirement was met, as was the need for CEUs in 2012. The CFMP is a five-year plan; more Township and EEC employees will be trained in 2013.

New Jersey Association of Environmental Commissions (ANJEC).

More than 250 NJ environmental commissions, plus associated members (planning boards, Green Teams) belong to ANJEC. ANJEC is a key part of environmental commission activities. Lee Farnham was elected to ANJEC's Board in 2011 and keeps the commission current on their initiatives, which include training for commissioners (seminars and webinars), Capitol Day in Trenton (where legislators talk about environmental issues), and an annual meeting to listen to leading speakers (former Gov. Jim Florio in October, 2012), and morning and afternoon break-out sessions on issues critical to environmental commissions including, storm water regulations, DEP initiatives, and how to be a more effective local force. ANJEC's research center is an excellent resource for us as it has sample ordinances as well as the latest information on how environmental commissions around the state are addressing issues of most concern such as open space, changes at DEP,

hazard planning for catastrophic weather events and many others. Our membership in ANJEC allows us to go to any of their workshops at no charge, something we will always take full advantage of.

In mid-December, ANJEC selected Ewing as one of three state-wide locations to do a regional focus group so that ANJEC members in our area could talk about the strategic planning issues that ANJEC faces over the next several years. EEC members will continue with ANJEC training in 2013.

Green Team and Sustainable Jersey.



John Hoegl, the EEC vice Chair in 2012, was also the Chair of the Green Team (he was a founder of the Green Team in 2009, along with Pete Boughton and Lee Farnham).

In accordance with the original resolution, Mayor Steinmann selected the Sustainable Ewing Green Team members for 2012, several of whom were reappointed from 2011.

The Green Team undertook several activities in 2012. With some assistance from the Bonner Scholars at TCNJ, Sustainable Jersey programs were modestly increased from the prior year.

The Community Garden committee, under the leadership of Mary Jane Leach, worked on establishing a second garden to be located at Banchoff Park. However, neighbors' objections led the committee to reconsider, and to reallocate effort to the expansion of the existing Whitehead Road Extension location. This activity continues into 2013 with expectation that the expansion may be completed in time for the growing season.

The energy efficiency committee, led by Mark Wetherbee, audited the municipal building and Hollowbrook Center. Several recommendations for improvement for each facility were presented to the administration. One major recommendation acted upon was the installation of an energy reflecting white roof on town hall. There will be significant savings in the cost of air conditioning during the warm months. Other recommendations including installation of high efficiency heating and reflective film on the town hall atrium windows have been proposed to the administration.



Plans for an active anti-idling program were initiated by several GT members including Valorie Caffee, Peter Boughton and Joe Mirabella. As of year-end, a township resolution endorsing anti-idling, and a signage program are being prepared. Additionally, our TCNJ Bonner Scholar Chelsea Sandmeyer began working on a Ewing Schools student anti-idling awareness program.

Ewing recycling activities were conducted by township employee and Green Team member, Tom Elder. The formation of a committee to assist Elder, to include associate Lisa Feldman who works for Mercer County, was being developed for 2013.

Community outreach and Green Team public relations were initiated by associate Joanne Mallowney. This includes a Green Team blog linked to the Ewing web site. Green Team activities and programs can now be accessed by any interested township residents. The Green Team also participated in the "National Night Out" on August 6 and Comfest 2012 on the TCNJ campus on October 8. These efforts were designed to promote sustainable activities to township residents.

Site Review Subcommittee.



Members of the Environmental Commission (EEC), supplemented by the expertise of a volunteer landscape architect and past EEC member, Ann Farnham, LLA, continued the practice of reviewing proposed plans by applicants before the plans were presented to the Planning or Zoning Boards. The plans varied greatly in scope and complexity from a simple installation of a solar panel array to a major commercial development.

At the time formal plans were presented to the township for review by the professional engineer and planner, a copy of the plans was routinely forwarded to the EEC. In each instance EEC's review team offered comments which were forwarded to the construction office, which in turn were forwarded to the applicant, the township engineer and the township planner for consideration. A copy of the review team's comments was also included in the packet which accompanied the application to the Planning or Zoning Board.

Depending on schedules, availability and particular expertise, the EEC has drawn on the following individuals to review the plans submitted:

Pete Boughton, M.S. in Chemistry/Bio-chemistry; MBA, brings insights regarding quality assurance measurement practices in the environmental field.

Ann Farnham, LLA serves as a consultant to the review team, and as a practicing landscape architect, is familiar with current best practices in the profession and how other governmental entities in the region respectfully implement environmental standards.

Hal Moeller, J.D. represents the EEC on the township Planning Board and coordinates the review team.

Arti Sahni, M.A., an educator and health technician brings common sense insights into workable solutions for project plans.

The subcommittee reviewed and commented on 10 properties over a dozen planning and site review meetings. Details of each review are included in the monthly meeting minutes of the EEC.

Tree of the Month.

Joe Schmeltz inherited the Tree of the Month project when Van Cotter moved on. Each month the EEC chooses a Tree of the Month, and sends a press release to the Ewing Observer about our choice. Ann Farnham, LLA has been writing the copy; Joe provides the photographs. In 2012, there were seven trees of the month published).

The Tree of the Month program was featured in the quarterly newsletter of ANJEC last summer, as a worthwhile project for any community. It was also featured in the bi-monthly newsletter of the NJ Shade Tree Federation late last year, which picked it up from the ANJEC quarterly.

This program also supports our CFMP, as we're increasing the public's knowledge of different trees, and the value they have to the population in general. This program could be replicated by any environmental commission.

Township Stream Monitoring

2012 saw the continued volunteer monitoring of selected streams in the township. Each quarter a pair of members of the Water Watch group of The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) students visited, monitored and reported on their visual assessment of stream conditions and count of relevant macro-invertebrates in the water thereby indicating water quality conditions in the streams. That is, the students became familiar with and recognized stream critters that are pollution-tolerant and those that are sensitive to pollution and able to thrive only in clean water. The counts from each monitoring visit are reported into a database maintained by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP).

This year the EEC further supported this program by purchasing a GPS reader so that the exact location where stream monitoring is completed can be included in the report to NJDEP.

Students Kristin Batko, John Speigel and Ammar Zia were regular participants in 2012. They will be joined in the new year by another group, including Hannah Krotulis and Danielle Leng. Their training, scheduled in October was rescheduled for the Spring because the AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador for this area, Jade Green, had her schedule rearranged by Hurricane Sandy.

Currently the student monitors make quarterly visit to Gold Run off Lower Ferry Road, Shabakunk East off Bull Run Road and on the TCNJ campus below Sylvia Lake. As new volunteers become trained, more stream sites in the township will be added to the regular visit list, including Shabakunk West, Ewing Creek and Jacobs Creek..

In December, Hal Moeller attended the Water Monitoring Summit sponsored by NJDEP's office of stream monitoring which involved updates on technology available and best practices employed by other volunteer monitoring groups around the state.

Board Retreat

On Saturday, December 15, 2012 the Ewing Environmental Commission (EEC) held a half-day retreat. The meeting was held at the Ewing Senior Center from 8:45 am until 1:00 PM. Morning refreshments, snacks, bottled water and meeting materials were donated by attending members.

The main purpose of the retreat was to create efficiencies within the group. We did this by: reviewing the core mission of the EEC, as per state statute; evaluating current EEC methods used to achieve that mission in relation to Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) best practices; and strategizing ways to complete current and future projects. In addition, we discussed ways to better communicate the Board's core mission and activities to stakeholders, such as the Mayor, members of Council and residents