

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT
2009

FEBRUARY 2010

2010 Environmental Commission

Arnold S. Vernick, Chairman
Arnold W. Schmidt, Vice Chairman
John Clyde
Cecile MacIvor
Dianne Pydeski
David Triggs
John Walker
Lawrence Lewis
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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 2009 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 21 regular meetings during 2009, meeting bi-monthly except for two summer months and December. 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 42 site plans for proposed residential and commercial development within the Township. A total of 96 site plans were reviewed during calendar year 2008.
- Sponsored a River- Friendly presentation by Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association representatives on February 16, 2009. The presentation was recorded and shown on Local Access TV channel 25 for residents unable to attend.
- Sponsored a Bear Awareness seminar presented by the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife on April 6, 2009. The presentation was recorded and shown on Local Access TV channel 25 for residents unable to attend.
- Continued the Environmental Stewardship Awards program for an outstanding citizen and local business by presenting the two awards at the Township Council meeting on November 24, 2009. The 2009 awards were presented to Bruce Hamilton and Suydam Farms.
- Updated and maintained the Environmental Commission's section of the Township's website.
- Co-sponsored and participated in a cleanup of the watercourse along Weston Canal Road adjacent to the Delaware & Raritan Canal on April 25, 2009. A total of approximately 1,000 pounds of debris were removed during the cleanup. Problems associated with improper drainage of the watercourse were noted during the cleanup, and were subsequently brought to the attention of the appropriate municipal, county and state agencies.
- Participated in the cleanup of the Butler Road Natural Area sponsored by the Trails Advisory Committee on November 7, 2009.
- Developed a program and obtained a Community Development Block Grant of \$5000 for the establishment of a community garden in the Township. The garden will be located in Naaman Williams Park, and is expected to be operational by the Spring of 2010.
- Provided support to the Township's Project Team for the County's Energy Audit Grant Program.
- Participated in a joint meeting with the Township Advisory Board of Health on February 4, 2009. The primary focus of the meeting was a presentation by a USDA representative regarding the poisoning of blackbirds and starlings in the southern portion of the Township. Other matters of joint interest were discussed, with a subcommittee being formed to investigate and evaluate the safety of detention basins in the Township.
- Provided input to appropriate Township officials regarding environmental issues affecting the Township.
- Initiated the Township's effort 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, a former member of the Commission.
- Met with a representative of the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy of Rutgers University regarding the Sustainable Raritan River Initiative program. Several members of the Environmental Commission are serving on the Initiative's working groups.

- Initiated planning for a Green Forum to be held in the Municipal Building on Saturday, April 17, 2010. The Forum will be co-sponsored by the Environmental Commission, the Theta Psi Lambda Chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha service fraternity, PSEG and the NJ Board of Public Utilities.

Expenditures

The Environmental Commission spent a total of \$513 in 2009. The expenditures included \$320 for annual membership in the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) and \$193 for the two Environmental Stewardship Award plaques.

Membership

Three members of the Environmental Commission ended their service on December 31, 2009. Barbara Beringer, a Regular Member, served on the Commission for over 20 years and has decided to retire. Dr. Theodore Chase served as the member of both the Commission and the Planning Board, as required by statute. Dr. Chase has previously served as Chairman of the Environmental Commission, and with his election to the Township Council, will act as the liaison from the Council to the Commission. Ernesto Cruz Roman served one term as an Alternate Member, and has decided to move out of the Township. Their service to the community is acknowledged and appreciated.