

**FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**Annual Report**

**2017**

**November 2017**

**2017 Environmental Commission**

**Walter Andrews, Chairman**  
**Paul Walitsky, Vice Chairman**  
**Cecile MacIvor**  
**Dianne Pydeski**  
**Arnold Schmidt**  
**David Triggs**  
**Arnold Vernick/Jenny-Ann Kershner**  
**John Clyde**

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 2018 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 17 regular official meetings, with one cancellation, during 2017, 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 18 site plans for proposed residential and commercial development within the Township. This total is down from 2016 however, this is occurring in a period of economic adjustment in the market. It is expected that this total will be up in 2018.
- 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 Seeley's Brook on April 29th. A total of 20 volunteers participated in the cleanup, which removed a significant quantity of debris from the area. This was our Earth Day Event..
- 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 24 plots respectively that were used by residents for growing fruit and vegetables. The Naaman Williams Park garden was expanded in 2016.
- 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 silver recertification that the Township received in November 2016 is valid until December 31, 2019. Silver certification was the result of extraordinary efforts by all involved. The award ceremony in Atlantic City, showing Township officials accepting the Silver certification, was front page news in the May issue of the Franklin Times.
- Pledged to support the New Jersey Wildlife Action Plan which was passed by Council.
- 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 September 9th in the Municipal Building, to instruct and assist residents in the construction of rain barrels for their homes. A total of 13 rain barrels were constructed and purchased by the people that attended the workshop. Rain barrels collect roof runoff that can be used to water landscaping plants and the lawn.
- Participated in Franklin Day on September 23 in Colonial Park. The Franklin Township recycling flyer and Environmental Commission flyer were updated for hand-out at the event. In addition, Fight The Bite material, 300 free LED bulbs donated by Phillips, and other hand-outs were made available to the public.
- Continued to support a Commission developed and approved resolution on climate change made at the August 17, 2015 meeting. The resolution was based on a draft developed by the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters.
- Commission member, John Clyde, thanked everyone who was present at the naming of the trail at Griggstown Grasslands for his late son, who constructed the trail.
- Continued to support the Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission and NJDEP in their program to dredge and remove sediment from the bottom of the canal.
- Continued to participate 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.
- Environmental Stewardship Awards were given to the widow of the late Arnold Vernick who chaired the Environment Commission with distinction for over ten (10) years. The other Environmental Stewardship award went to the youth of The St. Matthias School for their team effort in cleaning up a stream on church property.
- The Commission adopted a resolution in support of the Paris Accord. Subsequently, the chairman sent a letter to Mayor Kramer in support of the Paris Accord.

### **Expenditures**

The Environmental Commission spent a total of \$300 in 2016 for annual membership in the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) and the plaques for the Environmental Stewardship awards.

### **Membership**

There were no changes in Commission membership in 2016. Two members and one alternate were reappointed in January. The Commission operated with one Alternate Member throughout the year, as the second Alternate Member resigned and was not replaced. Jenny-Ann Kershner joined the commission in October filling the vacant position held by the late Arnold Vernick.