

**FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2014**

**JANUARY 2015**

**2015 Environmental Commission**

**Arnold S. Vernick, Chairman**  
**Arnold W. Schmidt, Vice Chairman**  
**John Clyde**  
**Cecile MacIvor**  
**Dianne Pydeski**  
**David Triggs**  
**Paul Walitsky**  
**Walter Andrews**  
**Timothy Biercz**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

### **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2014**

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 2014 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 16 regular official meetings during 2014, 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 34 site plans for proposed residential and commercial development within the Township. In previous years, 48, 36, 46, 48, 42 and 96 site plans were reviewed during calendar years 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, and 2008 respectively.
- Supported and worked with the Township staff to update and transfer the Environmental Commission's information to the new Township website.
- Continued the Environmental Stewardship Awards program for an outstanding individual and organization by presenting the two awards at the Township Council meeting on November 25<sup>th</sup>. The individual award was presented to Theodore Chase, and the Rutgers Preparatory School received the organizational award.
- Co-sponsored and participated with the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association in a cleanup of Seeley's Brook next to Rutgers Plaza on April 12th. A total of about 25 volunteers participated in the cleanup, which removed approximately 952 pounds of debris from the area.
- Supported and participated in a clean-up sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection at 77 Blackwells Mill Road (Six Mile Run Reserve) on March 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Met with George Stafford, Outreach Director of the New Jersey Highlands Commission in July. As a result, the Commission supported his draft resolution entitled, "Resolution of Continuing Support for the Goals and Purposes of the 2004 Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act."
- Acknowledged the Commission's role in the Appellate Court reversal of a lower court decision that would have allowed a digital billboard to be installed on Route 287 in the Township. The Commission's resolution opposing digital billboards was cited in the court's decision.
- Co-sponsored a display on solar energy in the Franklin library during April. The display was developed and managed by the service fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha.
- 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 47 plots respectively that were used by residents for growing fruit and vegetables. The Environmental Commission helped to establish and support a newly formed Community Gardens Committee to oversee the operation of the two gardens.
- 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 bronze recertification that the Township received in November 2013 is valid until June 2016.
- Sponsored a presentation on March 17th by the New Jersey State Apiarist on honey bees in New Jersey. Approximately 45 people attended the presentation.
- Developed and planned a presentation for September 15<sup>th</sup> by the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team. Unfortunately the presentation had to be cancelled due to the speaker having a family emergency.

- 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.
- Continued to support the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association concerning the program to remove two dams in Franklin Township on the Millstone River. Removal of the dams would facilitate the use of the river by anadromous fish such as American shad.
- Co-sponsored a workshop with the New Jersey Water Supply Authority on May 3rd in the Municipal Building, to instruct and assist residents in the construction of rain barrels for their homes. A total of 19 rain barrels were constructed and purchased by the people that attended the workshop.
- Continued to support the Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission and NJDEP in their program to dredge and remove sediment from the bottom of the canal.

### **Expenditures**

The Environmental Commission spent a total of \$490 in 2014 for annual membership in the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) and purchase of the two Environmental Stewardship Award plaques presented in November.

### **Membership**

There were no changes in Commission membership in 2014. Four members and one alternate were reappointed in January.