



Hamilton Environmental Commission
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**To: Mayor Jeff Martin
Township Council**

From: John H. Balletto, Chairman

Date: January 27, 2023

**Subject: 2022 Annual Report of the Hamilton Township
Environmental Advisory Commission and Green Team**

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:56A and the Ordinances of the Township of Hamilton, the following is a summary of the activities of the Hamilton Township Environmental Advisory Commission (Commission) for the year 2022.

The Commission has the responsibility for the protection, development or use of natural resources, including water resources, and open spaces located within the Township.

Membership of the Commission and the Green Team (EAC/GT) in 2022 consisted of the following individuals:

John Balletto, Chairman - Regular
Robert Benjamin - Regular
Clinton J. Griggs - Regular
Haig Kasabach - Regular - Planning Board Liaison
Rodney Richards - Regular
Karl Vetter - Regular
Ann Wolf - Regular
JoAnn Bruno - Alternate Member
Nicole Provost - Associate Member
Andrew Garcia - Associate Member
Julia Garcia - Associate Member
Theodore Buehler – Green Team
Patrick Nemes – Green Team
Claudia Shaughnessy – Green Team
Cathy Wagner – Green Team
Carrie Feuer - Mayor's Representative
Richard Tighe - Council Liaison
Sabrina Bowling - Commission Secretary

Due to lessening of covid restrictions all meetings were held in the Council Chambers with public participation allowed.

Sustainable NJ Certification

EAC/GT continued to work on maintaining our Sustainable Jersey Bronze Certification. Clint Griggs, along with Rob Poppert and Sabrina Bowling, with the support of Chuck Thomas and Jim Wyrrough in DPW, worked on the documentation for submitting our application for re-certification. Bronze Recertification was achieved for the 2022-2024 certification cycle. The award was presented to Hamilton Township in November 2022. We will also be looking ahead to the next level, Silver and formulating plans to achieve that certification.

Annual Land and Stream Cleanup

In April 2022 the Commission held its annual volunteer Land and Stream Cleanup effort. This environmental effort involved 36 volunteer participants along with 2 town council members. As a result of this multiple location cleanup effort 79 bags of trash and 49 bags of recyclables were collected. Commission member Haig Kasabach was responsible for detailing the various cleanup location site inspections. Jim Wyrrough and the Public Works team were also instrumental in this township wide cleanup event.

Pollinator Grant Program

The Commission and Green Team applied for and was awarded an ANJEC Grant to plan and promote Pollinator Gardens in Hamilton Township. Robert Benjamin and several Green Team members have been heavily involved with moving this new program forward. The committee has met with PTA representatives from several Township schools who are interested in the program.

Pollinator/Rain Gardens

Encouraged by the Pollinator Friendly Hamilton initiative and the \$1500 grant from ANJEC, the Green Team looked for suitable places to plant their first pollinator garden. Two neglected raingardens came to mind.

The program was initiated with the raingarden in the George Dye Tract. Workers from DPW helped dig a drainage ditch and supplied the sand, compost, and mulch. Volunteers revamped the area and planted flowers donated by members of the Green Team. Later we added a few plants we had purchased with the grant money.

During the initial phases of the Pollinator Grant Program, several webinars and Zoom instructional sessions were held during the winter months of 2022. In addition, several pieces of information were provided to the public through the Township's email communications network, "Township Update".

Robinson Elementary School had approached us to plant a pollinator garden in front of the school which we did with help of parents and students, and plants purchased with the grant money.

Just before the dry summer started, reestablishment of the raingarden on the far side of the library parking lot was started. The township had killed off invasive plants and provided compost, sand, and mulch; and later provided us with a long hose and reel to keep the plants watered. Volunteers and team members worked all day to remove weeds and plant flowers.

At the end of October, a wildflower meadow at Endicott Park was started. DPW tilled and provided compost, and we planted a few flowers and seeded the area. We hope this will be an example for the residents of the township to request similar gardens in their neighborhood park.

In 2023 we will work on finishing the Endicott Park wildflower meadow, maintain the two raingardens, and begin work on the areas behind the Groveville Fire Station and the Mercerville Fire Station as requested by the fire marshal. Claudia will continue to take the lead for the EAC/GT and work with Chuck Thomas.

Community Garden

Building on the work done in 2021, the EAC/GT continued working on the Community Garden program. JoAnn Bruno is chairing this effort with the assistance of several EAC/GT members. A number of sites were inspected. This program was temporarily placed on hold due to a similar effort between the Township and Isles, Inc. and RWJ for a community garden in Bromley Park.

Environmental Awards

The third Environmental Award Program was conducted this year. Two of the applicants were presented with awards by the Mayor on December 2, 2022.

GeoGreens: This company is an indoor hydroponics farm that grows fresh, local produce all year round serving the Tristate area. Because it is an indoor farm, they are not subjected to the effects of climate variability. Their mission is to become as close to a zero-waste farm as possible with their water, utilities and medium, using 100% recyclable packaging.

Scout Troop 91: They perform volunteer services on mostly conservation projects. They spent over 550 hours at Veterans Park, adding mulch, removing trash and debris, and building bat boxes. At Morgan Elementary School, they created an outdoor classroom to improve students physical and mental health. At Sayen Gardens, they built kiosks to educate the public about native plants and how to help them thrive amid invasive species.

Miscellaneous Topics

The EAC/GT were represented at Hamilton's 2022 Oktoberfest. The focus was again on recycling and proper disposal of non-recyclable items. This program was presented in 2021 and was just as well received this year. Green Team member Cathy Wagner took the lead again on this well-presented display.

Additionally, at the Oktoberfest and due to our receipt of an ANJEC Grant we displayed information on our current and on-going Pollinator Awareness program lead by Claudia

Shaghnessy. Our presentation highlighted native pollinator insects and attractive pollinator plants. The Commission distributed pollinator seed packets and information on current pollinator initiatives.

The Commission is actively working on an update to the Hamilton Township Environmental Resources Inventory (ERI) with the help of a \$10,000 grant funding from Sustainable Jersey. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) was awarded a contract to research and prepare an updated ERI for the Township. Preliminary meetings have been held with DVRPC staff and members of the Township Planning Office to begin the updating process. Rob Poppert, Township Planner is the lead individual on this project.

Members of the Commission participated in the Delaware River Cleanup in September.

The Commission is interested in food waste recycling. We received a presentation from a private firm that collects food waste and delivers the waste to Trenton Biogas. Preliminary discussions with Township employees indicated concern in the negative impacts of collecting food waste. The Commission will investigate other municipalities involvement in this kind of program.

The Commission continued its annual membership with the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC). Members of the Commission attended training sessions sponsored by ANJEC.

Hamilton Township continued participation in the Mercer County Sustainability Coalition. Our Green Team continues to partner with ten other Green Teams from Mercer County to discuss and share ideas and information. Rodney Richards was our contact with the coalition.

Commissioner Karl Vetter attended The Watershed Institute's "Assunpink Roundtable Discussions" concerning frequent flooding and areas prioritized for future development and preservation within the Assunpink Watershed. Unfortunately, this event was poorly attended (approximately only half of the Environmental Commissioners invited were in attendance) and there were no discussions concerning the issue of the Assunpink being piped under buildings in Trenton. However, discussions concerning water quality in the watershed streams were helpful. To date, there has been no follow-up.

Rodney Richards has resigned from the Commission after eight years of service. His participation was greatly appreciated.

Sabrina Bowling has resigned as Secretary to the Commission after six years of service. She has been a great contributor to the Commission. Thank you. Madison Mather will be replacing Sabrina.

Land Use Applications Reviewed

The Commission conducted 32 development site plan reviews as follows at its monthly meetings in 2022:

January – 2	July – 3
February – 3	August – 0
March – 2	September – 0

April – 5
May – 1
June – 2

October – 6
November – 5
December 3

Of these, the Commission submitted comments on 15 applications to the Hamilton Township Land Use Office:

1. 2144 E. State Rd. Industries LLC @ 2144 E. State St. for a motor freight terminal
2. Vessel RE Holdings LLC @ 1472 Kuser Rd. for 55 apartments
3. Hewitt St. Square LLC @ Hewitt Ave. for a self-storage facility & a billboard
4. 2144 E. State Rd. Industries LLC @ 2144 E. State St. for a motor freight terminal
5. Spolen Provisions LLC @ 482 Whitehead Rd. for building additions
6. 1 Earth Homes LLC @ Hunt & Samuel St. for a 5-lot subdivision
7. Windsor Builders @ 54 Rutgers Ave. for single family home
8. 2367 Kuser Rd. LLC @ 2367 Kuser Rd. for a warehouse
9. Denholtz Acquisitions LLC @ 2550 Kuser Rd. for flex building
10. Twin Ponds, Owner @ Yardville Hamilton Square Rd. for senior apartments
11. TEEVEE @ Deutz Ave. for creating 4 lots
12. Synergy @ Sweetbriar Ave. for solar panels
13. Sherute LLC 4000 Waterview Dr. for apartments
14. 1437 E. State St. @ 1437 E. State St. for additions to a warehouse
15. Cynthia & William Baker @ 11 Edgebrook Rd. for creating 3 lots

Due to important or serious environmental and geotechnical concerns, the EAC conducted additional research concerning the following applications:

Sherute, LLC
Teevee, LLC
Spolem Provision, LLC
Hewitt Street Square, LLC
2144 East State Street Industrial, LLC
1437 East State Street, LLC
2367 Kuser Road, LLC

This research included a technical review of environmental/geotechnical information either present in the application or from the NJDEP.

cc: Kathlyn Monzo, Business Administrator
Richard Tighe, Councilman
Fred Dumont, Director, Planning & Economic Development
Samantha Brown, Township Engineer
Eileen Gore, Township Clerk
Carrie Feuer, Mayor's Liaison, Director, WPC
Environmental Commission/Green Team Members
ANJEC