



BERKELEY HEIGHTS ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

2015 Annual Report Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

The Commission met 21 times to review plans and conduct environmental business. Comments were submitted on 37 applications to the Board of Adjustment or the Planning Board.

Volunteers for the Environmental Commission gave more than 500 hours of their time for meetings and work at Peppertown Park and the Community Garden.

In 2015 the Environmental Commission also:

1. Continued the community garden project. The garden is now planned to be on the Littell-Lord property.
2. Began to work with Township Engineer Robert Bocchino on revision of the Township Stormwater Ordinance.
3. Worked with the County to continue care at the walking path along the Passaic River Park.
4. Distributed some 200 saplings to all fourth graders in the Township in connection with Arbor Day.
5. Recommended more than 20 sites for planting trees along the Township right of way.
6. Participated in the June street fair at which we promoted recycling and rain barrels. We also promoted the community garden and handed out leaflets about single-stream recycling.
7. Continued with volunteers to weed and then install and mulch mostly native plants in one half of the bed at the eastern end of Peppertown Park. Purchasing of some plants and materials came through the Peppertown Park Memorial fund.
8. Collected Township energy consumption data and reported it on Engergy Star Website.
9. Supported efforts to work with the County and the State on desnagging the Passaic River as well as efforts to desnag streams in the Township.

10. Worked with DPW to submit a Sustainable Jersey grant for hazardous tree removal.
11. Submitted an application for an ANJEC Open Space Grant to build a crossing in the Passaic River Park.
12. Revised the Low-Impact Checklist for Building applications.
13. Set up an ash borer trap in cooperation with a statewide effort to monitor the spread of the emerald ash borer. No ash borers were found in the trap, which was set up in an ash tree in a wooded area of Kent Drive.
14. Passed a resolution in support of the goals and policies of the 2004 Highlands Water Protection Act and requested that the Township Council also support this resolution.
15. Supported an ordinance against unregulated pipelines and submitted this ordinance to the Township Council for passage.
16. Researched brown fields sites in the Township.
17. Supported the inclusion of funds for hazardous tree removal and stream desnagging in the Township's annual budget.
18. Began work with Watershed Ambassador Katie Ellis on a project to reduce stormwater runoff and flooding by installing rain gardens as well as projects to remove invasive plants from Township sites.
19. Began working with Rutgers Water Resources on Green Infrastructure Projects for the Township.
20. Supported Green Infrastructure in the Township's redevelopment plans.
21. Supported a resolution to request that the State of NJ update the Water Supply Master Plan which has not been updated since 1996.
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In addition:

1. Richard, Christine and Len attended the annual ANJEC meeting, which had all-day workshops.
2. Leonard Berkowitz retired from the Commission. Kinan Tadmori applied to join the Commission.
3. Commission member Ron Loria participated in the Downtown Development/Beautification Committee.

Estimated total volunteer hours were more than 900.
New grant funds received were: \$1500 from ExxonMobil.

Major Goals for 2016:

Review tree ordinance

Revise Stormwater Ordinance to include impervious surface mitigation

Work with the Watershed Ambassador and Rutgers Water Resources to reduce stormwater runoff and flooding by building rain gardens.

Commission members were :

Richard Leister, Chairman

Leonard Berkowitz, Co-chairman

Kevin Hall, Planning Board Liaison

Ron Loria

Ed Delia

Deborah Plotnik

Stephanie Zecca, Alternate

Helen Kirsch, BOE liaison

Jaime Salazar, alternate

Richard Leister, January 25, 2016