

## Annual Report of the 2015

### Lawrence Township Environmental Resources and Sustainability Green Advisory

#### Committee

#### **Introduction:**

The Lawrence Township Environmental Resources and Sustainability Green Advisory Committee (ERSGA) consists of ten members appointed by the Lawrence township council. Each member serves a term of four years. The ERSGA was reorganized in 2013 to merge the former Environmental Resource Committee and the Sustainability/Green Team.

#### **Our Mission:**

- Advise and consult with the council and the manager with respect to the environmental needs of the township.
- Review and make recommendations with respect to township acquisition and administration of open space and other conservation areas and projects.
- Study and develop proposals for the conservation and preservation of natural features, including landscaping of the township and make recommendations with respect thereto to the council and manager.
- Review and make recommendations to the zoning board of adjustment and the planning boards on all site plans and subdivisions submitted to the board.

#### **Members and Liaisons:**

##### Current Members:

- Pam Mount, Chair
- Ed Frankel, Vice Chair
- Teresita Bastides-Heron
- Donald Little
- Anna Bosted
- Dionne Polk
- Barry Chalofsky

- Tahirih Smith

Current Liaisons:

- Andrew Link, Principal Planner, Staff Liaison
- Chris Bobbitt, Councilman, Township Council Liaison

Generally, the Committee meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Community Development Conference Room in the Municipal Building.

### **Projects and Activities**

#### **Site Plan Review:**

At monthly meetings, ERC members continue to review site plans presented to the Planning Board, and the Zoning Board. Comments written by the Site Plan Review Subcommittee and approved by ERSGA, are sent to the appropriate board.

#### **Membership in ANJEC:**

The ERSGA renewed its membership in the Association of NJ Environmental Commissions. Several new members have attended training sessions working with Mercer County Sustainable Coalition.

Members of ERSGA are active participants in the Mercer County Sustainability Coalition. The Coalition meets monthly, at least three Lawrence members attend. The Coalition work jointly on four large public projects and have information and educational programs throughout the year. They also help publicize and share activities and workshops hosted by town Green Teams. Thus helping each other and providing more services for the residents of Mercer County without duplicating services.

#### **Living Local Expo:**

Members of the Lawrence ERSGA were instrumental in organizing the Living Local Expo on March 23, 2013. Attendance at the Expo increased from previous years and was a huge success.

Living Local Expo, March 19, held at Rider University. Most other Mercer County green teams participated in organizing the Expo. Lawrence took the lead. The planning committee met every Monday evening January, February and March. The Expo was a green-green fair promoting zero waste. The Expo was our 10th year of green fairs. Over 70 vendors participated including Wild Eyes zoo art and crafts, a farm market, electric car display and many educational speakers. Over 900 people enjoyed a sustainable day with friends and neighbors. Held at Rider University - a sustainable campus, with Rider students helping all day. They conducted a survey during the day to better understand how sustainable Lawrence is.

#### **Nature Center - Joint Program:**

The Lawrence Nature Center is located in Drexel woods, a town park of 35 acres. The ERSGA, in collaboration with the Friends of Nature Center - host trail walks, park and garden maintenance, speakers, family night activities all summer, educational programs and workshops. Now we have a grant from NRCS to develop a stewardship plan which will be a model for other parks in town.

#### **The Mother Nature Festival:**

The Mother Nature Festival is a town-wide event at the Drexel Woods Park, Lawrence Nature Center. Highlight is a visit from the Philadelphia Zoo as well as exhibits, trail hikes and 20 vendors and 10 speakers. It is free and open to the public. Held yearly, the first Saturday in May - a great event. Educational and fun family event.

#### **Sustainable Jersey Certification Program:**

**ERSGS** is working with students from Rider University to submit our completed Sustainable Jersey action certification application to reach "silver" certification.

"Sustainable Jersey is a certification program for municipalities in New Jersey that want to go green, control costs and save money, and take steps to sustain their quality of life over the long term." The members of the ERSGA have been working throughout the year on activities that would be counted towards the renewed certification from Bronze Certification issued to the Township in 2010 to Silver. The Sustainable Jersey program has been an ongoing item on the ERC agenda.

**Organic Waste Recycling:**

The ERSGA assisted the Township in organizing an Organic Food Waste Collection Program. This program picks up organic wastes from homeowners and transports it to a composting facility. The ERSGA, along with Township officials, have signed up 200 residents to participate in the program. This process will continue in 2016-17. We received a \$20,000 grant from Sustainable Jersey to help facilitate getting residents to participate by lowering the additional price for the program. Several members attend the Rutgers conference on Bio fuels and low waste.

**Environmental Resource Inventory:**

The ERSGA has worked for a year on updating our Environmental Resource Inventory with support from a grant and support from DVRPC. The inventory should be completed summer 2016.

The ERI "serves as an index of natural resources and is a compilation of text and visual information about the natural resource characteristics and environmental features of an area." In order for the ERI to continue to be useful to the Township and the ERSGA, the document is being updated. Will be presented to the planning board and town council to be included into the town master plan. The community was very helpful with ground truthing the information in the inventory.

**Clean Community:**

ERSGA supported the town clean communities clean up date, collection trash from the Colonial Lake area. An annual event emphasizing our efforts at litter abatement with the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association.

**Farm to Table:**

Hosting a Farm to Table dinner at Terhune Orchards (2015 - July 28th, 2016 - July 21st) the ERSGA helps with organizing and publicity as well as volunteering the day of! Funds raised go to the MCSC - for our joint county-wide efforts.

The Lawrence ERSGA has been very active this year. Our volunteers have put in many hours and helped bring sustainability and resilience to the residents and governing body of Lawrence.