



**TOWNSHIP OF BERKELEY HEIGHTS
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
29 PARK AVENUE
BERKELEY HEIGHTS, NJ 07922**

PHONE (908) 464-2700 EXT. 2116
FAX (908) 464-3238

**2008 Annual Report
Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission**

1) We organized a sustainability effort for Berkeley Heights, with 7 teams on specific subjects. The teams are charged with evaluating ideas and best practices along with their impact on energy and resource consumption and the environment and asked to come up with prioritized lists of action steps in a 5 year time frame. The concept was unanimously supported by the township council.

The sustainability program was publicized in the local press and via direct contacts with local organizations. We also publicized the effort with a booth at the town block party in September. Approximately 30 volunteers stepped up to help. A steering committee was formed, with membership from municipal government, planning board, board of education, league of women voters, chamber of commerce, and environmental commission.

2) We finalized an amendment to the tree ordinance, in cooperation with the Planning Board, which was adopted on February 8, 2008. The amendment provides incentives to developers for planting larger replacement trees and increases the payments required in lieu of plantings when developers are unable to accommodate replacement trees on site. Copies of our tree ordinances were supplied to Summit for their consideration, as they think about revising their ordinances.

3) In cooperation with Union County and the New Jersey Tree Foundation, we planted 33 new trees in the Passaic River Park and protected the trunks from deer with plastic tubes.

4) Deer exclosures in Passaic River Park were repaired, to keep deer away from newly planted trees and shrubs. We also worked along

with Union County personnel and volunteers from Schering Plough and Martindale-Hubbard to remove invasives and weeds from around last year's shrub plantings.

5) Approximately 200 seedlings were distributed to fourth grade students, along with planting instructions, for Arbor Day.

6) We arranged for the Mayor to proclaim Arbor Day during an assembly at Hughes school.

7) One EC member has enrolled to a course at Rutgers on "Hazardous Tree Identification", to be held in December. EC members also attended conferences on "Greening Union County", Energy Audits (Anjec), and 2 ANJEC webinars: "Effective Environmental Commissions" and "Environmental Considerations in Site Plan Reviews". The Commission secretary attended League of Municipalities sessions on Sustainability.

8) For most of the year, we operated without a secretary and were happy to have Amy Wagner join us as secretary later in the year.

9) The municipal ordinance was amended to allow for the addition of two associate members to the Environmental Commission. Stephanie Zecca was added as an alternate member, starting in 2009.

10) EC members did tree walks along with town officials and the developer's engineers and arborist at the Connell development and the Lillian Court development. Recommendations were made for tree preservation. EC members also visited a resident who was considering the removal of two specimen oak trees and, along with the township tree inspector, persuaded the resident to try pruning instead.

11) We hired a CTE to prepare the next five year Community Forestry Management plan for Berkeley Heights. The Environmental Commission met with the CTE and worked with him and the town tree inspector to finalize the draft.

12) We published 5 articles in the local press or township newsletter:

Two about the sustainability program, one about the general activities of the environmental commission, one about energy saving tips, and one honoring our retiring chairperson, Joyce Laudise. Joyce was honored by the town council for her 9 years of service.

13) We received \$2000 in grants from ExxonMobil in recognition of our volunteerism.

14) We worked with the Board of Education, PTO, and GL Environmental Club to help institute recycling in the schools.

15) We met twice a month , except when not necessary, to review site plans being submitted to the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment. Approximately 22 plans were reviewed and suggestions were made, as necessary regarding environmental and tree related issues.

Commissioners were: Leonard Berkowitz (chair), Robin Callaghan (co-chair), Marc Levine, Ron Hoke, Deborah Plotnik, and Mike Einbinder (planning board liaison). Dennis Smalley was our liaison with the Board of Education.

Total volunteer hours for the year are estimated to be 500: 220 hours for our meetings and 280 on other projects.