

2010 Annual Report Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

Our activities during 2010 were as follows:

1) The commission met 14 times and reviewed approximately 20 site plans and commented on 8 plans, generally with regard to impervious coverage issues and the desirability of mitigation. We benefited greatly by the attendance of informal liaisons from the Board of Education (John Sincaglia) and the Township Council (Kevin Hall). We also had occasional attendance from a member of the GL Environmental Club. We lost secretarial services early in the year and are indebted to commissioner Ron Hoke for taking minutes.

2) Several commissioners reviewed drafts of the CDM energy audit of Township buildings and made suggestions for changes. We then assisted the Township Administrator and his Executive Assistant to apply for follow-up work under the Direct Install program and to secure \$20,000 in federal block grant funding. The Direct Install contractor identified \$50,300 of primarily lighting projects in 4 buildings. The projects promise to reduce annual electric bills by around \$11,500. The Direct Install program and the federal grant will cover all but \$300 of the cost.

3) We completed paperwork for a \$7000 business stimulus grant directed toward creating an inventory of the Township's street trees. We organized training sessions for around 20 volunteers, purchased PDA's to run i-Tree software and began the project by inventorying approximately 15% of the town's streets. We plan to complete the project next year.

4) We obtained a \$10,000 grant through the Sustainable Jersey program, funded by Walmart, to use aerial survey data to evaluate the Berkeley Heights urban tree canopy and estimate its economic and environmental benefits. We hired the Global Ecosystem Center as the contractor for the photoanalysis. They will also look at 1985 to 2009 photo data for Berkeley Heights and surrounding towns to calculate canopy trends.

5) We worked with the Passaic River Coalition, partly funded by a \$1500 ANJEC grant, to update the Natural Resource Inventory for Berkeley Heights. The new NRI was discussed with the Planning Board. Copies were given to Planning Board members for their use in the review of building applications, were placed in the library and will be uploaded to our website, bh-ec.org. The ANJEC grant and the project were done in cooperation with Summit. One of the outcomes is expected to be future work with Summit and neighboring towns to enhance the recreational value of the Passaic River corridor.

6) Total grant funding for items 2-5 plus a \$2,000 grant from ExxonMobil and a \$250 donation from Dr. Smith's 5K race was \$70,750.

7) We continued to support the Passaic River Park by working along with Union County

park personnel and 30 volunteers from L'Oreal to remove a ton of invasive plants. We also planted 40 sweetgum saplings along the Passaic River with deer protective tubes. An Eagle Scout is repairing the deer enclosure in the park to demonstrate the effect of deer browsing on the understory. The County repaired flood damage at the park.

8) We distributed 230 saplings to all 4th graders in town and planted 6 trees, one at each school, in connection with Arbor day. The rain garden at Hughes school was maintained with the help of a local landscaper. We also joined with a Chatham program to sell rain barrels.

9) Commissioners recommended placement locations and varieties to the tree officer for 20 trees to be planted under the County's "Greening Union County" program. We also met with the new tree officer to acquaint him with ongoing programs and reporting requirements.

10) We publicized the energy savings opportunities available under the New Jersey Clean Energy Program with booths at the Rubber Ducky Race and the Berkeley Heights 5K race. We also talked to the seniors about energy and environmental conservation and the Clean Energy Program.

11) The Recycling Subcommittee, under the leadership of Marlene Sincaglia, ran a styrofoam collection event, made a field trip to the processing plant of Great Northern to see what actually happens to our recyclables, prepared a brochure of recycling advice, and ran an educational booth at the 5K race. We also discussed possible applications for the Townships recycling tonnage grant money with the recycling coordinator and hope to find ways in the future whereby these funds can promote recycling.

12) We worked with Council Member Kevin Hall to introduce a Green Building checklist for use by the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment. This list will encourage applicants to think about implementing environmentally sound practices. We also drafted a section for the Townships employee manual on "Behavioral Policies to Save Energy and Dollars".

13) The PTO environmental team, including Commissioner Zecca, initiated a campaign at Hughes, Mary Kay and Mountain Park schools, in conjunction with Kings, to promote use of reusable bags made from recycled plastic. They are also monitoring lighting usage and looking into reusable cafeteria trays to replace disposable styrofoam trays. Recycling programs are continuing at all the schools.

14) The Commission presented the Sustainable Jersey bronze certification plaque to the Council and discussed a roadmap to attaining the next (silver) level of certification. 33 more towns achieved certification in 2010 to join our initial group of 34. Only four of those towns achieved silver certification. This will be a possible 2011 objective for us.

15) Estimated total volunteer hours during 2010 were 610.

2010 Membership

Leonard Berkowitz, Chairman
Richard Leister, Co-Chairman
Michael Einbinder, Planning Board Member
Ronin Callaghan
Michael D'Aquila
Ron Hoke
Deborah Plotnik
Kim Diamond, Alternate
Stephanie Zecca, Alternate