



BERKELEY HEIGHTS ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

2012 Annual Report Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

The Commission met 13 times to review plans and conduct environmental business. Comments were submitted on 9 plans to the Board of Adjustment/Planning Board, and the Commission reviewed an appeal on a conservation easement.

Other activities of the Environmental Commission in 2012:

1. In January the recycling team organized a styrofoam collection.
2. The tree team continued the tree survey. One section of the Township is completed. One section is 95 percent complete. A third section is about 80 percent complete. A fourth section is about 50 percent complete. One section has not been surveyed. To date nearly 2,800 trees have been evaluated and recorded.
3. The town engineer, tree inspector and the Commission agreed to hire a Certified Tree Expert or arborist to evaluate trees identified as hazardous by the volunteers.
4. In May the EC organized and produced a public meeting for the Township and neighboring towns on flooding, stream protection and riparian ordinances. Participants in this meeting included members of the NJ DEP, the Passaic River Coalition, Rutgers Extension Service. One outcome of the meeting was to request the county desnag the Passaic River and streams on county property.
5. Helped the Township supervise the location and planting of 25 dogwoods trees as part of the Greening Union County program.
6. Ron Loria, a new member, and Richard Leister attended ANJEC (Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions) training. And Richard also attended the annual ANJEC meeting.
7. Leonard Berkowitz was elected to the Board of ANJEC.
8. Len also wrote the article "Trees are Worth Millions", about the value of the Berkeley Heights' tree canopy, in the March issue of the *NJLM* magazine.

9. The EC met with Bob Bocchino, the new recycling officer, to coordinate recycling efforts.
10. Sent a member, Ron Loria, to participate in the Downtown Development/Beautification Committee.
11. As a result of the EC's efforts in 2011, the Township received Sustainable Jersey Silver certification in 2012. It should be noted that while some other municipalities used paid employees to achieve certification, Berkeley Heights achieved it through the volunteers on the EC.
12. Leonard Berkowitz gave an interview on TV-34 regarding the commission's activities and also participated in a panel discussion on Sustainable Jersey for Greenable Woodbridge TV. Sustainable Jersey featured the discussion on its web site.
13. Our members continued care at the walking path along the Passaic River. Together with Union County personnel and master gardeners, we planted Eastern Redbuds in a deer enclosure. Together with Union County personnel and 25 volunteers from the L'Oreal Corporation, we cleared invasive plants from among the trees and shrubs and also removed debris from a stream. Together with Lexus-Nexus volunteers we also helped in a second day of cleaning the Passaic River park and removing minor snags from the Robbinsville stream.
14. We distributed some 200 saplings to all 4th fourth graders in the township in connection with Arbor Day.
15. We continued to maintain the rain garden at Hughes school with the cooperation of a local landscaper.
16. We developed a plan for a large planting bed, where some trees had fallen in Peppertown Park. We installed mostly native plants in one half of the bed and will complete the planting in spring of 2013. Purchasing of the plants and materials came through the Peppertown Park Memorial fund.
17. We supplied a list of native trees that might replace trees lost when hurricane Sandy came through.
18. Two commissioners served on the solar energy advisory committee for the Board of Education.

Estimated total volunteer hours were : 850

New grant funds received were: \$2000 from ExxonMobil.

Goals for 2013:

Finish the tree survey

Plant trees to replace those lost from Hurricane Sandy

Revise the Community Forestry Management Plan

Review tree ordinance

Prepare an impervious surface mitigation ordinance

Advise on Downtown beautification

Work on Sustainable NJ for 2014

Explore project on stream desnagging

Recycle styrofoam.

Commission members were :

Richard Leister, Chairman

Leonard Berkowitz, Co-chairman

Kevin Hall, Planning Board Liaison

Robin Callaghan

Ron Loria

Ed Delia

Deborah Plotnik

Stephanie Zecca, Alternate

Helen Kirsch, BOE liaison

Richard Leister, February 8, 2013