



BERKELEY HEIGHTS ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

## **2013 Annual Report Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission**

The Commission met 19 times to review plans and conduct environmental business. Comments were submitted on 32 applications to the Board of Adjustment/Planning Board.

Volunteers for the Environmental Commission gave 800 hours of their time for the tree survey, Peppertown Park and the Community Garden.

In 2013 the Environmental Commission also

1. Helped the High School Environmental Club organize a Styrofoam collection in January. The collection amounted to about six cubic yards, filling up and spilling out next to the large shed outside the Rec building. Now the Township has included Styrofoam in curbside recycling so this project will not continue. We also helped the High School Environmental Club purchase recycling bins for the school
2. Continued the tree survey with the tree team. Three sections of the Township are completed. The last two sections are more than 90 percent complete. To date nearly than 4,500 trees along the right of way have been evaluated and recorded.
3. Worked with the tree inspector to apply for a grant to inspect and remove hazard trees in the township. The grant for \$20,000 was received, and the Township has begun removing trees.
4. Began exploring whether residents would be interested in a community garden. Because of the positive response, the Commission formed a subcommittee to gather more detailed information from the community. The Commission met with Tom Barton and Dan Palladino, the representative of the Littell-Lord property, to discuss options. The project is now moving forward with more volunteers and grant applications.
5. Helped the Township supervise the location and planting of 10 dogwood and 10 Maackia trees as part of the Greening Union County program.
6. Worked with Tom Bocko to obtain a grant to revise the Community Forestry Management Plan. Certified Tree Expert Stephen Schuckman was hired to revise the plan.

7. Began to prepare for renewing Sustainable Jersey Certification, which must be renewed in 2014.
8. Worked with the County to continue care at the walking path along the Passaic River Park. In June 35 people from L'Oreal installed tubes to protect plantings behind soccer field and worked on trail maintenance. With Union County personnel and Lexus-Nexus volunteers we also helped clean the Passaic River Park trail.
9. Distributed some 200 saplings to all fourth graders in the Township in connection with Arbor Day.
10. Participated in the June street fair at which we promoted recycling and rain barrels. The new recycling vendor also joined our booth and handed out leaflets about single-stream recycling. We also published an article about the new recycling system.
11. 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 the plants and materials came through the Peppertown Park Memorial fund.
12. Presented a resolution on Open Space Preservation to the Township Council. The resolution was passed at the April 9 meeting of the Council.
13. Supported efforts to work with the County and the State on desnagging the Passaic River

In addition:

1. Richard and Len attended the annual ANJEC meeting, which had all-day workshops. Richard also attended a meeting in Hightstown on stormwater management.
2. Leonard Berkowitz continues to serve on the Board of ANJEC; he attended two regional and planning meetings organized by Sustainable Jersey. And he organized a program at the Rotary Club to publicize the Direct Install energy saving program for local businesses.
3. Commission member Ron Loria continued to participate in the Downtown Development/Beautification Committee.

Estimated total volunteer hours were more than 900.

New grant funds received were: \$1500 from ExxonMobil.

Goals for 2014:

Finish the tree survey.

Plant trees to replace those lost from Hurricane Sandy

Revise the Community Forestry Management Plan

Revise Green Building Practices

Review tree ordinance

Prepare an impervious surface mitigation ordinance

Advise on Downtown beautification

Achieve Sustainable NJ certification

Explore project on stream desnagging

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

Jaime Salazar (joined the commission at midyear).

Richard Leister, February 10, 2014