



# EWING GREEN TEAM

*Promoting People, the Planet, and Prosperity in Ewing*



July 26, 2017 Minutes

LOCATION: EWING SENIOR AND COMMUNITY CENTER

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Evan Crumiller\*  
Lisa Feldman\*  
John Hoegl\*  
Garry Keel\*  
Joanne Mullowney\*  
Amy Otey  
Patrick Otey

Michelle Pitts  
Sharon Rose  
David Schroth\*  
Mark Simchock  
Caroline Steward\*  
Mark Wetherbee\*  
Christine Wooden

## INTRODUCTION

The July 26, 2017 meeting was called to order by Joanne Mullowney at 7:00pm. Green Team members were asked to approve the June minutes as posted on our website and hot-linked within the meeting reminder email. They were unanimously approved with no additions or corrections, Caroline Stewart made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Mark Wetherbee.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ENVIRONMENTAL INSIGHTS PROGRAM

At the September meeting Joe Mirabella will be speaking on Intro to Ecology for the non-scientist followed in October with the current realities of what the status is of the environment.

### EMERALD ASH BORER GRANT

We planted 100 Eastern Red Bud trees, unfortunately got a late start and have lost a few. We do have a one year guarantee so we will be able to replace those lost.

Certified Tree Expert Bill Brash is supposed to finish working on the Ash tree inventory. We notified of the grant award in April September of 2016 and have 18 months to complete it. The reality is that most of the Ash Trees will need to come down since they will become safety hazards once they are dead and brittle. Once the inventory is completed; it will be easier to prioritize which might be worth trying to save and which need to be taken down.

## GARDEN TOUR



# EWING GREEN TEAM

*Promoting People, the Planet, and Prosperity in Ewing*



The Garden tour and Garden Contest are on schedule for September. This year's tour is being expanded to 2 days – September 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> in order to give the gardeners and attendees greater flexibility. Each day will have the various gardens mapped out. Having 2 days gives options to the people showing the gardens and will hopefully get a larger turnout with this flexibility.

## PUBLIC PROGRAM

Patrick Otey, a local Boy Scout has been working on his Eagle Scout Badge project which is about recycling. His 'Ewing Better Bag Project' was designed to encourage people to change from using plastic bags to reusable bags. He reported on the results of his project as the featured speaker of the meeting.

His first idea had been to go to local Ewing stores such as ShopRite and Home Depot and bag for people using donated reusable bags. The bags would have flyers with information inside about recycling and also information about the Green Team. However, as Patrick worked on the project it went through many modifications. The end result was approaching customers and asking them to complete a survey about their recycling habits. For each completed survey the person would receive (2) reusable bags.

It was decided that the Scouts would have (3) different outreach days and locations where they would do the surveys. They had teams of three Scouts who were at each site to help Patrick. The first day was at the Ewing Shoprite on Sunday, July 9<sup>th</sup>. They were successful and over 100 surveys were filled out. They found that people were generally willing to do this and that the bags were appreciated (and might have been good incentive more people to do the surveys). Patrick happily noted that people were coming out using their new bags instead of plastic bags.

The second work day was held on Saturday, July 15<sup>th</sup> at the Trenton Farmer's Market. While not strictly in Ewing, it was decided that many Ewing residents go there and it's right on our border. Patrick had approached Ewing stores but only ShopRite said yes. The Trenton Farmer's Market work day went extremely well and people were very receptive.

The third location was the Sunday Farmer's Market at Campus Town (TCNJ), 31 & Main, and while not as crowded as the other two locations, people were still open to filling out the surveys.

## SURVEY RESULTS

When reviewing the surveys, they learned that a great number say that they do reuse plastic bags that they receive at the store. And 107 did sign the commitment pledge going forward.

## PROJECT CRITIQUE

Patrick did look back objectively to critique the overall project and thought he could have designed a better survey with a better layout of the questions. He also thought about his original objective of finding ways to encourage people to use reusable bags and thought PSA's hung strategically to remind people to bring their bags inside the store would also be helpful.



# EWING GREEN TEAM

*Promoting People, the Planet, and Prosperity in Ewing*



He also recognized that most people of voting age seemed to be in favor of paying a fee on using plastic bags. Mercer County did have a ballot question about this that was voted down a number of years ago but the consensus was that it was poorly written and people didn't understand where the money collected would go.

It was suggested that we follow-up in one year to see if we can take this further. Maybe there is a way that we can see if this had any impact on the people who took the survey. Many people gave contact information; maybe we can use that to check in with those people.

There are cities and townships that are enacting their own plastic bag fee; perhaps we can find out how they did it. John Hoegl said Long Beach Township has done it maybe we can find what they did. John will follow-up to see how they were able to do this.

Plastic bottles are also a big problem. We need to be able to change people's habits. The overwhelming use of bottled water has led to a whole new level of problems. Not only the plastic in the landfills, now in the waterways and oceans, but as health hazards. People don't realize that drinking bottled water that has been sitting in warm places probably has bacteria and can make them sick.

Kids do seem to be bringing more reusable bottles to school and refilling them rather than buying bottled water. Joanne has a BYOB letter and maybe we can work with schools on this.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### ARTS

Lisa reported that she held a collaboration meeting with the Arts Commission and Art Has No Boundaries to plan the 'yarn bombing' project. Unfortunately, she felt that not enough people were there to come up with a viable project to go forward. She didn't feel that much was decided.

The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Scarecrow Contest is planned for October, but it's really too early to start planning. Thankfully we have materials from last year that will be a big help. September is when the details and organization should really begin.

### BEAUTIFICATION

The Garden Tour and Contest are coming along. They are September 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Times will probably be 10-2:00 but are still being discussed. We are still looking for gardeners to show off their gardens. As for the contest we currently have 6 submissions but are hoping for more. The winners will be announced that weekend.

We have 5 rain barrels to offer as prizes as well as gift certificates from local nurseries. One business has already entered, Erini's Restaurant.



# EWING GREEN TEAM

*Promoting People, the Planet, and Prosperity in Ewing*



We originally only had 2 rain barrels from our very successful rain barrel workshop, but the Girl Scouts were able to get more barrels from River Horse so they have made 3 more.

Joanne has made a slide show on how to make a rain barrel to run for the Girl Scouts which will also be very helpful for future workshops.

## BIKE ADVOCACY

The date of the 2017 Bike Tour is September 23, the same day as Community Fest. Registration begins at 8:00 and riders will leave at 8:30. The ride begins from Campus Town and includes a long and a short route with different levels of difficulty. There is a maximum of 50-60 riders due to insurance issues.

The cost before September 16th is \$20; after will be \$25. Since September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, all proceeds will be donated to American Cancer.

This works out great since riders end up again at Campus Town hopefully they will stay to enjoy CommFest at TCNJ.

## GREEN BUSINESS RECOGNITION

Evan reports that outreach has been frustrating because as of yet, we don't have anyone new. He has a packet ready to give out but not finding any interested prospects. Last time we had 7 responses. He has a meeting set up with Erin at Elements hotel which is encouraging. And he stopped at the Ewing Construction Office to see if any construction is going on that could suggest new contacts.

The contact list from Patrick Otey's survey might be a good resource to check out and it might be worthwhile to check churches such as Abiding Presbyterian and Our Lady of Good Counsel, and Villa Victoria. Another suggestion was maybe to contact Real Estate companies.

## ENERGY

John reported that the Direct Install program where business has an energy audit for various work to be done in their building that could save energy and the state would pay 70% of the cost of the upgrades which was supposed to be supported by state has lost much of its funding. The Governor removed what is believed to be \$300 Million dollars from this program so in reality; there is no money.

## PARIS CLIMATE ACCORD

John Hoegl is going to work on a resolution that we could give to Town Council in support of a local initiative that would support the goals outlined in the Paris Accord. Since President Trump announced the U.S. is pulling out of the Paris Accord, many states, and local county and municipal governments are stepping up to create legislation on the local level that follow the goals.



# EWING GREEN TEAM

*Promoting People, the Planet, and Prosperity in Ewing*



There are a couple of steps that need to be done in order to do this. The first thing that is needed is a way to track and quantify what we are doing. For example, reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We would need to redo our energy billing. While PSE&G is willing to consolidate the numerous accounts; Ewing also uses a 3rd party supplier and this 'muddies the waters' since including them would cause Ewing to lose their discount rates. This has been the big stumbling block.

Mike Winka, one of the members of the Mercer County Sustainability Coalition, offered to analyze Ewing's energy usage to help measure our carbon footprint. John will contact him to see what he needs. If we want to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions; we first need to know where we are to start.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

It was mentioned that a good resource for the Ewing Welcome Packet that her committee is working on would be seniors. It would be especially helpful to talk to the seniors at the Community Center.

## REPORTS FROM OTHER BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS AND OLD/NEW BUSINESS

### TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

There is an ordinance pending on solar panels and square footage that is coming up at the next Town Council Meeting. He will discuss details at our next Green Team Meeting.

### PUBLIC HEARING

Several Green Team members attended the Township Public Hearing before the Ewing Green Team meeting to discuss how the current Department of Public Works location in John Watson Park is a prohibited use in lands under the DEP's Green Acres program. Chuck Latini, Ewing's city Planner, ran the meeting. He explained that there are rules on what is allowed to be located on this type of property and Ewing is in violation and can be charged fines.

To address DEP's concerns Ewing Township is getting public feedback on this situation and asking for suggestions to either relocate Public Works or how to improve John Watson Park and increase open space and ideas for possible recreational uses. If the Department of Public Works is to remain at this location, additional green acreage has to be added to compensate for this loss to the Park. Public Works takes away about 2 acres from the Park acreage, but Chuck believes DEP is looking for 6-7 acres to offset the loss.

Other locations have been looked at, but each has more problems such as flooding or accessibility and this location seems to be the best most practical for the Township. It does need to be cleaned up to meet with DEP regulations, but that has been addressed in the proposal to the DEP.



# EWING GREEN TEAM

*Promoting People, the Planet, and Prosperity in Ewing*



The Boy Scouts are going around John Watson Park to help assess possible walking and bike trails. It would be ideal if these could be tied into local neighborhoods and to Fischer Middle School which is adjacent to the park.

The public is welcome to send comments to the Township up until August 9th. They want as much feedback as possible to help convince DEP that even though Ewing lost 2 acres because of Public Works; the new improvements will far exceed the loss.

## NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Next Tuesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, is National Night Out and the Ewing Green Team will be manning a table. Several committees are planning on being there: Arts-Bike Tour- Garden Tour and Contest – Green Business – Neighborhood/Welcome Packet. It should be a good outreach attempt.

## GUEST REMARKS

Christine Wooden attended our meeting to discuss article about Green Open Space. There is land behind 4 houses in the area of Washington and Lafayette Streets in the West Trenton area. It was originally purchased with the intent to build houses, but the buyer has changed his mind. She is hoping that the Township would purchase the land and add it to Ewing's Open Space. The seller is willing to sell.

## CONCLUSION

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 following a motion made by Mark Wetherbee and seconded by Evan Crumiller.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Lisa Feldman, Acting Secretary*