



EWING GREEN TEAM

Promoting People, the Planet and Prosperity in Ewing

MARCH 29, 2018 MEETING MINUTES

LOCATION: EWING SENIOR AND COMMUNITY CENTER

PRESENT

Green Team members denoted with an asterisk *

Emily Blackman

Pete Boughton

Dan Burke

Evan Crumiller*

Lisa Feldman*

Heidi Furman

Joanne Mullowney*

Jillian Stark

Caroline Steward*

Sarah Steward*

Mark Wetherbee

INTRODUCTION

The February meeting was called to order by Joanne Mullowney at 6:45 PM. *Lower Ferry Road was closed due to downed wires so the meeting got a late start and members had a hard time getting to the center. Approval of the prior monthly minutes were put off until the April meeting as a quorum was not present.

FEATURED PRESENTATION

Attending tonight's meeting includes a special presentation by two people from Mercer County Parks Department; Emily Blackman, Senior Planner from Mercer County Open Space Preservation and Jillian Stark, Land Steward from Mercer County Parks Commission. (They will also send the presentation to Joanne since a number of members were not able to attend meeting (see <https://ewinggreenteam.org/sustainable-landscaping-2/> bottom of the page.¹)

Mercer County is interested in creating new pollinator gardens and setting up pollinator partnerships with local municipalities, schools or non-profits and Emily and Jill are here to talk about possibly starting the new pilot program with Ewing. This is their first presentation. They are starting with Ewing and our Green Team to get our feedback since they know we are interested in pollinator gardens.

Mercer County Park Commission was established in 1963 and is responsible for 7,100 acres of parkland which is a balance of public recreation and ecological stewardship. Since 1994 Mercer County voters

¹ Upload to Ewing Green Team website 4/22/2018 by Joanne Mullowney



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approved setting aside funds to preserve open space. Now Mercer County owns about 10,000 acres of open space and parkland which means about 20% of Mercer County is preserved. This includes forest, wetlands, streams, meadows and leased farmland.

Mercer County had a good experience converting lawn areas to meadows which are the type of pollinator initiatives that they are thinking about – finding partners such as municipalities like Ewing who would be interested in converting non-native lawn areas and making them into meadows. And with the funds that have been set aside for preserving open space they believe they should be able to find grant money to help pay for this type of project.

Why lawns are problems and wasted space:

- Lack of biodiversity
- High maintenance
- Cost could be better spent elsewhere
- Gas powered lawn mowers big polluters
- Lawns needs watering

Figures in the US for water usage for lawns: 30 billion gallons of water per year and 3 Billion gallons of pesticides per year are used.

Meadows are a mix of wildflowers and grasses and contain a diversity of food sources (nectar, pollen, insects). Meadows provide cover for breeding and nesting. It has a high diversity of plants and wildlife.

Pollinators are animals that fertilize plants resulting in formation of seeds and the fruit surrounding seeds. Examples are butterflies, bats and honey bees. Pollinators help our ecosystems function. There are 300,000 species of flowering plants that require pollination. In agriculture $\frac{1}{4}$ of all crops require pollination. This shows how vital the pollinators are to our food resources.

There has been a dramatic loss of pollinators, believed to be due to a variety of factors: increase in pathogens, large scale pesticides applications, habitat loss, and prevalence of invasive plants. Is it a coincidence that with more non-native plants that we have seen diminished pollinators?

There are so many vital factors involved in how critical our pollinators are and why pollinator gardens have become so important. With a less diverse ecosystem, we are losing species. Look at species co-evaluation (example is monarch feeds on nectar of milkweed and pollinates milkweed for caterpillar nest for next generation of monarch).

It is hoped that replacing useless lawn areas and replacing with meadows that it will help address this loss of pollinators. Meadows decrease chemical use, increase storm water retention, reduce emissions from fuel (less lawn mowing), create more habitat for animals, insects, and will also decrease maintenance costs with less mowing fertilizer and watering.

A cost savings analysis has been done for converting lawn to meadow, on a 1/3 acre:

Lawn: from savings of watering, mowing and fertilizer:	\$ 28.37/one year
Over a 10 year period a savings of	\$ 31,774/10 years

Ewinggreenteam.org

Monthly Meetings at Ewing Senior & Community Center, 999 Lower Ferry Rd, Ewing, NJ 08618, 4th Wed. of each month

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To convert a lawn to a meadow – you need:

- Site prep
- Sod removal
- Herbicide applied
- First few years requires multiple mowings

The optimal time to prepare is 2 weeks before seeding, after August 15th to save nesting birds.

The pilot project the County is looking for is ½-2 acres opportunities to work with municipalities, public groups, public parks with unused lawn space, roadside areas, schools, and or colleges.

The County is looking for grant money to help with the pilot project. The roughly \$1000/acre estimate which includes:

Herbicide	-\$125
Labor	-\$100
Seed mix	-\$530
Seeding	-\$250

They (Mercer County) are hopeful that they will be able to come up with grant money to get started.

The County would provide technical assistance, the seed mix, the contractor, the implementation guidelines and the commitment to the project. They are looking for partners who would help coordinate with the contractors, follow guidelines, mow as required, agree to keep native for 10 years, plus agree to do invasive spot treatment as necessary, and keep it as meadow for 10 years.

Some suggestions for possible meadows in Ewing:

- Village on the Green on Pennington Road
- Drake Farm
- Banchoff Park
- Ewing Community and Senior Center
- Gusz Building on Ewingville Road

Our next step will be to go the Township to see if they are ‘on board’ with this idea. We would need their commitment for the next 10 years to stick with this concept. Of course, one of their first questions will be the cost of the initial start-up.

The seed mix can be reviewed and selected to be less desirable to the deer population which is a big concern in Ewing.

Joanne will follow-up with the Administration and speak with Jim McManimon. If there are more questions Emily and Jillian would be willing to come to the Administration and make a presentation.



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They are sending the slide presentation that they used at our meeting and that can be used when Joanne speaks to them as well.

The general consensus was positive for the Green Team to support the initiative.

OLD BUSINESS

THE GREEN FEST

Caroline and Sarah Steward both attended and worked the Green Team booth in addition to Joanne Mullowney and Pete Boughton. The attendance was about 1200 this year. A popular giveaway by the Ewing High School Environmental Club was a fish in a mason jar that both Joanne and Sarah took home to remember the day.

EWING SCHOOLS

Our Student Ambassador, Kiley, advised our group that the High School received a grant for their garden.

ARBOR DAY

Arbor Day is coming up on Friday, April 27th, and Evan is in charge of the festivities. The Environmental Commission and Green Team are jointly planting a tree to commemorate the day and hope to plant one every year. The suggested site is Drake Farm alongside the driveway with the eventual vision of a tree 'alley' alongside the driveway. The planting will be at 11:00 am and the Mayor will be there as well.

The tree will be a native species, one that could eventually grow 50-75' tall, will be selected and planted by Dan Burke, landscape architect on the Environmental Commission. The cost of the tree (including planting) has been estimated at \$300. A contribution of \$20 per member should cover all costs.

Jim Castilieze from the Elks asked about the 'no-net loss' tree replacements program and could they get some at the Elks. It is our understanding these are just for public lands. Lee Farnham will follow-up and explain the program to the Elks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ewing Shred Day is coming up on Saturday, April 28th from 9-1:00; a sign-up will be going out for people willing to help during the event. It is also National Prescription Take Back Day.

EAB PRESENTATION

Emerald Ash Borer presentation by the Environmental Commission will be at their next meeting on April 17th at the Municipal Building at 7:00. This was postponed due to a snow event. This includes Bill Brash and is public outreach program.

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MCIA HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL DAY REMINDER

MCIA is having a Hazardous Waste Day on April 7th from 8-2:00 at the Dempster Center.

TCNJ ENVIRONMENTAL PRESENTATION

On April 12th The College of New Jersey is hosting, Dr.Vandana Shiva, an internationally renowned environmentalist and advocate for food justice, biodiverse agriculture, and small farms. She has two presentations during the day, the first at 11:00-12:30, Biotechnology and Food Justice at the Education Building, Room 212. The second is a community dialogue at 2:00, Earth Democracy: New Jersey and the World. And at 5:00 at the Mayo Concert Hall Dr. Shiva is the keynote speaker followed by a book signing. The group is invited.

DELAWARE RIVERKEEPER AT RIDER UNIVERSITY

Rider University Tuesday evening, Delaware River Keeper, Maya Van Rossum will be speaking.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Pete Boughton brought up the Solar Challenge that Joanne Held of Hopewell Valley is leading and suggested we get more information to see if Ewing should do this as well. Caroline Steward would like the Green Team to do a public presentation on the pros' and cons to help educate the public to make better decisions if solar is right for them.

It was suggested that since the Mercer County Sustainability Coalition is working on a big project on business and saving energy we should wait to see how much work that will entail and how involved that will be since we are limited on volunteers.

Pete and Mark Wetherbee attended the Princeton carbon footprint workshop and were very impressed. Mike Winka on the Sustainable Coalition has offered to help Ewing work on figuring our carbon footprint.

CONCLUSION

The agenda for the next one or two meetings will be our breaking out into our mini-groups to start planning our projects for certification.

Mark Wetherbee motioned for adjournment at 8:45 pm; seconded by Evan Crumiller.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa K. Feldman, Acting Secretary

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