



EWING GREEN TEAM

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



APRIL 24, 2019 MINUTES

Location: Ewing Senior and Community Center

ATTENDEES

Green Team Members denoted with an *

John Hoegl*
Lisa Feldman*
Joe Mirabella*
Donna Morgan

Joanne Mullowney*
Sarah Steward*
Mark Wetherbee*

Special Guest: Chuck Latini, Planner and Zoning Official, Ewing Township, NJ

INTRODUCTION

The meeting began at 7:06pm. The March minutes were passed. We are waiting to receive February minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Saturday, April 27th at 9:00 am at the Benjamin Temple House on Federal City Road, we will be holding our Arbor Day celebration. This is a joint effort with The Environmental Commission again like last year with our (2) two groups purchasing and planting a tree along the drive of the historic Benjamin Temple House. Dan Burke of the Environmental Commission who is also a landscape architect will again purchase a tree and his company will plant the tree for us as well.

A sign-up sheet had gone around both the Green Team and the Environmental Commission asking for people willing to donate for the tree. Evan Crumiller is organizing the event and will let everyone know the amount we each owe once he determines the final count of donors. Evan is also going to have a plaque created and installed to commemorate the donation. (estimate \$20-\$25 each)

SHRED DAY

We have our first shred day coming up on Saturday, May 4th, 9-1:00 at the Municipal Building. We're looking for 4 volunteers to work 2- hour shifts. Joanne will put out a sign-up registration shortly. We will have handouts as well as reusable bags from the Township to give out.

BETTER BAG PROJECT

We had hoped to discuss the 'Better Bags' project that Kylie, our student ambassador was going to manage, but Kylie was returning late from a trip and couldn't get back in time for our meeting and Malissa Arnold, the Green



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Team member who was the coordinator is not here tonight, so we will have to manage this via phone calls and emails. This needs to be done soon in order for us to get credit for this action for our certification.

RAIN GARDEN PRESENTATION

We have a program coming up on May 14th on rain gardens. It will be here at the Community Center and in the Community Room. Korey Kreseider from The Watershed Institute will be running the program.

EGT BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Plans for the Green Team Birthday celebration are on hold until after the certification work is done. We have reserved the Municipal Building (2) two hallways and entry with display cases scheduled for the months of July and August to feature the Green Team accomplishments from these last 10 years. We will have a reception/party to open the display which will probably be at the end of June. More details to follow.

VIDEO HISTORY OF THE EGT

Dorin who has already moved to his new job in California said he will still try to complete the video history. John, Pete and Lee Farnham of the Environmental Commission were the original founding 'fathers' of the Green Team and have been asked to do a 2-3-minute video about the start of the Green Team.

Lisa Feldman is working on a scrap book to show some of the highlights and this will also be part of the display. If anyone has any memorabilia that should be included, please forward to Joanne or Lisa.

GARDEN TOUR

The garden tour has been changed to June 22nd and 23rd. We're going to have artists in the different gardens and so far, have 3 artists; Anne Cheslock and (2) two men that Melissa Bennet from Art Has No Boundaries knows. We have asked the Arts Commission if they could also help us find more.

STREAM CLEAN UP FOLLOW UP

The stream clean-up at the Home Depot had great results in cleaning out over 3400 lbs. of trash and garbage. This was considered such a great success with a wonderful turnout of about 40 people. Joanne Mullowney mentioned this at the Town Council Meeting.

Unfortunately, the area has not remained in good condition. Mark Wetherbee went back and took pictures and it is discouraging to see broken glass, trash, and various litter where none had been when we were done. What about Code Enforcement playing a stronger role monitoring this area so it is not allowed to revert to its previous trashy state?

A discussion followed on how to address this situation. Home Depot doesn't seem to care about keeping this area clean; they don't have trash receptacles in their parking lot. Their security guard is not supposed to get involved with people littering. To some people this seems to be a cultural lack of care about their surroundings; the world is my garbage can and not my problem.



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Some suggestions were neighborhood clean-up or block parties to be held several times a year. More code enforcement would be helpful, especially where it seems where commercial buildings are very careless, and trash blows all over. What if there were better fencing around industrial and commercial buildings would that cut down on all the trash blowing around? This topic certainly needs further discussion.

Creeks and streams in other areas like NJM where there is no industry don't have this problem. Is this a resource issue? How do we change the culture, or mindset?

FEATURED PROGRAM

Chuck Latini, the Planner and Zoning Official brought maps and updates on a proposed Bike and Open Space Plan. He supplied us with (4) Maps: 1) Parks and Open Space Inventory, 2) Acquisition Opportunities, 3) Bike /Pedestrian Concept Plan, and 4) NRPA Standards Buffer Map.

To help give us over view of parks and open space – maps show some mini masterplans for each park. We're interested to see how neighborhoods can get involved in making changes. There are bike plans and green ways and road diets in the works. The acquisition map helps picture different target areas in town, protecting natural areas and possible places where additional parks could be developed. Park analysis shows where there are gaps where some neighborhoods don't have access to mini parks. These are helpful to look for balanced land use and to fill gaps.

Acquisition plan – what will get better environmental quality and access? We need the bike plan to work in conjunction with the County to get better bike paths. Right now, they are working on putting in paths on Ewingville Road; and Scotch Road is getting the road diet incorporated.

A problem with bike paths on public roads is obstruction which requires education and enforcement. You can now go on the Ewing website under Public Works on the SDL complaint form, create an account and file a complaint. You can also notify Public Works about a pothole.

Chuck reported that the baseline work is done. Not done are recommendations from public. He still needs to meet with the public for input. They need to develop a schedule to meet with groups to get feedback. Groups like neighborhoods will look at maps and their feedback will be helpful. Their information will go back to the Mayor, Town Council, Public Works and Recreation Departments, etc. to help inform decisions such as acquisitions, where to add crosswalks, bike lanes, additional parks which ultimately helps with budgets.

We are also looking to work with partners like the D&R Greenway and the County for various projects and different redevelopment ideas. For example; connecting the new Town Center to the Community Center or the bike path connecting to the new Town Center and the Community Center, sidewalks, West End Soccer Fields, putting in other amenities into the parks, connecting the various open spaces or parks, these are all ideas that we would like to see completed.

Chuck also spoke briefly about the plans for the old Naval Warfare center. Bedrock underneath is fractured so contamination is deeper than originally thought, so remediation of groundwater is going to spike contamination levels.



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Re: getting credit for the Bike and Open Space Plans in our Sustainable Jersey submission. We can upload what we have done to date and work to complete it over the summer.

Other open space includes preserved farm land. This was preserved by Governor Christie Whitman by Executive Order so if the state decides to sell property it could be a problem. It would have to be zoned for conservation. Just because a previous governor assigned the land as preserved farmland does not mean it would necessarily stay that way if the farms (Jones Farm and Knight Farm) are sold by the state.

OUTSIDE COMMITTEE REPORTS

COUNCIL

Sarah Steward, Council liaison, gave us an update on Town Council activities. The budget was passed at their meeting last night (April 23). Some highlights include: \$8 or 9 Million to be spent on capital improvement, \$ 5M of that will be dedicated to the expense of finishing of Silvia Street. There are no new vehicles in the budget such as fire trucks or police cars. There is of course lots of road improvement going on. The big line item is salaries.

Hiring a new Administrative Fire Director has helped bring positive morale to the department; paid fire-fighting staff during day, volunteers help at night.

All passed under the budget cap. Ewing can use 'banked' caps from previous budgets. Total expenditures 8% increase, mostly due to salaries, negotiated salaries some of which are with unions.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REPORT

Joe Mirabella, Chair: There will be a special committee meeting with the Mayor, Planner, Council Representatives and selected representatives from the Green Team, Environmental Commission, Planning Board and a member of the public on April 25th about a proposed tree ordinance. This is something the Environmental Commission has been working on for over ten years. The proposed ordinance will address mostly commercial and government properties, not residential. A problem that comes up with the ordinance is who is responsible for the space between the curb and sidewalk? If a tree dies in that space is the homeowner responsible for its removal? This can be expensive. This is one reason the ordinance is taking so long to get passed.

The Natural Resources section of Sustainable Jersey has a lot of areas to write about so Joanne assigned this whole action area to the people in Environmental Commission. Joanne asked Joe Mirabella to check the status of the Annual Report that Lee Farnham is writing.

The Community Forestry Management Plan also needs to be updated.

FYI, Ewing is the only municipality in Mercer County that is not designated as a Tree City and without a tree ordinance.

SUSTAINABLE JERSEY WRITE UPS



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Direct Install -John Hoegl will get his Sustainable Jersey Action written and to Joanne by May 2nd.

Green Purchasing Program - Recycled Paper – Donna Morgan: W.B. Mason the supplier of the paper for Ewing Township offices has sent some of the necessary invoice reports but we still need months February – through May. Joanne will send all the reports to Donna, and Donna will write up this action for “SJ”.

Green Fest – John Hoegl was Ewing’s representative for this year’s Green Fest and will do the write up.

Improve Public Engagement in Municipal Government - Sarah met with Kevin Baxter, the current President of the Town Council, to go over some items. One is the suggestion to change when the public can address the Council during Council meetings. Currently the public can speak at the end of the meeting. However, this is not always good because some Council meetings are very lengthy, and this discourages members of the public from staying to have their say.

It has been suggested to try moving the public comment portion to the beginning of the meeting and perhaps try this for a limited number of meetings to see how this works. Of course, each speaker would be given limited speaking time to ensure the meetings start at a decent time if there are many people wishing to speak. Sarah will send some possible language to Joanne.

Sarah also has an innovative approach to the public having access to Town Council members – suggest advertising to the public you can have access to Council Member ...from 8-10 am on Saturdays and post this as an on-going initiative.

Public Engagement: draft of survey on a hot topic, aware of deadline?

Recycling Depot: policy has changed for bulk drop because of problems with contractors. The new policy has been updated on website. Ewing residents are allowed 12 bulk drop offs per year. Each household user must register by going to the Senior and Community Center and getting a card (bar code id) that is used for each bulk drop off at the depot. Already about 1000 Ewing residents have signed up for this.

Make Your Town Solar Friendly - This action encourages communities to become solar friendly and make it easy for residents to go through the process of getting solar panels installed at their homes. For Sustainable Jersey, if the Township has a web page with solar requirements, it should help meet their requirements for this action.

Complete Streets – We need to write up this action.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Feldman

Lisa Feldman, Secretary
Ewing Green Team