



# EWING GREEN TEAM

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



## EWING GREEN TEAM MINUTES (VIRTUAL)

OCTOBER 28, 2020

### ATTENDEES (\* DENOTES MEMBERS)

Marissa Benson	Jennifer Keyes-Malone	Caroline Steward*
Cameron Boyd	Jasmine Lee	Sarah Steward*
Colleen Burns	Donna Morgan*	Maya Van Rossum, the Delaware
Evan Crumiller*	Joanne Mullowney*	Riverkeeper
Lee Farnham	Chloe Peterson	Priya Vimalassery
Lisa Feldman*	Lorraine Prince	Mark Wetherbee*
Heidi Furman*	Lynn Robbins	

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 by Chair Joanne Mullowney. The August and September Meeting Minutes were approved by the members. Joanne then introduced the featured speaker of the evening, Maya Van Rossum, who has been the Delaware Riverkeeper since 1994. The role of the Delaware Riverkeeper is to help keep the Delaware River and the surroundings well maintained for the people and communities who depend on it for a clean, safe water source. They must ensure that 'no harm' is done to this important resource. The Delaware Riverkeeper advocates for strong and vital river stewardship.

Ms. Van Rossum has also been a strong proponent for the passage of a Green Amendment in New Jersey. She can be seen in the PBS production 'Here's the Story – 'One of Waters.' The Green Amendment is in its 4<sup>th</sup> iteration. For more information, email [Maya@forthegenerations.org](mailto:Maya@forthegenerations.org) or call 267-274-2674.

The aim of the Green Amendment is to protect the rights of every New Jerseyan to a clean and healthy environment. Federal and state legislation to protect natural resources have been insufficient and New Jersey water, air, forests, and other special places from the highlands to the pinelands have been allowed to degrade in ways that are harming people's lives.

The amendment will update the state constitution to recognize that "Every person has a right to a clean and healthy environment....", that the State has a duty to serve as trustee of the state's natural resources, and must conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all people. The need for the Green Amendment has been growing in part due to the realization that current system of laws are not working adequately to protect the environment. This is a newer concept.

As an example, laws that focus on how to address ongoing pollution basically permit it to happen and deal mostly with results and attempt to find ways to deal with its many effects instead of trying to find ways to prevent pollution and degradation in the first place.

The Green Amendment aims to remedy:

- PFAS or PFOS – no amount is safe.
- It also recognizes that environmental racism is built in; sadly, targeted are communities of color and low income.



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- Communities are drinking contaminated water; and species being lost.

## HISTORY

In 1969 Pennsylvania Senator, Franklin Kury wrote Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, popularly known as the 'Environmental Rights Amendment.' This was also known as the 'Bill of Rights – a recognition and duty to protect the natural environment.' The first time this was used was in 2012-13 to help fight the pro-fracking policies. Fracking was doing incredible harm to the environment and causing devastating impacts on communities. Fracking Industry legislation allows for waivers for minimum standards which would allow things to get worse.

The Delaware River network was successful in keeping fracking away from the Delaware watershed. It would violate the environmental rights of all people who depend on the Delaware River for healthy environment, water, and air.

New thinking is to restructure decision-making approach rather than dealing with the effects of pollution think about making decisions how to prevent degradation in the first place – rethinking how it affects a healthy environment.

## HOW AND WHEN DID THIS ALL START IN THE GREAT STATE OF NEW JERSEY?

On November 30, 2017, New Jersey Assemblyman Tim Eustace, joined by Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, Assemblywoman Pinkin and Assemblywoman Sumpter, announced new legislation that, if passed, would amend Article 1 of the state constitution to recognize that "Every person has a right to a clean and healthy environment....", that the State has a duty to serve as trustee of the state's natural resources, and must conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all people. Since its original proposal there has been significant forward progress. We need enforceable legal laws.

It would be helpful if municipalities and cities would show support for the Green Amendment with passage of local resolutions. This would send a message to legislators that the people of the State do support it. Only about a half-dozen towns currently have resolutions.

There is a 3-part leadership training coming up to help prepare people to be able to educate others about the NJ Green Amendment. Sign up at <http://bit.ly/green>. These are 3 interactive hands-on training sessions to teach people to be able to act as leaders for the green amendment movement. Participants need to register for the 3-part leadership training to help secure a right to a healthy environment.

Over half of the NJ General Assembly and 12 Senators have indicated support. There are two bills proposed with parallel language, if passed by the legislature, the amendment would go to public ballot.

Marisa Benson commented that the Dodge Foundation has initiated partnerships with indigenous peoples.

Thanks to Lynn Robbins for arranging this helpful presentation. FYI, Joanne has a copy Maya's book, '*The Green Amendment*' and she will be willing to loan it out to anyone interested.

## GREEN TEAM BUSINESS

John Hoegl has resigned from the Green Team and moved to California so that he and his wife can be close to their 2 sons and their families. Ewing Township did a proclamation in honor of his years of service and we will get this framed and sent to him to honor all the work he did to establish and contribute all these years to the Green Team and the Environmental Commission.



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## SCAVENGER HUNT

We are currently holding our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Green Team Scarecrow Scavenger Hunt open to all Ewing residents and people working in town. We have a total of 49 Scarecrows. The project focuses creative use of recycled materials and aims to build community and promote local businesses thru their participation. This event concludes this Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup> and winners will be announced via Zoom. We've gotten some great feedback from residents about how appreciative they are and how much fun this has been. That it was something fun and positive to do during these very troubling times.

This year we were able to add several new prizes due to the incredible generosity of EGT members and several residents. Prizes will be given for a People's Choice for each category residential and then one for commercial. This year we are also giving a Green Team prize and we will vote shortly on our choice for the scarecrow that best uses recycled materials. This was an additional prize that some participants chose to apply for.

## VOTING

Green Team members were extremely impressed with the wide range of entries and people's wonderfully creative imaginations. The choice was difficult. The vote-getting Scarecrows were *Wiley-Coyote and Road Runner*, *Plastic Princess*, *Marching Band*, *'Digging-It, Furever Friend*, *Tread* and *Huck Finn*. A lively discussion and vote on the various entries followed. The Green Team's first choice for best use of recycled materials was *Furever Friend* and the second choice was *Tread*. The winner was *Furever Friend*, as long as it is not a prize winner in another category. Otherwise, the prize will go to *Tread*. Joanne will coordinate getting prize money to the artist.

## COUNCIL REPORT

Sarah Steward provided an update on Council issues. Plans are being worked on for Olden Avenue redevelopment. Lidl, a new food store, like the one in Lawrenceville is being added on corner of Parkway and Olden where Parkway Pizza was located. The DEP will oversee the remediation of the gas station on corner of Olden and Parkway.

November 19<sup>th</sup> will be Mercer County Sustainable Coalition's Energy Training.

Normally the first Wednesday in December is our Holiday get together but due to the pandemic, we will not be having a gathering this year. The next meeting will be our annual retreat in January; Joanne will contact members to set a date. This year it will be a 'virtual' meeting. We will also need to discuss possible new members for the Green Team. All members are encouraged to think of residents who you think will be interested.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Lisa Feldman*

Secretary