



EWING GREEN TEAM

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



MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 25, 2021

IN ATTENDANCE

Evan Crumiller*
Mark Wetherbee*
Lisa Feldman*
Donna Morgan*
Priya Vimalassery*

Pete Boughton
Lynn Robbins
Caroline Steward*
Jack Wolfarth*

Brielle Jenkins
Cassidy Burns
Jacklyn Garay
Joe Mirabella*

The February 2021 Green Team meeting was called to order by Joanne Mullowney.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ARTS

The only thing to report is an update on the tentative plans on the new Holiday decorating event for community building. Lisa and Joanne discussed the plans at the Arts Commission Meeting to see if they would be interested in working together on this new event.

BIKING

Gary Keel oversees this but it's tax season and he is very busy and unable to attend tonight's meeting. Gary will not start planning the event until after tax deadline passes in April. He still needs to check with Jim M. to confirm that the Township will be able to help with the \$1,000, which is the basic cost to hold the event.

Monday evening, March 8th Pete Boughton will attend a Mercer County bike group and will represent our group as well as Hamilton.

CLEAN COMMUNITIES - LITTER

We are currently planning 2 events; March 20th is the spring clean-up and will be at Moody Park. We already have most of the volunteer time slots filled. We had 25 slots. Students from Ewing High School's Environmental Commission have taken the early time slots. We're really pleased that we've had such a great response.

Saturday, April 24th, 9-11. This is the stream clean-up that Donna is organizing in conjunction with The Watershed. Jennifer K. did ask Jim if the stream behind Hollowbrook could be our clean-up spot for this project.

We will have to follow social distancing guidelines and if too many people show up, we'll have to send to a different location. But we will do advance sign-ups so we should have some idea of the numbers. And



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we would be thrilled to have more volunteers; it's a rare problem for us so we're not overly concerned. As the event dates get closer, we will prepare some back-up plans for extra volunteers.

The Public Works Department will be supplying trash bags. Evan has some handy 'trash-pickers' to help pick-up trash without having to touch it. Someone also has some of the fluorescent vests that we can borrow. We will have masks and gloves to keep everyone safe.

Joanne asked Joe M. if he thought members of the Environmental Commission would want to participate. He thought it was a good idea and will be discussing at their next meeting.

Joanne will be sending out reminders and the sign-up genius forms so be on the 'look-out'.

Community Education and Outreach- we have not done a newsletter during this whole pandemic. We could start to think about restarting this. We're starting to do some activities like the community and stream clean-ups.

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ENERGY COMMITTEE

Mark does not have anything to report. The Mercer County Sustainability Coalition has a training that people on the Energy committee need to do to help with the Direct Install Program for businesses. The Coalition had a grant that the various town members of the Coalition shared; but with the current situation it will probably be a while before this becomes active. And as far as Joanne is aware there are no plans for the energy training for any Coalition members.

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE

Joanne met with the 2 Professors at TCNJ, one is a Sociology teacher the other is English. The Sociology class is working to develop a survey to administer to certified wildlife gardeners and non-certified to learn why residents did certify and what were the issues that prevented people from certifying their gardens. This will help us tailor our outreach to Ewing homeowners. The English class will create a press release about our participation in the NWF program and our quest to get gardeners in town to certify. They will also develop content for a couple of webpages with a brochure for our gardening for wildlife website aimed at kids. We can present the brochure to the teachers at the schools in town which manage their courtyard gardens. The thought is that kids can urge their parents to garden for wildlife. The press release in a newspaper will directly get us points in our certification quest.

GREEN BUSINESS RECOGNITION



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Evan, nothing much to report. Have a couple of potential businesses in mind but has not approached anyone yet. Joanne mentioned that the Green Business Recognition category is one of the 3 Priority Actions required by Sustainable Jersey for Silver Certification.

GREEN FEST

Joanne told the Mercer County Sustainability Coalition that Ewing will not be participating this year. The event is going to be virtual. John Hoegl used to be our representative. We had to decide for this year, and no one was interested in being Ewing's rep. We can re-visit for next year when it may be back in-person and may be ready for some significant changes from past years.

GREEN AMENDMENT

this was pulled from Ewing Town Council's Agenda because of ongoing concerns about what this might obligate the Township to, if passed.

RECYCLING

The single plastic bag ban may need to be worked on in a separate meeting. We need to do a lot of educational outreach. This will take concentrated time and effort.

STORM WATER CONTROL EDUCATION

We need to make people aware of Ewing's updated ordinance. This time of year, it will become important to start clearing storm drains to help prevent flooding. Is there research done about why this is important? It would be very helpful if our group created an educational flyer to help explain why this is important and the background of why this was needed. If people understand the reason, they might be more amenable to supporting the changes that are coming. Change of longstanding habits is not easy for anyone.

A big part of this will be changing how we handle leaf collection. People will no longer be able to just pile up their leaves in the street along their curbs for Public Works to collect. They will have to bag their leaves for collection or best practice is to mulch and leave on the grass for nutrients. But people are creatures of habit and they take services like leaf and brush collection for granted and expect this to continue.

There must be some enforcement as part of this to expect residents to change their habits. There will also be dissatisfaction with what will be perceived as less services so if we do good educational materials well in advance; we can hope to alleviate much of the complaints and negative behavior.

Jennifer and Joanne will work on an educational flyer. We could hand out at the upcoming Shred Day in May. What about an 'adopt-a-storm drain?' idea. Make this a type of fun approach.

SUSTAINABLE JERSEY – WASTE/RECYCLING ACTION



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We didn't get points last time because Ewing Township does not do any enforcement for recycling. The MCIA has Solterra take almost everything because people complain. Before the pandemic, the MCIA started enforcement but it was discontinued when the pandemic began. They left stickers on cans explaining why they didn't take someone's recycling. We can do a lot of education, especially address the new single use plastic bag ban that has passed but it needs to be enforced to have any teeth.

- Shred Days - We will get points for some actions like shredding; our shred days already planned for this year. Sustainable Jersey now requires the shredding trucks to have windows into the trucks for residents to watch their papers being shred. It sounds like if our shred trucks don't have this too bad; we don't get points. SJ is getting very demanding and unrealistic in what they expect from cash strapped towns.
- Commercial and Institutional Recycling – not enforced.
- Household hazardous waste – we share MCIA's collection days. See if shared services are allowed for SJ points.
- Grass cycling - We do have our grass cut-it-and-leave-it pamphlet; we can distribute this at shred days.
- Recycle Depot - . We're uncertain whether we will be able to get points for the Recycling Depot with its current closed status. We're not sure when or if it will re-open and what they will be accepting.
- Reusable Bag Education - The reusable bag program that the boy scouts did in the past may be something that Cassidy and Jack with Ewing High School Environmental Club could help with – maybe they would also be able to help with waste audit at High School.

It was suggested that someone have a 'candid' dialog with SJ on some of these issues and how these are not realistic, and we can't meet these.

SUSTAINABLE JERSEY RECERTIFICATION

The 'Clean Communities'- litter pickups activities don't lend themselves directly to any SJ points. We can perhaps use the Innovative actions category. Hillsborough has a wonderfully innovative clean-up campaign – 'Captain Cleanup – Litter Hero'. It's a great way to address the issue and at the same time is a good community-builder, in spite of the pandemic.

We would like the Township Administration to get behind our clean-up efforts. Once we have a successful 1st event on March 20th; we can explain that we want to make this a year-long campaign. We need to prove ourselves and kind of 'sell' it. We can do this without being a drain on the Township.

The fact that litter clean-up is greatly needed just about everywhere is something that many residents agree. And the amount of litter all over is also concerning.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Ewinggreenteam.org

Contact us: ewinggreenteam@gmail.com

Meetings: 4th Wednesdays, 7 p.m. Ewing Senior and Community Center, 999 Lower Ferry Rd., Ewing



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Joanne successfully worked with the Township's Rob Green on the last certification. He was one of the few managers in the Township actively involved in supporting our efforts to help us achieve some of our action goals.

Next time we can look at the actions for 2 major categories -**Natural Resources and Operations & Maintenance**: (Following from SJ's website)

NATURAL RESOURCES

- [Natural Resource Inventory](#) 20 Points *Priority for all certification levels
- [Environmental Commission](#) 10 Points
- [Environmental Commission Site Plan Review](#) 10 Points
- [Municipal Water Story](#) 20 Points *Priority for all certification levels
- [Open Space Plans](#) 10 Points
- [Water Conservation Education Program](#) 10 Points
- [Water Conservation Ordinance](#) 20 Points *Priority for all certification levels
 - Submissions for this action do not expire.
- Caring for Conservation Easements
 - [Easement Inventory and Outreach](#) 10 Points
 - [Easement Inspections and Evaluations](#) 15 Points
- Natural Resource Protection Ordinances
 - [Clustering Ordinance](#) 10 Points
 - Submissions for this action do not expire.
 - [Environmental Assessment Ordinance](#) 10 Points
 - Submissions for this action do not expire.
 - [Habitat Conservation Ordinance](#) 10 Points
 - Submissions for this action do not expire.
 - [Tree Protection Ordinance](#) 10 Points
 - Submissions for this action do not expire.
- Tree & Woodlands Management
 - [Community Forestry Management Plan and NJUCF Accreditation](#) 10 Points
 - This action has variable points: 10, 20.
 - Competitive funding available
 - [Tree Hazard Inventory](#) 10 Points
 - Competitive funding available
 - [Tree Maintenance Programs](#) 10 Points
 - Competitive funding available
 - [Tree Planting Programs](#) 10 Points

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

Green Purchasing Program



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- Adopt a Green Purchasing Policy by Ordinance 10 Points.
 - Submissions for this action do not expire.
- Adopt a Green Purchasing Policy by Resolution 5 Points.
- Green Cleaning Products 10 Points
- Green Maintenance Equipment and Materials 10 Points
- Recycled Paper 10 Points
- Grounds & Maintenance
 - Green Grounds & Maintenance Policy 10 Points
 - Efficient Landscape Design 10 Points
- Integrated Pest Management 10 Points
- Minimize Water Consumption 10 Points.
- Recycled Materials and Composting 10 Points

We have a new Public Works Director who may be open to working with us. If we show him how he can save money on gas and staff time on the new meadows we installed with Mercer County, maybe this can be a fresh start in a positive relationship where we can help one another accomplish good changes for the Township.

WALKING TRAILS

In final wrap-up- Lynn is trying to get some advancement in the walking trails. But this needs cooperation from different areas – trying to find out who actually owns the land behind the Benjamin Temple House. She will reach out to Joe Mirabella to see if he can help. We believe this qualifies under open space. Also looking at area behind Municipal Building. Is this area environmentally sensitive? The Boy Scouts have volunteered to help Lynn with trails. If area is environmentally sensitive it just means not to use power mowers, need to use hand tools to cut. Chuck Latini may know status of land, also mentioned area next to Watson Park. Maybe once restrictions from covid ease-up, Lynn will be able to reach more people to get more help.

OTHER BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

TOWN COUNCIL

Jennifer shared that at the last Council meeting there was a 1st reading of the update to the Solid Waste Ordinance – Chapter 319. Provisions include the following: Leaves will now have to be collected in PAPER bags. Township will no longer collect loose leaves along curbside. Not sure what enforcement will look like. There will have to be some type of warning. We will need an educational flyer.

The Township will do spring clean-up as previous years. Spring is not a good time to spread mulched leaves. We need to do an educational flyer that clearly spells out all the correct guidelines so that residents will have a helpful resource that answers all the new and helpful rules and gardening tips. Joanne may

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have already started this. Jennifer KM offered to do this, but we need to check with Joanne to make sure we're not working on something that has already been started.

We should include all the helpful waste disposal rules, i.e., residents allowed to get rid of 3 bulk items with trash pick-up. Leaves must be in bags, no longer acceptable is loose leaves at curb – must be in bags. (not sure about enforcement) The informational flyer should be delivered to all homeowners (not renters). We'll have to figure out how to confirm where to send flyer. The landlords need to know the rules. Although people living at location should know as well since they will be putting garbage and recycling out. If renters are violating the rules, the landlords will be responsible.

Branches no longer than 4' long will still be picked up curbside. Brush pick-up is supposed to be the day after your trash is picked up.

Storm water Education We are waiting for materials from ANJEC; they are developing statewide media campaign.

CONCLUSION

At our next meeting we will identify which categories we want to look at. Reviewing SJ actions may help us decide what we will take on, i.e., the category of climate change is a major undertaking, and we need to recognize what we can realistically take on. We've looked at the actions for this before and recognized that these are 'huge lifts' for our group. So, let's review now and see what, if any, we can expect to accomplish with the current status quo.

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Feldman