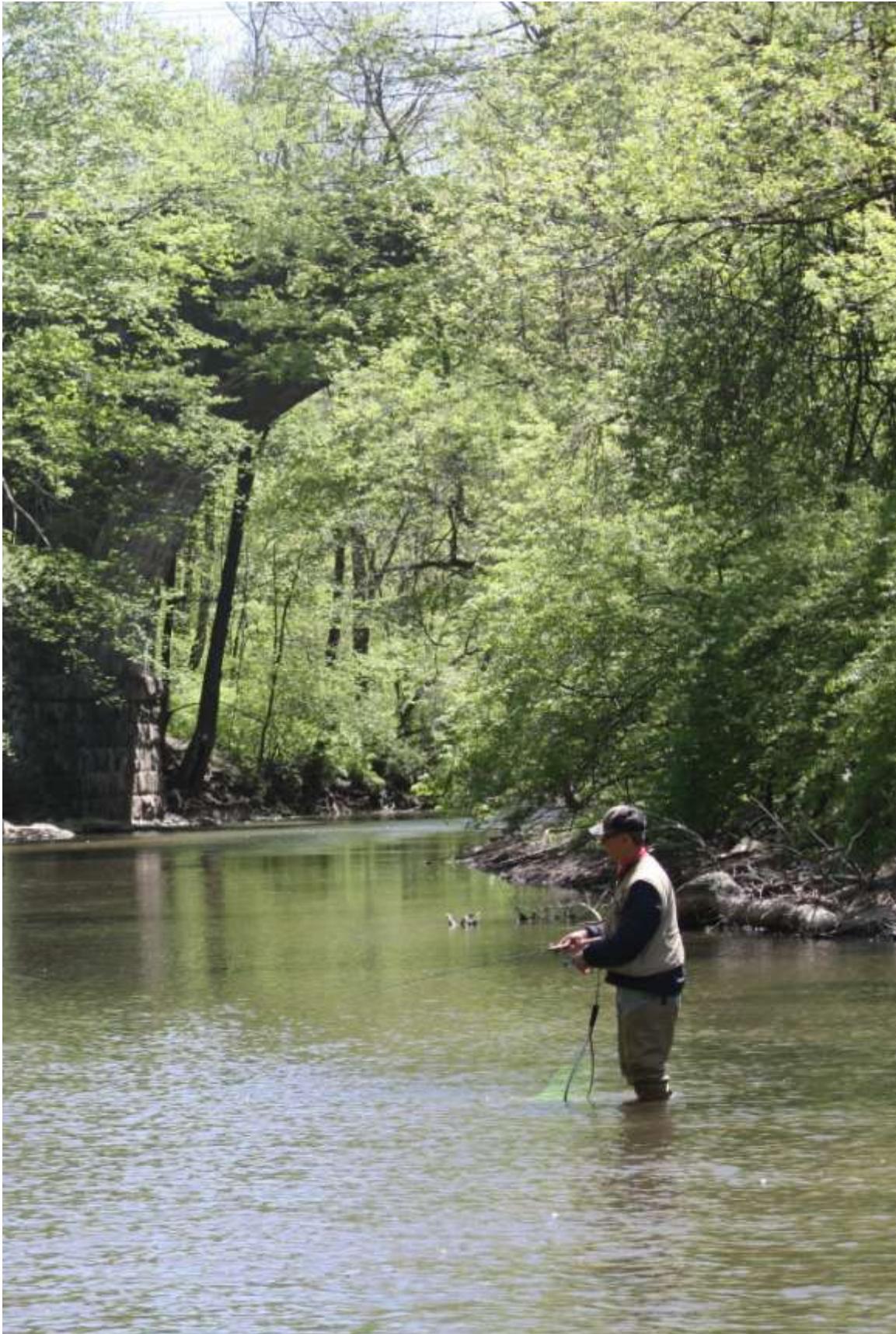

**CHATHAM BOROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMISSION'S 2014 ANNUAL REPORT**



2014 was a year of transition for the Environmental Commission. Although John Tancredi served another year as Chair; John Bitar served another year as Vice-Chair and Dick Plambeck served another year as Secretary, the Commission lost three valued members.

In June, 2014, Ed DiFiglia, who had coordinated trail clean-ups and had been the Commission's Liaison to the Open Space and Historic Preservation Trust Advisory Committee, resigned his position as he and his family relocated from Chatham to Ocean, NJ. In August, 2014, Cindy Steffens, who had been instrumental in getting Chatham certified as a Silver sustainable community under the Sustainable Jersey program, resigned her position due to personal reasons. Finally, in September, Ruth Dekker, who had been instrumental in the Complete Streets and Safe Routes to Schools programs, resigned due to personal reasons. These were three major resignations as each made major contributions to not only the Commission but to Chatham. They are missed.

Projects Requiring Environmental Commission Approval

There were no projects presented to the Commission from either the Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Adjustment for review and approval of the Environmental Commission in 2014.

Community Garden

Due to the upgrading of the high tension wires by PSE&G, the Community Garden could no longer function at its Division Ave. location. After much debate, a decision was made to locate the Community Garden at Woodland Park and make it a joint effort of both Chatham Borough and Chatham Township. Dick Plambeck led the Environmental Commission's efforts in clearing brush and debris at the entrance to and at the site of the new Community Garden. One entire Saturday was devoted to pulling down the wire fence that stretched from Woodland Ave. to near the Community Garden, including the pulling of wooden stumps which kept the fencing in place. The Commission had additional help from Eagle Scout Mark Kellstrom who built two picnic tables and a kiosk for the new garden. The garden continues to be a source of pride for both communities.

Open Space and Historic Preservation Trust

Consideration was given, during the time that Ed DiFiglia was serving on the Commission, to having a portion of Shepard Kollock Park devoted to being a "dog park". Alternatively, the Trust considered land along River Road. The Commission felt that Shepard Kollock Park would present an issue with neighbors being against it and the River Road location would present liability issues. The proposals were tabled for future consideration.

Member Outreach

Chatham's lifeblood is volunteerism. So it is with the Environmental Commission. Losing three valuable members was quite a blow to the Commission; and, the Commission actively sought out volunteers. Press releases and Letters to the Editor were placed in *The Alternative Press*, *Chatham Courier*, *The Independent Press* and *The Chatham Patch*. In addition, Len Resto spoke

before the Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club and the Senior Center of the Chathams. Kate Murphy and Dick Plambeck manned a table at the Farmer's Market. The Commission also had a presence at both the Fishawack Festival/Rail Centennial Day and the Green Fair. As a result of our efforts, local resident Ben Lampert has become a regular member of the Commission; and, we just added Brendan Keating as a regular member. We still have one vacancy which we will fill this year.

Commission "Service" Days

1. **Spring Clean-Up:** A trail clean-up of the Shepard Kollock trails along the Passaic River was scheduled for May 3, 2014, coinciding with the Borough's annual "Spring Clean Day". Unfortunately, very heavy rains the week prior to May 3rd flooded the trails making them impassable and the trail clean-up had to be cancelled. Those who had volunteered to help clean the trails instead assisted in the Spring Clean Up in town. The trail clean-up was rescheduled for the fall; however, rains once again forced the canceling of the clean-up and the Commission will tackle it again in the spring. Fortunately, between May and October, the Kiwanis Club did do a clean-up. Dick Plambeck reported that the trails are seriously overgrown and will require some real attention and help from the DPW.
2. **Kelley's Pond:** After the annual Fishing Derby was well over, John Tancredi explored the area in and around Kelley's Pond and reported that they are in need of a good clean-up. This will be a priority in 2015.
3. **Rain Garden at Memorial Park:** Carl Cappabianca continues to be the maintenance keeper of the Rain Garden frequently stopping by during his runs through town and arranging for any new plantings needed in the fall. The Garden looks great.

Scout Projects

1. **Mark Kellstrom-Community Garden:** Mark constructed two picnic tables and a kiosk at the Community Garden enhancing the new location of the Community Garden which now serves the Borough and the Township.
2. **Griffin Kenny- Bat Houses at Kelley's Pond:** Eagle Scout Griffin Kenny put down ¼ inch gravel on the paths in the Kelley's Pond area and built bat houses along the backside of the pond. The project had the full backing of both the Environmental Commission and the Chatham Borough Council.
3. **Mike Twentyman- Stanley Park Restoration Project:** Mike Twentyman's Eagle Scout project was to build two new benches at Stanley Park and restore an existing bench. In addition, he was able to restore an existing barbeque grill.
4. **Steve Kamionek- Bee Garden on St. James St.:** Eagle Scout Steve Kamionek, with assistance from Al Tomaro of Tomaro Honey and the Chatham Community Bee Club,

built the necessary habitat for bee hives on vacant land along St. James Street in the River Road section of Chatham. Many Chatham residents have partaken of this project.

5. **Tristan Thomas- Bird Blinds- Wuhala Woods:** Tristan Thomas, as his Eagle Scout project, constructed Bird Blinds in Wuhala Woods which gives residents and other visitors the opportunity to view native species of birds and other migratory birds in their natural habitat.

The Environmental Commission is proud of these young leaders who have stepped forward to provide Chatham with environmental improvements which will serve the community for years. In addition, the Commission is grateful to the Boy Scout troops, as well as the Girl Scouts, who have been so supportive of the Environmental Commission.

Eco-Film Series

Kate Murphy continues her efforts in providing topical content in the Commission's ongoing Eco-Film series. These films are presented at the Library of the Chathams mainly on the first Thursday of each month. Attendance has ranged from a low of 4 individuals to a high of 23. Please spread the word of these wonderful films. They are worth attending.

Recycling

There had been consideration given to moving the recycling depot from its current location near Myrtle Street to the Mulch Area by Milton Ave. School. After reconsideration of the traffic issues relative to children at the school, the idea was abandoned.

Dick Plambeck reported that Chatham remains at the top of the list in terms of recycled tonnage according to MCMUA reports.

In October, the MCMUA held a Hazardous Waste Collection Day at Chatham High School. The event was very well patronized and will be held again in 2015.

Green Fair

The 9th Annual Green Fair of the Chathams was held on September 20th and over 20 vendors participated along with the greatest number of entertainers we had ever had. It appears Green Fairs have begun to fade from popularity in favor of Wellness Fairs. Consequently, the Commission has decided that it will yield to the Mayor's Wellness Campaign in 2015 to plan a Wellness Fair and provide the planners of that Fair the list of vendors who had previously participated in the Green Fair. The Boy Scouts were a huge help in the 2014 Fair and both the DPW and the Police Department did a phenomenal job of helping. With the listing of vendors and their contact information, we have no doubt that in 2015, Chatham's first "Wellness Fair" will be a success. The Environmental Commission will offer to assist the Mayor's Wellness Campaign in putting on the event.

Grants

1. **\$15,000 Sustainable Jersey Grant-Electric Charging Station:** The Commission applied for and won a \$15,000 Sustainable Jersey Grant to partially fund an electric car charging station at the Train Station. Unfortunately, problems with the vendors and the prohibitive cost, along with no known electric vehicles who would use the charging station led to the Borough Council voting to abandon the project. Consequently, the funds were returned to Sustainable Jersey. According to Janice Piccolo, Sustainable Jersey continues to hold the \$15,000 for Chatham and the Commission will discuss what it can or might do with those funds in 2015.
2. **\$2,000 Sustainable Jersey Grant- Various:** The Commission applied for and was awarded a \$2,000 Sustainable Jersey grant to fund various Commission initiatives. These included items such as Anti-Idling signs, course expenses and a Direct Install initiative. Upon Cindy Steffens departure from the Commission, we ran out of time and \$1,328 of the grant had not been used. We are in the process of asking permission of Sustainable Jersey to obtain an extension to June 30, 2015 to use the balance of the grant.
3. **\$1,500 ANJEC Grant for Trail Extension:** The Commission applied for and was denied a \$1,500 grant to extend a trail so that we could connect Bonnell Street to Watchung Ave.

Explore Chatham Photo Contest

Dick Plambeck conducted the successful “Explore Chatham Photo Contest”. Any resident was able to participate and submit their photos for consideration. Kate Murphy assisted in the judging of submissions.

Awards

The Commission awarded the William T. Hornaday Gold Badge Award to former Environmental Commissioner Richard D. Ligertwood for his many years of service to the Commission and to Chatham. Mr. Ligertwood is a true environmental steward and his absence on the Commission is felt.

Eagle Scout Brian Goldstein earned a brick paver on the Walk of Honor and received a special Teddy Roosevelt Coin minted in 2014 for conservation. The Commission congratulated Brian on this prestigious award and on his accomplishments.

Sustainable Jersey

Largely through the indefatigable efforts of Cindy Steffens, Chatham Borough was awarded Silver Certification in 2012 by Sustainable Jersey. The certification is good for three years and is up for renewal at either the Bronze or Silver level in 2015. The Commission began to conduct the necessary updates that would qualify Chatham for recertification. The Commission established a separate Green Team consisting of John Tancredi, Len Resto, Dick Plambeck, Carl

Cappabianca, Ben Lampert and Kate Murphy. Each Commissioner has taken on several areas of responsibility and they are gathering the data that Len Resto, Janice Piccolo and Andrew Holloway, a Borough intern, will upload to the Sustainable Jersey website portal. We must submit our materials by June 14, 2015.

Pilgrim Pipeline

Mayor Bruce Harris and the Council created an Advisory Committee, chaired by Len Resto, charged with the task of gathering facts, pro and con, to be able to advise the Mayor & Council on the issues involved with the pipeline and to recommend a course of action. The work of the Committee will continue through 2015.

On behalf of the Environmental Commission, I express our appreciation at being able to serve Chatham in our capacity as environmental stewards.

Respectfully submitted,

Len Resto
Chair
Environmental Commission
February 15, 2015