

Borough of Chatham

Annual Report

2012

Green Initiatives Advisory Committee

Green Initiatives Advisory Committee: 2012 Annual Report

Mission

The Committee recommends to the Mayor and Council ways that Chatham Borough can become more environmentally sustainable. In addition, the Committee seeks to reduce the municipal government's "carbon footprint" by increasing energy efficiency, which will also reduce Borough costs. The Committee seeks additional cost reductions by pursuing grant opportunities. Finally, the Committee provides guidance and information to Borough residents regarding how they can become more responsible stewards of our environment.

Meetings

The Committee met on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm in the third floor conference room at Borough Hall. All meetings were open to the public.

2012 Membership

Carl Cappabianca, Marc de Mul, Erik Klepper, Cindy Steffens (chair), Kate Murphy. The President of the Chatham High School Environmental Club, Sophie Kapica, also attended several meetings. The Committee's Council Liaison is Councilman Len Resto.

2012 Accomplishments

The Committee's 2012 activities related to pursuit of Sustainable Jersey recertification and other sustainability-related services provided to the Mayor and Council. These activities led to silver certification from Sustainable Jersey, as well as the 2012 Sustainable Jersey Champion Award for Medium-Sized Municipalities (population 5,000 to 50,000), and the *Daily Record* Grassroots Award – municipality.

In 2010, the Green Initiatives Committee's submission to Sustainable Jersey resulted in Bronze certification for Chatham Borough, with 225 points.

In 2012, the Green Initiatives Committee's submission achieved Sustainable Jersey recertification for Chatham Borough, one year earlier than required. Recertification was achieved at the Silver level. Chatham Borough became one of only eleven silver-certified municipalities in New Jersey (Currently, 380 New Jersey municipalities are registered with Sustainable Jersey, and 105 are certified, 94 at the Bronze level and 11 at the Silver level).

Silver certification requires successful completion of actions totaling 350 points, including 3 priority actions. Chatham Borough's silver recertification included 410 points and 4 priority actions.

The large number of points earned Chatham Borough, with a population of 8,962, the 2012 Sustainable Jersey Champion Award for Medium-Sized Municipalities (population 5,000 to 50,000). Sustainable Jersey selects Champion Award winners based on: the highest number of

points achieved in the category; a dedicated leader; hardworking green team; and balanced sustainability program.

Sustainable Jersey awards are usually presented at the Sustainable Jersey luncheon during the annual New Jersey League of Municipalities convention in Atlantic City. That convention was canceled in 2012 due to hurricane Sandy. Mayor Bruce Harris and Green Initiatives Chair Cindy Steffens accepted the silver certification and Champion Award at a substitute Sustainable Jersey Recognition Ceremony on January 29, 2013, at Forsgate Country Club in Monroe Township, NJ. Cindy Steffens also spoke on the Award Winners panel at that event.

Chatham Borough is the first municipality in Morris County to achieve silver certification from Sustainable Jersey. As a result, Chatham Borough received the *Daily Record* Grassroots award – municipal. The award was presented at the *Daily Record*'s annual Grassroots Awards dinner at the Hyatt Morristown. Mayor Bruce Harris, Administrator Bob Falzarano, Council members Len Resto and Vicki Fife, Administrative Assistant Janice Piccolo, and Green Initiatives Chair Cindy Steffens attended the dinner.

Highlights of the sustainability activities included in Chatham Borough's silver certification submission to Sustainable Jersey (SJ) are included in this report.

Memorial Park Demonstration Rain Garden

The rain garden was officially opened as part of the reopening of Memorial Pool and playing fields, on May 19, 2012. The rain garden is composed of New Jersey native plants. It manages stormwater runoff, keeping it in the rain garden, which filters out pollutants, and out of the stormwater system, which ultimately flows into the Passaic River.

The rain garden was funded through a grant from Sprout House Nursery School, who wanted to say thank you to Chatham Borough for many years of use of the Memorial Park playground.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension – Morris County – helped select the rain garden site. GreenPath Landcare designed and prepared the site. The garden was planted by GreenPath and volunteers from the Town and Country Garden Club and the Green Initiatives Committee (CBGI).

Rain gardens are important in Chatham Borough, which gets its water from the Buried Valley Aquifer. The building of a few new houses, and additions to many existing houses, have increased the impervious coverage in Chatham Borough, which leads to increasing amounts of stormwater runoff. The Municipal Park demonstration rain garden includes a large sign describing the utility of rain gardens for managing stormwater runoff. Rain gardens are inexpensive to install and maintain. The Green Initiatives Committee will continue educational programming to encourage more Borough residents to install rain gardens on their property. If 40 rain gardens are installed, it is estimated that 1,000,000 gallons of stormwater are recharged into the aquifer.



Water Conservation Event, 2/2/12, Library of the Chathams

This 3-part event included: a PowerPoint presentation by New Jersey-American Watershed Ambassador Stephanie Queirolo on ways to conserve water indoors, including the use of faucet aerators and low-flow showerheads; a rain barrel demonstration by Pat Collington, of Chatham Township Environmental Commission; and a rain garden panel. The rain garden panel featured Hazel England, of the Great Swamp Watershed Association (GSWA), who spoke about the GSWA rain garden; Mary Keselica, President of the Town and Country Garden Club of the Chathams, who has a rain garden in her backyard; and Eagle Scout candidate Anthony Lofredo, who described his Eagle Scout project to plan and install a rain garden at Stanley Congregational Church, and Bill Presnell of the Stanley Congregational Church GreenFaith Committee. Two short film clips about sustainable stormwater runoff were shown: “Rain Gardens” and “Reduce Runoff: Slow it Down, Spread it Out, Soak it In”.



Rain Garden Workshop, Great Swamp Watershed Association, March 12, 2012

The Green Initiatives Committee partnered with the Great Swamp Watershed Association to put on this workshop. GSWA Education and Outreach Director Hazel England gave a PowerPoint presentation on the benefits of rain gardens. She described site selection and preparation as well

as rain garden installation. She then led a tour of the GSWA rain garden and described the plants. Workshop participants brought questions about installing rain gardens on their property.

Complete Streets

Chatham Borough received a 2011 grant from the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) to write a municipal Complete Streets Policy and Plan. Complete Streets accommodate all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and vehicles, senior citizens, and people with disabilities – as well as motor vehicles.

The goal of Complete Streets is to create, over time, a comprehensive network of streets providing connections for all users to key trip generators, including jobs, schools, residences, retail, recreational and public facilities. Traffic safety will improve, people will experience health benefits, and carbon emissions will be avoided.

The Chatham Borough Complete Streets Policy and Plan and Appendix were written by professional planner Susan Blickstein and a Complete Streets team including Mayor Harris, the Borough Engineer, and representatives from the Police Department, the Environmental Commission, the Planning Board, and CBGI. The Appendix includes a checklist that will go in the file of every streets project in Chatham Borough to ensure that Complete Streets measures are considered for inclusion in every project.

The Chatham Borough Planning Board adopted the Complete Streets Policy and Plan and Appendix as part of the Chatham Borough Master Plan on March 21, 2012. Chatham Borough's Mayor and Council adopted a resolution in support on April 9, 2012.

Outreach and Education

The CBGI **webpage** on the Chatham Borough website was updated to support the silver SJ certification submission. In addition to new information, many photos and visuals were added.

CBGI had a display table at **Fishawack Festival** again in 2012. We talked about sustainability with many members of the public and added several names to our email list.

The **Chatham Borough Green Challenge** took place from July 1, 2011 – April 28, 2012. Available online and in person, the Green Challenge was a checklist of many everyday actions that individuals could take to live more sustainably. Activities ranged from green (turn off water when brushing teeth, washing only full loads of dishes or laundry, etc.) to greenest (install a rain garden, drive a hybrid car, etc.) Several articles about the Green Challenge appeared in the local press. By March, 2012, the required number of 225 Green Challenges had been returned by Borough residents.

The most popular everyday actions that Borough residents pledged to take were: meticulously separate recycling from trash; recycle ink cartridges and electronics; turn off lights or computers when not in use; adjust their thermostats to use less energy at night or when away from home;

stop idling their cars when stopped anywhere for over 30 seconds; and substitute reusable cloth bags for plastic shopping bags. Collectively, CBGI estimates that these actions by Borough residents will annually keep 10,768 plastic bags out of landfills and prevent nearly 42 tons of carbon emissions.

To celebrate having collected over 225 Green Challenges, CBGI put the names of everyone who had returned a Green Challenge in a flower vase and drew out a name on April 28, 2012, at the **Chatham High School E-Carnival**. Mary Keselica, President of the Town and Country Garden Club, whose name was drawn, was awarded a backyard composter.



In addition to awarding the composter, CBGI had a display table with the EQ Challenge Game, from ANJEC. This game includes a large picture of a house, with each room numbered, and large green and yellow dice. Participants roll the dice, find the corresponding room in the house, and talk about ways to save energy in that room. The game provides good visual education to the public about energy conservation.

The **Eco Film and Discussion Series of the Chathams** continued in 2012. Started in 2010, this series offers films to the public on a variety of environmental topics. The films are shown, free of charge, at the Library of the Chathams. Free refreshments are always available, and discussion follows each film. In 2012 the Eco Film and Discussion Series of the Chathams received a \$500 grant from the Chatham Jaycees.

Films shown in 2012 included:

- January 6, 2012 – Houston, We Have A Problem (energy)
- April 5, 2012 – No Impact Man (waste reduction)

- May 3, 2012 – Tapped (water)
- October 4, 2012 – Food, Inc. (food production)
- December 6, 2012 – Human Footprint (energy)

A planned November showing of *The Story of Stuff* and *The Story of Change*, films which deal with waste reduction, had to be canceled due to Hurricane Sandy.

The **Fifth Annual Green Fair of the Chathams** took place on Saturday, September 22, from 10 am – 2pm at the Gazebo and Railroad Plaza North. It was jointly sponsored by the Environmental Commissions of Chatham Borough and Township and CBGI. An estimated 600 people attended the Green Fair.

A good and diverse mix of non-profit and for-profit participants offered a range of information, products and services that promote environmental sustainability. There were 18 participants, including Techniart, the NJ Clean Energy lighting store sponsored by NJBPU, and several for-profit vendors selling “green” products. Pascarella Bros. sold food again this year. Entertainment included Rizzo’s Reptiles, the Chatham Brass Band, and eco activities provided for children.

The Green Fair included a free **Community Paper Shredding Event**, located in Railroad Plaza North. Also at Railroad Plaza North, Morris Habitat for Humanity filled its ReStore truck with donations of gently used home furnishings and appliances to be sold in its ReStore, with proceeds used to build Energy-Star certified, sustainable and affordable homes for employed people living in substandard housing.

Press releases about the Green Fair were distributed between March and September 2012. Press coverage of the Green Fair was excellent. Print advertisements were eliminated for 2012, which saved money but did not impact attendance.

The 2012 Green Fair was a “greener” Green Fair, because efforts were made to increase energy efficiency, reduce waste, and support local vendors and alternative transportation. All vendor communication was electronic. Instead of having paper schedules at the Green Fair, the schedule was listed on large posters posted prominently around the Fair. Green Fair 2010 and 2011 lawn signs were reused by placing the new 2012 date over the previous date. These signs, and additional signs purchased in 2012, can be reused in 2013. The central location encouraged people to walk or bike to attend the Green Fair.



Health and Wellness

Anti-idling programs continue in Chatham Borough. In 2012, 4 additional metal anti-idling signs were posted, at: Memorial Park; Sheppard Kollock Park; ECLC/Lum Field; and Borough Hall. There are now anti-idling signs posted at all idle-frequent locations on Borough-owned property.



Anti-idling programs are maintained at all schools in the School District of the Chathams by PTO Green Teams and by the Chatham High School Environmental Club. CBGI provided information about anti-idling laws to private schools. The Stanley Congregational Church GreenFaith Committee had anti-idling signs posted at parking locations used by the Stanley Nursery School. The Chatham Day School held an anti-idling campaign, which included posting sandwich board signs during morning and afternoon car line and publishing an article in their newsletter.

CBGI also sent letters to businesses that include drive-through windows and other idle-frequent activities. We are not aware of any private business installing new anti-idling signs in 2012.

The many activities of the very active **Safe Routes to School Committee** of the Chathams were included in the 2012 SJ submissions of both Chatham Borough and Chatham Township.

The **Building Healthier Communities** action included the work of the Mayors' Wellness Campaign Committee of the Chathams, including the Put Your Best Foot Forward walking

contest for Borough employees, and the many MWC activities for the community. The exercise programs for seniors and other programs at the Senior Center of the Chathams were included, as well as the many programs for children, including Girls on the Run, the Milton Mile, and the huge variety of recreational sports programs for children.

Food

The Chatham Borough **Farmers' Market** and the **Community Garden** were recognized for their many programs that benefit the Chatham community.

Operations and Management

A Municipal Green Team had been created in 2011, including the Mayor, the Borough Administrator, municipal department heads, the Administrative Assistant, and the CBGI Chair. This team completed several actions in 2012, in addition to those completed in 2011. The Green Fleet Inventory, a priority action, was updated. In addition to inventorying all Borough vehicles and detailing the excellent Borough vehicle maintenance program, this inventory estimated that Chatham Borough could decrease fleet emissions by 3% by 2015, by replacing 3 specific vehicles with functionally appropriate hybrid vehicles in 2014 and 2015.

A **Construction and Demolition Recycling Ordinance**, which was adopted on second reading by Chatham Borough Mayor and Council on April 23, 2012. The Ordinance requires contractors for construction and demolition projects over \$50,000, not including projects involving single-family or duplex homes, to salvage, reuse, or recycle at least 50% of the following types of debris: asphalt, concrete, brick, masonry, cardboard, glass, clean, unpainted and untreated wood, landscape debris, paper, plastics, # 1-7, and scrap metal. Once this program is well-established, the ordinance can be amended to include smaller projects, as well as projects involving single-family homes and duplexes.

Upgrades undertaken at the Joint Meeting qualified for **Other Innovative Demonstration Project**.

At least 25% of the paper purchased for use in Borough of Chatham offices in 2012 was **recycled paper**.

The Konica-Minolta leases for 5 copiers that exceed Energy Star Compliance levels by 50%, the toner used in those copiers, and other materials that include recycled content qualified Chatham Borough for **Green Maintenance Equipment and Materials**.

Energy audits conducted of municipal buildings and associated upgrades undertaken qualified in 2010 and 2011 qualified Chatham Borough in 2012 for **Audit**, and **Green Buildings Retrofit – Water Conservation**.

Grounds and maintenance procedures followed by Chatham Borough qualified for **Green Grounds and Maintenance Policy** and **Minimize Water Consumption**. The longstanding

mulch reuse and recycling program, and the use of wood chips on municipal properties, including the annual Environmental Commission events to clean up trails and lay fresh wood chips on the trails, qualified for **Green Grounds and Maintenance Recycled/Composted Material**.



Chatham Borough Mayor and Council had passed an Integrated Pest Management Policy and Plan in 2011. Pesticide-free zones were created and ladybug signs posted. In 2012, the Chatham Borough Farmers' Market contributed \$350 to update the training of a Borough employee in Integrated Pest Management, thus qualifying the Borough for SJ points under **Integrated Pest Management**.

The **Energy Star Portfolio Management System** helped track Chatham Borough energy data in 2012. CBGI gathered data from Borough employees, PSE&G and JCP&L to complete a **Municipal Carbon Footprint** and a **Community Carbon Footprint**.

The **Green Buildings Policy** and **Behavioral Policies to reduce energy and paper consumption**, which were adopted by Borough Council in 2011, remained in force in 2012. Energy-Star compliant computer purchases qualified for **Energy Efficient Appliances**.

Natural Resources and Waste Reduction

The **Open Space and Recreation Plan** and the work of the **Environmental Commission** qualified the Borough of Chatham for additional points.

The **Environmental Resource Inventory** is a priority SJ action. In 2012, the Environmental Commission updated Chapters 1 and 10 of the ERI and wrote two new Chapters – Chapter 11, Regional Relationships, and Chapter 12, Land Use. Both new chapters included new GIS maps. The Planning Board amended the Chatham Borough Master Plan to include these revisions to the ERI on May 2, 2012.

The Chatham Borough **Pay As You Throw** system, including green garbage bags and the associated single-stream recycling program, continue to be pioneering programs in New Jersey. The well-utilized **Recycling Depot** also continues to qualify for SJ points.

The **Municipal Waste Audit** demonstrated a recycling rate of over 60% at Borough Hall.

CBGI sent letters to residents and landscapers to supplement the Borough's **Grass Cut It and Leave It!** program, and also publicized this program on the CBGI website and at various public events.

Water and Energy Usage Reports to Mayor and Council

The CBGI Chair tracked several years of water and energy use and reported the findings to Borough Council. The reports were then updated throughout 2012.

Aftermath of Hurricane Sandy

CBGI put sign-up sheets for people who might want to carpool to New York at warming stations and in key businesses in the Chathams, checked the sign-in sheets regularly and reported names and contact information to Borough Hall. CBGI also forwarded several email updates from Borough Hall to our email list.

Integration with Environmental Commission

At the end of 2012, it was decided that the best and most efficient way to continue CBGI's work was to join forces with the Environmental Commission. A CBGI member moved out of town, and existing vacancies on the EC could accommodate CBGI members.

2013 Goals

Update the ERI and OSRP as needed

Prepare a work plan for SJ 2015 recertification, with work to be started in 2013, continued throughout 2014, and completed by the 2015 SJ deadline

Maintain the Memorial Park rain garden

Continue to update water and energy usage reports for Mayor and Council

Survey our email list again in 2013 to determine which films to show in the Eco Film and Discussion Series for 2014-15

Continue our education and outreach efforts and public appearances

Continue to raise our public profile and expand our email list

Pursue additional grant opportunities, especially but not exclusively, to assist with SJ recertification

Maintain an updated webpage

Continue and increase our partnerships with other local sustainability organizations

Provide further service to Mayor and Council if and when requested