

Borough of Chatham

Annual Report

2010

Green Initiatives Advisory Committee

Green Initiatives Advisory Committee: 2010 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 about how they can become even more responsible stewards of our environment.

Meetings

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

Membership

J.R. Buzelli, Carl Cappabianca, Michele Hudec, Stan Serbanica, Cindy Steffens (chair for last part of 2010) William Tackaberry, Mark White (chair for first part of 2010). The Committee's Council Liaison is Councilman Len Resto.

2010 Accomplishments

1. The Committee's most significant accomplishment of 2010 was our achievement of Bronze certification from Sustainable Jersey. Mayor Vaughan, former Mayor Barbara Hall, and Committee Chair Cindy Steffens traveled to Atlantic City to accept the bronze certification plaque at the Sustainable Jersey awards luncheon on Tuesday, November 16, 2010 at the New Jersey League of Municipalities convention. As of November, 2010, over 250 municipalities across New Jersey were registered with Sustainable Jersey, and 67 had achieved bronze or silver certification. Registration; and certification, with Sustainable Jersey, were included in the 2010 Department of Community Affairs best practices checklist for municipalities, used to determine 2011 state aid levels. Sustainable Jersey requires 150 points for bronze certification. Chatham Borough submitted 225 points, all of which were accepted. Included in the submission were Chatham Borough's many active sustainability efforts; including: energy audits (see accomplishment #3, below), a municipal carbon footprint, an Environmental Resource Inventory, the community garden, the Chatham Borough Farmers' Market, the recycling depot, Chatham Borough's Open Space and Recreation Plan, Chatham Borough's pay-as-you-throw solid waste management program, Safe Routes to School, the anti-idling program of the Chathams – Turn the Key, Be Idle Free! (See accomplishment # 6, below), the Eco Film and Discussion Series of the Chathams (see accomplishment # 5,

below), the Green Fair of the Chathams (see accomplishment # 7, below), Safe Routes to School, and the Mayors' Wellness Campaign. The achievement of bronze certification represented two years of hard work by the Committee, with indispensable contributions from: the Land and Historic Conservancy Committee, the Chatham Borough Environmental Commission, the Chatham Borough Farmers' Market, the Senior Center of the Chathams, the Chatham Borough Planning Board, the Chatham Township Environmental Commission, the Borough Engineer, the Borough Administrator, the Department of Public Works, Administrative Secretary and Farmers' Market Manager Janice Piccolo; and outstanding leadership from Mayor Vaughan and the Borough Council.

2. During the early spring of 2010, the Committee worked with the Environmental Commissions of Chatham Borough and Township, Madison, Summit and Berkeley Heights to create programs that promote the use of composters (Save It to Spade It!) and rain barrels (Soak It – Don't Send It!) The public was invited to purchase composters and rain barrels in advance for a discounted price. The kickoff event for the programs was held at Chatham Middle School on Friday, April 16, 2010. A seminar was offered, demonstrating the use of rain barrels and composters. The programs were publicized in the press and in the schools. The program was a resounding success.
3. Committee members and Borough municipal employees worked with Steven Winter Associates to complete audits of our three major municipal facilities: the Municipal Building and Police Department; the Department of Public Works; and the Fire Department. The audits, which the NJ Board of Public Utilities funded, were completed in May 2010. Chatham Borough leveraged over \$80,000 in grants and incentives to implement many of the energy efficiency measures recommended by the audits. With installation completed, it is estimated that these upgrades will result in substantial savings in annual energy costs.
4. In July 2010, Borough municipal staff and committee members submitted an application to the Wal-Mart grant program, administered by Sustainable Jersey. Chatham Borough applied for a \$25,000 Wal-Mart grant to implement energy audit recommendations. A total of 24 grants were awarded to municipalities across New Jersey: 4 project grants for \$25,000 apiece, 10 project grants for \$10,000 each, and 10 capacity-building grants for \$1,000 each. Competition was stiff, and Chatham Borough did not receive a grant. Committee members reviewed the winning projects closely against the 2010 grant criteria to try to determine the best possible approach for a 2011 Wal-Mart grant application.
5. Committee members worked with the members of the Environmental Commissions of Chatham Borough and Township to present Eco Film and Discussion Series of the

Chathams. Every few months, a different film on an important environmental topic is shown to the public, followed by a discussion. The films are shown, free of charge, at the Library of the Chathams. On February 11, 2010, clips were shown from the documentary films *Tapped* and *Flow*, as part of a presentation on “Water in the Chathams”. Following the film clips, there was a discussion with local experts of tap water sources and components in Chatham Borough and Chatham Township and a taste test comparing bottled water to tap water in Chatham Borough and tap water in Chatham Township. On April 15 and 19, and on November 4, the film *A Chemical Reaction*, which addresses the hazards of pesticides, was shown and discussed. Two films about food production were shown during the summer: *The Future of Food*, on July 8, and *Food, Inc.*, on August 5.

6. Turn the Key Be Idle Free! is the anti-idling program of the Chathams. In past years this program featured flyers and poster contests in the schools and a joint resolution signed by the Mayors of both Chathams to set up the program. Signs have been posted at idle-frequent locations around the Chathams, including the post office, train station, and all the public schools, reminding people of New Jersey’s laws against idling. In October 2010, the Committee and the Chatham Township Environmental Commission sent a letter to the public and private schools in the Chathams, informing them of updates to the anti-idling laws.
7. The Third Annual Green Fair of the Chathams, jointly sponsored by the Environmental Commissions of Chatham Borough and Township and the Chatham Borough Green Initiatives Advisory Committee, was held at Reasoner Park on September 11, 2010, from 9 am to 2 pm. The weather was perfect – warm and sunny but not hot – and a large crowd of 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. For the first time, the Green Fair sought sponsors. Team members created a logo and letterhead and developed sponsorship materials. Seven sponsors enabled the 2010 Green Fair to double advertising, to post yard signs around the Chathams, and to increase entertainment. Entertainment featured appearances by: the Chatham Community Band, Rizzo’s Reptiles, and the Grand Falloons eco-entertainment. Press coverage of the Green Fair was excellent. The 2010 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; there were no paper communications. Instead of having paper schedules at the Green Fair, the schedule was listed on large posters posted prominently around the Fair. The central location encouraged people to walk or bike to attend the Green Fair. Recycling receptacles, in addition to trash cans, were clearly marked and visible around the Green Fair. A highlight of the Green Fair was an electric car display.

8. Committee members attended the following networking events in 2010. In August 2010 Len Resto, Stan Serbanica, and Cindy Steffens attended a Sustainable Jersey event at the Maplewood public library regarding water conservation ordinances and education. In August 2010, Cindy Steffens attended a Sustainable Jersey networking event in Sparta Township. This event was an opportunity to meet Sustainable Jersey representatives as well as Green Team members of towns throughout North Jersey. In October 2010, Cindy Steffens spoke to the Kiwanis Club of the Chathams and Madison about sustainability programs in the three towns.

9. The Committee's goals for 2011 include: pursuing additional grant opportunities; enhancing our computer capabilities; raising our public profile; seeking additional members; and working towards silver certification from Sustainable Jersey.