

Green Initiatives Advisory Committee: 2011 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 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.

2011 Membership

Carl Cappabianca, Marc de Mul, Stan Serbanica, Cindy Steffens (chair), William Tackaberry, Senior. The Committee's Council Liaison is Councilman Len Resto. At the end of 2011, Stan Serbanica and William Tackaberry resigned, and Kate Murphy and Erik Klepper joined the Committee.

2011 Accomplishments

The Committee's 2011 accomplishments can be organized into three categories: grants; outreach and education activities; and pursuit of Sustainable Jersey recertification.

Grants

In February and March, 2011 the Green Initiatives Committee drafted an application to the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) for a \$7,500 grant to adopt a Complete Streets plan in Chatham Borough. A Complete Streets team was formed. The grant was funded by ANJEC. A Complete Streets Plan will be presented to the Chatham Borough Planning Board, and a Complete Streets resolution will be presented to Borough Council, in spring of 2012. The Plan will commit Chatham Borough to developing, over time, a network of complete streets, which serve all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, the disabled, and senior citizens, to major destinations in town. This action is worth 20 Sustainable Jersey points.

In July 2011, Borough municipal staff and committee members submitted an application to the Wal-Mart grant program, administered by Sustainable Jersey. Chatham Borough applied for a \$10,000 grant to install a demonstration rain garden as part of the Memorial Park project, with a sign, a contest to name the rain garden, a grand opening, and several public workshops. Available grant dollars were decreased, and allocated differently from 2010. Only 3 grants for

\$25,000 were awarded (down from 4 in 2010), 8 grants for \$10,000 were awarded, with two projects coming in at \$9,000 and \$9,475 (down from 10 grants for \$10,000 in 2010); and 25 capacity-building grants for \$1,000 were awarded (up from 10 capacity-building grants in 2010.) Competition was stiff, and Chatham Borough did not receive a grant. Committee members reviewed the winning projects closely against the 2011 grant criteria to try to determine the best possible approach for a 2012 Wal-Mart grant application.

Outreach and Education

The Chatham Borough Green Initiatives Advisory Committee (CBGI) undertook many outreach and education efforts in 2011. These activities included: a new CBGI webpage on the Chatham Borough municipal website; display tables at many public events; the Eco Film and Discussion Series of the Chathams; the Green Challenge; and the Green Fair of the Chathams.

During the spring of 2011, a CBGI webpage was set up on the Chatham Borough municipal website. The webpage, which fulfills a long-held goal, is managed by CBGI. It includes information about all CBGI programs and encompasses a wide range of environmental topics.

The Chatham Borough Green Initiatives Advisory Committee had a display table at the following local public events:

April 30, 2011: Chatham High School E-Carnival. CBGI's table had the EQ Challenge Game, from the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, which 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. CBGI may return to the E-Carnival with this display in 2012.

June 11, 2011: Joint CBGI table with the Chatham Borough Environmental Commission at the Fishawack Festival. It was a success and may be repeated in 2012.

August 27, 2011 and October 22, 2011: CBGI had a display table at the Chatham Borough Farmers' Market, with information about energy efficiency programs offered to the public by the NJ Board of Public Utilities, as well as educational materials about a variety of environmental topics, including anti-idling, grass cut it and leave it!, indoor and outdoor water conservation, Pay As You Throw, recycling depot and single-stream recycling, integrated pest management, rain gardens, Complete Streets, the Eco Film and Discussion Series of the Chathams, and the Chatham Borough Green Challenge.

November 19, 2011: The last day of the Chatham Borough Farmers' Market includes some of the highest traffic of the season. Project Porchlight, which is sponsored by the New Jersey Board

of Public Utilities (NJBPU), Clean Energy Programs, distributed complimentary CFL bulbs to the public. The Green Initiatives Advisory Committee and the Chatham Township Environmental Commission had a joint table with Project Porchlight, where we provided information about additional NJBPU energy efficiency programs for the public and other environmental topics.

Eco Film and Discussion Series:

Committee members worked with the members of the Chatham Township Environmental Commission (CTEC) to present the Eco Film and Discussion Series of the Chathams. The series was expanded from 2010, with 6 films shown on a variety of environmental topics during 2011. The films are shown to the public, free of charge, at the Library of the Chathams; discussion follows each film. In November 2011, Whole Foods became a sponsor of the Series, providing free refreshments for each film.

The Fall 2011 newsletter of the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) included an article about the Eco Film and Discussion Series of the Chathams. Some films shown in the series since 2009 have been borrowed from ANJEC.

Films shown in 2011 included:

- January 13, 2011 – Killowatt Ours (energy)
- April 14, 2011 – A Chemical Reaction (sponsored by GreenPath and Sprout House) (pesticides)
- May 12, 2011 – Turning the Tide (film borrowed from ANJEC) (wetlands, groundwater recharge, water conservation)
- October 6, 2011 – Carbon Nation (energy)
- November 3, 2011 – Are You Ready for the Next Industrial Revolution? (sustainability practices in business) (film borrowed from ANJEC)
- December 1, 2011 – Bag It! (plastic)

Chatham Borough Green Challenge

The Chatham Borough Green Challenge includes many everyday actions that individuals can take to live more sustainably. CBGI created the Green Challenge and has made it available on our website and at all our public events. The Green Challenge kicked off with a press release in July 2011. When 225 Green Challenges have been collected from Borough residents, CBGI will hold a drawing to award a backyard composter and issue a press release. By the end of 2011, 125 Green Challenges had been collected, and a midpoint press release was being drafted, to include data on the environmental impact of the actions taken by Chatham Borough residents in the first 112 Green Challenges.

Fourth Annual Green Fair of the Chathams: Saturday, September 24, 9am – 2pm

The Fourth Annual Green Fair of the Chathams was jointly sponsored by the Environmental Commissions of Chatham Borough and Township and the Chatham Borough Green Initiatives Advisory Committee. The Green Fair took place at the Gazebo and, for the first time ever, expanded across the street to also use the Railroad Plaza North parking lot. Despite the weather prediction of rain, the largest crowd ever – 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, fulfilling a longterm goal of having food at the Green Fair. Entertainment included Rizzo’s Reptiles, whose performance was sponsored by Investors Savings Bank, the Chatham Brass Band, and eco activities provided by the Girl Scouts and the Chatham High School Environmental Club.

The Green Fair included several opportunities for the public to reduce, reuse and recycle. For the first time ever, the Green Fair included a free paper shredding event, sponsored by Peapack-Gladstone Bank and located in 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. Good Goes Around collected gently used children’s bicycles to be repaired and recycled to the less fortunate. The Library of the Chathams collected used books for their annual book sale.

Four press releases about the Green Fair were distributed between March and September 2011. Press coverage of the Green Fair was excellent. Print advertisements were eliminated in 2011, which saved money but did not impact attendance.

As in 2010, the 2011 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. Green Fair 2010 lawn signs were reused by placing the new 2011 date over the 2010 date. These signs, and additional signs purchased in 2011, can be reused in 2012. 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.

Green Fair sponsors included: Investor's Savings Bank, Peapack-Gladstone Bank, GreenPath Landcare, the NJ Association of Railroad Passengers, Morris Habitat for Humanity ReStore, Coviello Bros. Horticultural Services, and Solar Energy World.

Work Towards Recertification with Sustainable Jersey

The Committee researched and summarized many SJ actions early in 2011 and developed a list totaling 510 points to pursue. Over the course of the year it became apparent that not all actions could be fulfilled, and, by the end of 2011, the Committee was pursuing actions totaling approximately 400 points, with four priority actions. To maintain bronze certification, Chatham Borough must complete 150 points, including two priority actions. Silver certification requires 350 points and three priority actions. Requirements will change in 2012, perhaps affecting our ability to complete all actions being pursued.

A Municipal Green Team was created, including the Mayor, the Borough Administrator, municipal department heads, the Administrative Assistant, and the Chair of the Green Initiatives Advisory Committee. This Green Team met several times as part of the monthly department head meetings. The Green team completed several Sustainable Jersey actions, including: Fleet Inventory (priority action); Green Grounds and Maintenance Policy; Green Grounds and Maintenance – Recycled Materials; Green Buildings Policy; Adopt Behavioral Policies; Integrated Pest Management; and updates to Anti-Idling. The Municipal Green Team also worked on Energy Star Portfolio Manager, a priority action, and Energy Efficient Appliances and Green Maintenance Equipment.

In June 2011, Chatham Borough Council passed resolutions that adopted: a Green Grounds and Maintenance Policy, a municipal Green Buildings Policy, an Integrated Pest Management Policy, and Behavioral Policies to decrease energy and paper consumption.

Additional actions being pursued by the Committee at the end of 2011 include two additional priority actions - Municipal Carbon Footprint and Environmental Resource Inventory – in addition to the following actions: Green Buildings Retrofit – Water Conservation; Energy Education and Outreach; Waste Audit; Create Green Team; Farmers' Market; Community Garden; Environmental Commission; Inventory and Upgrade One Municipal Building; Pay As You Throw; Recycling Depot; Water Conservation Education; Green Challenges; Safe Routes to School; Mayor's Wellness Campaign/Building Healthier Communities; Community Carbon Footprint; Grass Cut It and Leave It!; Open Space Resource Plan; Construction and Demolition Ordinance; Other Demonstration Project – Joint Meeting; Rain Garden; Minimize Water Consumption.

In September 2011, energy efficiency upgrades were installed through the Direct Install program in accordance with recommendations that had been made in energy audits completed in 2010 by

Steven Winter Associates. Energy efficiency upgrades, such as lighting, motors, and heating and air conditioning units, were installed at the Municipal Building and Police Department, the Department of Public Works, and the Fire Department. It is estimated that these upgrades will result in substantial savings in annual energy costs.

On December 27 and 29, 2011, the Chatham Borough Recycling Coordinator and the Chair of the Green Initiatives Advisory Committee conducted a waste audit of one week's trash and recycling generated by the Municipal Building and Police Department, and a visual inspection of trash and recycling containers in all Borough parks. The recycling rate for the Municipal Building and Police Department was 60%, which exceeded the Borough goal of 50% recycling. Very little trash was comingled with the recycling. The trash included approximately 10% commingled recycling. Two new recycling containers were immediately set up in targeted locations to decrease the recycling in the trash. The waste audit also included no-cost recommendations to add recycling containers at specific locations in some parks to increase recycling there.

2012 Goals

The 2012 goals of the Chatham Borough Green Initiatives Advisory Committee are as follows:

- Recertification with Sustainable Jersey
- Pursue additional grant opportunities
- Provide additional service to Mayor and Council as requested
- Further enhance our computer capabilities
- Continue to raise our public profile
- Continue our outreach and education
- Seek additional members