



HAMILTON TOWNSHIP

Environmental Advisory Commission

Hamilton Environmental Commission
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**To: Mayor Jeff Martin
Township Council**

From: John H. Balletto, Chairman

Date: January 22, 2025

**Subject: 2024 Annual Report of the
Hamilton Environmental Advisory Commission & Green Team**

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:56A and the Ordinances of the Township of Hamilton, the following is a summary of the activities of the Hamilton Environmental Advisory Commission (Commission) and Green Team for the year 2024. The Commission has the responsibility for the protection, development or use of natural resources, including water resources, and open spaces located within the Township.

Membership of the 2024 Environmental Advisory Commission and Green Team (EAC/GT) consisted of the following individuals (six new members were added to the Green Team in 2024):

John Balletto - Chairman - Regular	Theodore Buehler - Green Team
Robert Benjamin - Regular	Nicolina Contardo - Green Team
JoAnn Bruno – Regular	William Wall - Green Team
Clinton Griggs - Vice Chair - Regular	*Jeanette Bergeron - Green Team
Haig Kasabach - Planning Board Liaison - Regular	*Tara Heagle - Green Team
Karl Vetter - Regular	*James Hopkins - Green Team
Ann Wolf - Regular	*Monica Martinez-Collins - Green Team
Andrew Garcia - Alternate Member	*Nicole McHugh - Green Team
Nicole Provost- Alternate Member	*Dony Oommen - Green Team
Patrick Nemes - Associate Member	
Claudia Shaughnessy - Associate Member	* new member in 2024
Cathy Wagner - Associate Member	

Madison Mather-Nebbia - Commission Secretary
Carrie Feuer - Mayor's Representative
Richard Tighe - Council Liaison

All Commission meetings were held in the Council Chambers in the Municipal Building with public participation permitted.

Sustainable New Jersey Certification

EAC/GT completed the requirements to maintain our Sustainable Jersey Bronze Certification. Clinton Griggs, along with Rob Poppert and Madison Nebbia, and the support of Chuck Thomas and Jim Wyrough in Department of Public Works, and Bianca Jerez, Mayoral Chief of Staff, compiled the documentation necessary to submit the application for bronze re-certification in February, 2024. The bronze recertification was awarded and is valid for three years. The Commission continues to look ahead to the next level, silver certification, and is working to achieve that higher goal.

Annual Stream and Community Cleanup

In April 2024 the EAC/GT held its annual volunteer Stream and Community Cleanup effort. This environmental effort attracted 54 volunteer participants. As a result of this multi- location cleanup effort, 78 bags of trash and 52 bags of recyclables were collected. Various other items such as a machete, tires, furniture, a mini-frig, carpet, and a muffler/catalytic converter were collected and properly disposed of. The total effort netted 20 cubic yards or 2.96 tons of collected materials. Commission member Haig Kasabach was responsible for scoping out the various cleanup locations and conducted site inspections prior to the cleanup event. Jim Wyrough and Public Works staff were also instrumental in this township wide cleanup event, which was also publicized through the NJ Clean Communities Program. Commission members took the lead as Team Leaders to guide the volunteers to the cleanup locations.

Pollinator / Rain Garden Program

Claudia Shaughnessy, our Green Team Committee Chair, initiated periodic maintenance sessions to cleanup and enhance the existing pollinator/rain garden locations that the Commission installed/upgraded in recent years. In the winter of 2024, GT members constructed and placed fourteen (14) bird nesting boxes at various locations. Thirteen were observed with active nests. Plans are being formulated for new pollinator gardens in locations throughout the township.

Community Garden

The Commission's interest in Community Gardens continued in 2024. The existing community garden located in the Bromley neighborhood drew greater interest in 2024, its second year in operation by Robertwood Johnson. The garden plots were selected and maintained by the neighborhood residents with assistance from the DPW. The majority of the available garden plots were planted and thrived. JoAnn Bruno, Chair of the Commission's Community Garden Committee, has been working with the local Rotary Club on a possible new Community Garden in Hamilton.

Rain Barrel Workshop

The 2024 Rain Barrel Workshop took place in May. It was a sold-out event with 30 rain barrels constructed by the participants after a program overview, explaining the importance of water conservation and storm-water management given by our local Watershed Ambassador, Carly DiGirolamo. The EAC provided the barrels and the necessary hardware to build each rain barrel. A nominal fee was charged for the workshop.

Various Other Topics

A new EAC logo was created by administrative staff, which then formed the basis of the new banner produced by the Public Works Department.

The EAC created a new tri-fold information handout for public distribution. The handout contained general information about the EAC/GT with links to their websites. Madison Nebbia and Bianca Jerez did an outstanding job compiling the new document.

In the early months of 2024, the Commission put together a checklist for training new EAC/GT members and held a refresher for existing members on the review of Development Applications. Several training sessions took place at commission meetings.

The Commission continued its annual membership with the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC). Members of the Commission attended seminars and training sessions sponsored by ANJEC throughout the year.

The EAC web page is periodically updated with the latest commission information and any available photos from events that take place.

In March 2024, Commission Member Cathy Wagner conducted a Recycling Information Program at Hamilton High West with the school's environmental group.

In August, the EAC/GT planned to be represented at the 2024 National Night Out event, but due to inclement weather, the event was cancelled.

The EAC/GT was represented at Hamilton's 2024 Oktoberfest. The focus was on our continued interest in Pollinator Program efforts and our proposed Rain Barrel Workshop planned for May 2025. As was done in prior years, a sign-up sheet allowed individuals to express interest in participating in an upcoming workshop. Information was provided relating to the on-going Pollinator Awareness Program lead by Claudia Shaughnessy, continuing the work started with our 2022 ANJEC Pollinator Program grant. Displays highlighted native pollinator insects and attractive pollinator plants. The Commission distributed pollinator seed packs and EAC specific give aways as well as several informative flyers on current environmental issues.

Karl Vetter created several flyers and information sheets updating current information on the Township's Leaf Collection and Disposal Program. Alternative methods of composting and disposal were presented. This information was posted on the EAC web page and sent out with the mayor's bi-weekly email message.

Commission members attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Municipal Complex.

The Commission continued to actively update the Hamilton Township's Environmental Resources Inventory (ERI) with the help of a 2022 \$10,000 funding grant from the Sustainable

Jersey Program. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) was awarded a contract to research and prepare an updated ERI for the Township. Rob Poppert, the Township Planner, was the lead individual on this project with input from John Balletto and Clinton Griggs, of the Environmental Commission. Members offered comments and suggested revisions to the draft document as chapters were provided for review. The final version of our updated ERI was completed by DVRPC and provided in December 2024.

The Commission held two team building events in 2024: a late summer picnic in September and a holiday/appreciation dinner in December.

At its monthly meetings, the Commission hosted several guest speakers in 2024.

Michael Pisauro from the Watershed Institute presented a program on storm water management related to the Township's MS4 permit and offered his support if needed.

The Commission continued its interest in potential food waste recycling. The Commission hosted the owner of One Compost Can, LLC, a recycled food processing business, who explained its recycling process. The Commission continued to investigate other municipalities' involvement in this type of program. Jeanette Bergeron, a GT member, attended a meeting of the NJ Composting Council Food Waste Conference, and provided notes and resources from the conference to the EAC/GT.

Rob Benjamin continued to work on improving recycling information in Hamilton as a means of increasing proper participation in the Mercer County sponsored program. Dan Napolian from the Mercer County Improvements Authority, and Jim Wyrrough, Hamilton's Clean Communities Coordinator, chaired a round table discussion on strategies for improving residential recycling efforts throughout Mercer County. Dan is coordinating efforts with counties throughout the state.

Late in 2024 the Commission was introduced to Jessie Lisanti, the newly appointed 2025 Watershed Ambassador for our watershed area. She will be working with the Commission on various environmental projects in the upcoming year.

At the request of Mayor Martin, the Commission provided locations for future pollinator/wildflower meadows in an effort to reduce ongoing lawn maintenance in those areas.

An Adopt-A-Storm Drain Program proposal was presented to Mayor Martin for future consideration as another tool in our storm-water tool box. It was thought to be a viable idea. Work will proceed toward implementing a program in 2025.

Land Use Applications Reviewed

The Commission received 23 sets of development site plans to review at monthly meetings in 2024:

January – 3	July – 0
February – 3	August – 0
March – 3	September – 0
April – 3	October – 2
May – 0	November – 0
June – 4	December – 5

Of these, the Commission submitted comments on twelve (12) applications to the Hamilton Township Land Use Office:

1. CRP DUPT, LLC @ 840 Nottingham Way, 475,820 SF warehouse
2. Hamilton Storage, LLC @ 1514-1530 Kuser Rd., 122,400 SF self-storage facility
3. TEEVEE, LLC @ Duetz Ave., creating 4 residential lots
4. JHR Real Estate, LLC @ 19 Industrial Dr., 10,683 SF addition to a warehouse
5. Raising Cane Restaurant @ 955 Route 33, 3,326 SF Raising Cane Restaurant
6. Sunnybrae Baseball League @ Pleasant Dr. & Route 195, erecting a billboard
7. Williams Trading Co. @ 1030 Route 33, construct a car wash
8. Gianni Polizzi @ 193 Vetterlein Ave., creating 2 lots
9. Dean Tardiff @ 397 Cypress Lane, expand residential structure
10. Aqua NJ @ 463 Paxon Ave., addition to building
11. Aqua NJ @ Paxon Ave., construct treatment building
12. CGN Investments, LLC @ Bacon Ave., 4,316 SF warehouse

In February 2024, the commission reviewed a revised development application for a proposed residential subdivision on Duetz Avenue. Karl Vetter performed an extensive environmental review of the revised application documents and a detailed report was forwarded to Mike Guhanick, Land Use Coordinator.

cc: Kathlyn Monzo, Business Administrator
Richard Tighe, Councilman
Fred Dumont, Director, Planning & Economic Development
Samantha Brown, Township Engineer
Alison Sabo, Township Clerk
Carrie Feuer, Mayor's Liaison, Director, WPC
Environmental Commission/Green Team Members
ANJEC