



The Borough of Hightstown
Environmental Commission
156 Bank Street
Hightstown, NJ 08520

The Hightstown Environmental Commission (EC) got off to a good start in 2019, seating 2 new members. The Commission is comprised of: Allen Keith LePrevost, Donna LePrevost, Yan Troizier, David Zaiser, Todd Frantz, Joshua Jackson (planning board), Gary Grubb and Barbara Jones. Conner Montferrat will be the Commissions Borough Council Liaison. The Commission in their reorganization meeting elected new officers. Allen Keith LePrevost will be the chair for 2018, with Yan Troizier as the vice chair. Todd Frantz accepted the roll as secretary.

The Commission set out establishing their “Green Team” members for 2018. Each EC member is automatically on the Green Team, as well as the following individuals: Ken Lewis (Public Works), Debra Sopronyi (administrator), Jennifer McKeever (Peddie School), Tara Misiura (Hightstown High School).

The Commission set off on an aggressive agenda for 2018. Items included:

- Reach Silver Certification in Sustainable Jersey
 - Status-Goal was achieved, reaching 385 overall points. The commission was limited by the participation of the various boards and commissions. Several categories of points were not completed due to inadequate responses from various boards and commissions. Goal for 2019 has to be improving communication within all the Borough’s boards and commissions.
- File for Sustainable Jersey Capacity Building Grant
 - Status. Grant was filed and not funded. Commission will try again in 2019.
- File for ANJEC grant- Rocky Brook Park reconstruction
 - Status- Grant was filed and funded for \$1500 dollars. Initial planning was done and 2 separate walkthroughs were completed. A work plan has been developed, but the extraordinary wet weather has made it next to impossible to get into the park and work. Also, the mosquitos this past summer made it uncomfortable and possibly unsafe to have volunteers working in the park.

- File for “Roots for Reforestation Grant” for Rocky Brook Park
 - Status- grant was filed and not funded.
- Rewrite the Borough’s tree protection ordinance to protect all trees, even on private property
 - Our Shade tree commissioner did an excellent job rewriting the tree protection ordinance. It was presented to the Council as a discussion item and was well received. The Borough attorney is going to review and clean up the language to bring it into the correct format. Ordinance will be introduced in early 2019 for consideration.
- Modify the Borough’s stormwater ordinance on small lots to include mandatory measures
 - Status- ordinance has been modified to include mandatory measures for storm water. The Watershed Institute will assist the EC in introducing the language in January of 2019.
- Continue to pursue the “Tree Cover” goal.
 - Status- we have not been successful this year increasing the tree cover in Hightstown. In fact, we have lost tree cover due to road construction projects that have removed trees and the replanting has been negotiated out of the contracts. Goal for 2019 has to be increasing the tree cover and developing a long-term maintenance plan for our street trees.
- Develop a stronger relationship with the MCSC. (Mercer County Sustainability Coalition)
 - Status- we have successfully attended each of the MCSC meetings this year and Hightstown is becoming a strong participant and leader in the Coalition. We have taken the lead position in the Recycling compliance project and are actively participating in the Small Business Energy outreach campaign.
- Do outreach- Bring Peddie, Meadow Lakes and the High School into the EC and work with them to expand our mission.
 - Status- we have been very successful in bringing Meadow Lakes and Peddie into our meetings and regular conversations. One great achievement has been the Peddie School looking into starting a food waste recycling program. This project, if successful will be the model to take to other food services to recycle the food waste instead of just putting it in the landfill. Meadow Lakes is interested in considering the program, and we look forward to taking the concept to the local school district.
 - The Environmental Commission was very successful this year in reaching out past its membership to the local community. We have also reached out to Allentown Borough and their EC chair, Nancy Tindall (and former chair of ANJEC) attended and observed one of our meetings. We are pleased that Allentown has now registered for the Sustainable Jersey program, and we have offered any assistance needed to help them in the process.
- Enhance our community image by attending “Green Fairs”, enhancing our social media presence, having a presence at all Council meetings, getting involved and assisting other boards and commissions when appropriate.

- Status- We attended two main Green Fairs this year, including the St. Anthony's Green Fair and the annual Harvest Fair. We focused on water conservation at the St. Anthony's fair and both storm water and water conservation at the Harvest Fair.

EC Role in Plan review:

The Hightstown Environmental Commission has the role of reviewing each and every building/zoning/ planning application that includes an increase in impervious coverage. Our current role is to review, advise and recommend passive storm water actions to home owners and business. In 2018 the EC reviewed 16 applications, ranging from a driveway addition to the very large projects at Meadow Lakes and the Mills redevelopment project. Each project was carefully reviewed and recommendations were written and submitted to the building/zoning official for distribution before permits were issued. This is a very good process, but we have limited success with passive storm solution actually being built. This is why we are going to push in 2019 to strengthen our storm water regulations to include mandatory capture and retention based on the new impervious coverage. The large developments are mainly regulated by our borough engineer, and have environmental engineers submitting plans. Our feedback on these projects is mainly to push for increased passive measures and innovative solutions.

Fundraising. The EC has one main fundraising activity during the year. This is the pedal boats on the lake during the "Fun Friday's" and the Harvest Fair. We did very well with the boats this year, earning almost \$800 dollars during 4 events. We are looking to work with Parks and Rec to develop a permanent home for the pedal boats near the boat dock in 2019.

Community Gardens. We had mixed results this year due to the weather. The gardens at the Housing Authority were a great success, with expanded planting areas and one resident acting as the "overseer" of the gardens. The community gardens on Bank street suffered a terrible flooding event at the height of planting season, putting the entire garden under 2 feet of water. The wet season never allowed the Bank Street gardens to come back to life. Preparations are underway for the 2019 season.

Outreach. The Environmental Commission was very successful this year in reaching out past its membership to the local community. We brought into our group The Peddie School and made them an active participant in our meetings. Meadow Lakes has taken an active role in our meetings and bring their ideas and projects forward. We have also reached out to Allentown Borough and their EC chair, Nancy Tindall (and former chair of ANJEC) attended and observed one of our meetings. We are pleased that Allentown has now registered for the Sustainable Jersey program, and we have offered any assistance needed to help them in the process.

Looking forward, the EC is already planning an aggressive agenda for 2019, addressing small business energy efficiency, recycling compliance, increasing tree cover, strengthen our storm water regulations and water conservation.