

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

CTEC'S Purpose: To undertake projects and make recommendations concerning the protection or use of natural resources, including water resources and air quality, located within or directly affecting Chatham Township.

The Chatham Township Environmental Commission's goal is to provide a responsible environmental viewpoint to Township committees and boards and to undertake projects with a strong educational component in order to inform officials and residents about constructive actions that can be taken to preserve the environment.

CTEC is 51 years old

The Chatham Township Environmental Commission was formed in 1968 (Ord. No. 27-68), the same year New Jersey passed legislation allowing towns to do so, and the same year the Rolling Knolls landfill was closed. The EC's first major action was to create a Natural Resources Inventory in 1974 which the EC has since updated twice. In 1974 former mayor Erv Hoag was on the Township Committee, Sam Averett was chair of the EC, and EC members included Sylvia Boyer, Arthur Heyl, Elise Davis and Joan Farrell.

REMEMBERING FRANK ESPOSITO

Frank Esposito passed away in the morning, April 20, 2019. Frank was a member of CTEC for over ten years, acting as web master, communications chair, community education and outreach chair, recycling chair, email coordinator, and contributor to workdays and events. He has been greatly missed.

Commissioners in 2019

Frank Esposito, Cara Feeser, Maureen Kelly, Amy Mason, Dan Miller, Christina Mott, Matt Palmer, Jessica Romeo, Dorothea Stillinger (EC Chair), Don Travisano (Planning Board liaison)

Meetings. The Commission met 11 times during the year. Average attendance was 6 members.

Green Team

- The Commission also serves as the Township Green Team. The Green Team is chaired by Maureen Kelly.
- The Green Team achieved 200 points for Sustainable Jersey certification due to the efforts of Steve Carroll and Maureen Kelly, which was more than the 150 required for Bronze certification. Bronze certification was awarded to Chatham Township in 2018, good for three years through 2021.

Projects

- Single-use plastic bag ban ordinance. Northern New Jersey Sustainable Municipal Alliance, chaired by Jessica Romeo, which includes Chatham Township, Chatham Borough and Madison, cooperated on an ordinance to ban single-use plastic bags. The ordinance was passed in all three towns in 2019.
- Seedling Give-A-Way in April. In a project led by Cara Feeser, a thousand tree seedlings were distributed free to Chatham Township residents as part of a joint effort between Chatham Township, New Jersey Forest Service, New Jersey Soil Conservation Districts, Sustainable Jersey and the Arbor Day Foundation.
- Energy Aggregation. The Energy Subcommittee chaired by Amy Mason investigated the benefits to Chatham Township of energy aggregation and submitted a model ordinance to the Chatham Township Committee.
- Pesticide-free lawn care project. With Environmental Commission leadership (Cara Feeser) Chatham Township implemented an organic pesticide-free maintenance program on all its municipal playing fields and recreation areas.
- Sustainability Fair in the fall in partnership with the Chatham Borough Environmental Commission. Booths, exhibits, handouts.
- Annual Open Space Workday. Trash pickup, trail maintenance and clipping of invasive plant species on Township-owned property around the Green Village Pond. **Chatham Disposal Inc.** donated pickup of bags of collected trash. **ShopRite of Chatham** donated plastic bags and work gloves. Thank-you messages were sent to participants, letters to sponsors.
- Collaboration with Madison Environmental Commission to co-host an ANJEC program on plastics pollution in May.
- CTEC Facebook page maintained on-going (Cara Feeser).

- Commission website updated (Cara Feeser).
- Recycle Coach app promoted, Tanglewood recycling activities, recycling initiatives.
- Hosted scout and other work groups at the Green Village Pond trail - brambles clipped, downed tree cleared, woodchips spread, trail lined with branches. Trail is well marked with white diamond-shaped CTEC markers.
- Maintained liaison with Open Space Committee (Cara Feeser).
- Updated the conservation easement inventory and map (Dot Stillinger). Chatham Township holds about 50 conservation easements and there are at least 20 NJDEP conservation easements in the Township. The map is online in the NRI.
- A summer intern recruited by CTEC assisted in the recycling department.

Advocacy

- Development applications. Members attended Planning Board and Board of Adjustment meetings and commented on applications (Maureen Kelly, Dot Stillinger).
- Letters were sent to the Board of Adjustment and various legislators and state agencies.

Training and Meetings

- Several Commissioners attended conferences and workshops sponsored by the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) and other environmental organizations.
- A member (Maureen Kelly) attended a grant writing workshop at the Chatham library.
- A member (Jessica Romeo) was a presenter at an ANJEC conference and attended meetings in Trenton concerning a plastic bag ordinance.

Plans for 2020

- Conduct a Tree Seedling Give-A-Way.
- Conduct an Open Space Work Day in April.
- Promote an Energy Aggregation ordinance.
- Improve Green Village Pond trail, which has great potential for a nature trail and also gives easy access to the Kirby meadow, a great place for birdwatching.
- Co-sponsor the Sustainability Fair to be held in September.
- Work on projects that will result in Sustainable Jersey points.
- Produce educational events for residents.
- Work on organic pesticide-free lawn and field maintenance programs.
- Monitor environmental activities on the local and state level (e.g. Pilgrim pipeline, offshore drilling), comment as necessary.
- Investigate potential grants for projects.
- Attend conferences and training events.
- Review development and wetland applications, comment as necessary.
- Attend Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, Township Committee meetings as needed.

Acknowledgements

- Grateful thanks to the Chatham Township Committee for supporting the Green Team by passing all requested resolutions and ordinances.
- Grateful thanks to **Chatham Disposal Inc, ShopRite of Chatham, and Chatham Township DPW** for donations of goods and services and providing assistance.
- Grateful thanks to ANJEC for responding to requests for information and documents.
- And most grateful thanks to the Commissioners for their faithful attendance at meetings and work on projects

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