

**CRANBURY TOWNSHIP  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
23A North Main Street  
Cranbury, New Jersey 08512**

Barbara Rogers, Chair  
James Gallagher  
John Persico  
Andrew Johnson  
Paul Mullen  
Paul Ginoux  
David Marabello  
Theresa Vaccaro

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TO: Cranbury Township Committee  
FROM: Barbara Rogers, Chair of the township Environmental Commission  
DATE: January 2015  
SUBJECT: Environmental Commission 2014 Year-End Report

The activities of the Cranbury Township Environmental Commission in 2014 are summarized in this Year-End Report.

Membership – The EC had full membership for 2014.

Cranbury Book Preserve – The EC continued the replanting of native plants, the eradication of Bradford pear trees, multi flora rose and other invasive species, and the management of the grasslands. Dr. Rogers taught after school programs for elementary students in the Preserve this year.

The EC wrote to the Township Committee in favor of trees from No Net Loss to be planted on the dirt mounds at the entrance to the Preserve. However, the TC decided the trees should not be planted there.

Reinhardt Forest Preserve – Work continued in the spring with an open space stewardship grant from ANJEC. A sign constructed by EC member Paul Ginoux was installed by EC members and boy scouts from Troop 52; the property was cleaned and a grand opening celebration was held. On a beautiful spring day, over 50 volunteers and township residents walked the trails and were treated to a bird watch by Kathy

Easton from All About Birds. A subcommittee comprised of EC members John Persico, John Reinfelder, Paul Mullen, Barbara Rogers and David Marabello worked in the Preserve to cut a one-mile trail around the perimeter of the property. Also cut were cross trails in the middle. A map of the property was created using GPS by Commissioner Paul Mullen. Trees from the state No Net Loss Reforestation program were planted along the border of the property and the parking lot.

Dr. Rogers also presented a program called "Tale of a Trail" at the township library and the Cranbury Lions Club detailing the construction of the trails at the Preserve.

Environmental Resource Inventory – Led by Commissioner Andrew Johnson, an update of the ERI continues. He applied for a grant from Sustainable Jersey and the township was awarded \$2,000 to fund the re-write.

Dam Reconstruction Project – Work on the area was completed in the fall with the planting of trees and the installation of fencing, benches and sidewalks.

#### Educational Activities –

Cranbury Day activities – The EC continues to provide environmental education activities. In 2014, over 100 patrons to the booth were given information about recycling and water conservation. A stormwater drain model was displayed and demonstrated to educate the public about stormwater management and run-off. Children were intrigued by the stormwater model and other activities. Commissioners Barbara Rogers, John Persico, Paul Mullen, Andy Johnson and Paul Ginoux manned the table and talked with the public throughout the day.

Fifth Annual Alfred Meiss Environmental Appreciation Award – The EC again sponsored an award for Cranbury School 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Entrants described the Cranbury Brook Preserve and Unami Woods and how these areas inspire and are important to them. They shared their favorite place in whatever way they deemed appropriate, i.e. essay, song, photo, poem, etc. In the early spring, Dr. Rogers met with over 50 8<sup>th</sup> graders and walked them to the edge of the Preserve to provide the students with inspiration for their projects. A subcommittee of EC members reviewed the submissions using a judging criteria rubric. Student Kiera Sears was chosen the winner of a \$50.00 VISA card out of five entries. Mr. Marabello attended the award ceremony in June at the school and presented the award.

Stream Clean up – In April, the EC participated in the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Stream Clean-up sponsored by the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed. Approximately 69 volunteers collected 594 pounds of garbage using 65 trash bags. The most common items were glass bottles and other glass items. Also found were coconut shells, a television, a life buoy, stuffed animals and a transmission drum.

Water Pollution Prevention at Cranbury School Car Wash – Spearheaded by Commissioner David Marabello, storm drain filters were again used in October for car wash run-off at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade car wash. At the conclusion, the filters were removed and stored for future car washes at the school and the firehouse. Posters and information about car washes and their effect on the environment were given.

Rain Barrels – A new program at Cranbury School called Aquaponics incorporated the donated rain barrels. Dr. Rogers and EC Commissioner Theresa Vaccaro attended the construction of Hatponics at the Cranbury School.

Township's quarterly newsletters - Articles about EC activities were written by Commissioners and included in the newsletters.

### Environmental Initiatives

Sustainable Jersey – The “Green Team,” led by Barbara Rogers, met once a month to discuss environmental initiatives. Mr. Mullen reviewed the municipal energy audit; Dr. Reinfelder worked on the farmland preservation item; Mr. Persico worked on the Environmental Commission item.

Mrs. Vaccaro and Dr. Rogers have begun work with Cranbury School Chief School Administrator and Teacher Susan Lepardo on Sustainable Jersey School registration.

No Net Loss Reforestation – In the fall, 300 Phase 3 trees were planted – 50 in the Cranbury Brook Preserve; the others in the Reinhardt Forest Preserve, Barn Park, and Fisher property.

A trail of trees was planted on the Fisher property, that lead to the Hagerty property. This creates a contiguous walk from Heritage Park over to Hagerty, onto Millstone Park.

Dr. Rogers continued to participate in a subcommittee to advise the Township Committee on the planting locations for the New Jersey Turnpike Mitigation Project. The subcommittee also advised on tree placement, species choice, watering, soil condition, deer protection and staking.

Rain Garden – The township was awarded a grant for \$5,900 by New Jersey American Water Company for a planting a rain garden in Village Park near the floating dock. Environmental Commissioner Dave Marabello applied for the grant and coordinated the project. The garden was installed by over 12 local volunteers in the spring. It collects run off from gravel parking lot areas and Dirt Mountain. Rutgers Water Resources program and Rutgers Cooperative advised on the planning and planting.

NJ Invasive Species Strike Team – The Commission became a member on the Eradicator level.

Applications – Numerous applications for development were reviewed, and comments were submitted to the Planning Board and Zoning Board, as appropriate. Specifically, APCO Petroleum's application was reviewed for the property at the Route 130 and South Main Street circle. The EC continues to monitor state DEP activity.

Development Review Committee (DRC) – Commissioner Paul Mullen served as the EC representative to the DRC. He provided input from an environmental standpoint to applicants seeking land use approvals, including JET USA, who received a use variance. He also participated on the Riparian Zone ordinance amendment subcommittee and participated in the discussions and meetings.

Student Representative to EC – An eighth grade student, the student council president, attended meetings and reported on the recycling and upcycling efforts at Cranbury School, including working with Terracycle to gather juice pouches and other containers.

Animal issues – The EC heard a report on a Trap, Neuter and Release program for feral cats.