

MEETING NOTES

SUSTAINABLE WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP GREEN TEAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SWT GTAC) FEBRUARY 5, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

Members Present: Vicky Binetti (Environmental Commission); Karen Garrison (Board of Education); and Mayor Joann Gattinelli. Members Absent: Frank Altamuro (Public Works); Brian Bailey (Chamber of Commerce); Brooke Evanko (Public); Sean Longfellow (Council); Matt Mallon (WTMUA); Michelle Martin (Planning Board); and Bonnie Vance (Public). Also present were Bob Timmons (Chamber of Commerce); Anne Hastings (Environmental Commission), Ann Culkin (Environmental Commission); Andrea Huhn; and George Gerber.

Members reviewed meeting notes from the November 6, 2017 meeting and the proposed agenda for the current meeting.

Updates

Vicky Binetti reported that the plaque the Township received to commemorate our Bronze certification from the Sustainable Jersey program has been hung in the front lobby of the Municipal Building. Vicky noted that, while our certification has a 3-year term, the “shelf-life” of six actions expired at the end of 2017, and six more will expire at the end of 2018. Documentation for the following actions will need to be provided to demonstrate that we continue to perform them in 2018—Active Green Team; Community Garden; Environmental Commission; Recycled Paper; Improve Public Engagement in Municipal Government; and OnLine Municipal Public Services. Vicky anticipates that we can provide current information by the June 3rd certification application deadline for 2018. This will enable us to refresh our Bronze certification in 2018, and to again be recognized at the Sustainable Jersey luncheon in November, during the annual meeting of the New Jersey League of Municipalities.

A second draft of the update of our Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is anticipated within the next week. The Land Conservancy of New Jersey will join the Open Space Advisory Committee to make a presentation to Township Council on February 28th. There will be an opportunity for public review and input, followed by another (final) draft, which will be considered by the Planning Board for adoption as an element of the Master Plan later in the Spring.

Under the direction of the Township Clerk, Leo Selb, the Township has recently published a Clean Community and Recycling Calendar highlighting recycling guidelines and schedules, and providing information on other Township services, activities and municipal meetings. The calendar features artwork of our elementary school students. Tax Rewards Cards for the new “Shop Washington Township” program (see below) were distributed to all residents with the calendars.

Sustainable Jersey Grant

Thus far, a display board and a small indoor banner have been purchased under the grant, to facilitate outreach. Vicky showed Team members a reusable shopping bag (from the Environmental Commission) as an example of a promotional item that would be consistent with a sustainability theme.

2018 Budget Request

Vicky shared with Green Team members the budget request (\$2,720) that was submitted to the Administration in November 2017 for 2018 activities. The 2018 proposed budget is still under development.

Sustainable Jersey Small Grants Program

There is a current funding opportunity under the Sustainable Jersey Small Grants Program. Applications are due February 28th for grants of \$2,000, \$10,000 or \$20,000 grants. Discussion among the group resulted in several suggestions for projects for which funding might be sought, although there are no proposals that were “grant-ready” at present; the most feasible potential project was thought to be a series of gardens throughout the Township. A resolution that would indicate the Township Council’s support for an application will be considered at the Council meeting on February 7th.

Next Steps for Sustainable Washington Township

Mayor Gattinelli discussed the newly launched “Shop Washington Township” program. Residents have received their Shop Washington Township Property Tax Reward Cards and information about the program with the Township calendar mailing. With the card, residents receive credits toward their property taxes when they shop at participating local businesses. The program benefits residents by reducing their real estate taxes, and provides a strong incentive to patronize local businesses. The Mayor announced that approximately 20 businesses have already registered with the program, and more are expected as the program grows. This program should easily qualify as a certification action under *Buy Local Campaign*.

Anne Hastings, Vice Chair of the Environmental Commission, and Andrea Huhn discussed the possibility of initiating activities under the *Animals in the Community* action cluster. Andrea, an experienced volunteer with the Camden County Animal Shelter, presented information about Trap, Vaccinate, Neuter and Return (TVNR) programs for feral cats. Such programs involve trapping all cats in a stray/feral colony, spaying/neutering them, and vaccinating them. The adults are then returned to their territory, to a responsible caretaker; kittens may be placed for adoption at a shelter or a rescue facility. Gloucester County has the highest rate of euthanasia for cats brought to its shelter; an estimated 64% of cats brought to the shelter from Washington Township were euthanized in the 3-year period 2014-2016. Similar programs elsewhere have demonstrated success in reducing the euthanasia rate for cats brought to shelters, and at the same time reducing the number of and improving the health of feral cats. It is also cost-effective, in that the mandatory 7-day hold at the County shelter costs more than \$70/animal, while the cost of the TVNR is often paid by caregivers, non-profit advocacy organizations, or by grants. Anne and Andrea will follow-up with Council members to pursue the potential for this program in Washington Township. Additional actions in this grouping

could include *Companion Animal Management Pledge*, *Companion Animal Management Plan*, and *Animals in the Community Education*.

Additional prospective certification-eligible actions will be discussed at future meetings.

Our next meeting will be held on Monday, March 5th, at 6:00 pm in the Mayor's office.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Some upcoming events/deadlines to note:

- "Stay in the Game! Strategize Your Recertification," webinar, February 7. For webinar at 1-2 pm, register at: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5392145046837013505> For webinar at 7-8 pm, register at: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8885549676526023937>
- Sustainable Jersey Small Grants for Schools Program Deadline: February 9, 2018 <http://www.sustainablejerseyschools.com/grants-resources/sustainable-jersey-for-schools-grants-program/pseg-cycle/>
- Application deadline for TCNJ student assistance, February 19, 2018; sponsored by Center for Community Engaged Learning and Research, more information at https://tcnj.co1.qualtrics.com//CP/File.php?F=F_38ZdFFxA2eVIZxb
- "Sharing Positive Energy," February 21, 6-8 pm; Atlantic-Cape May Counties Regional Hub Event (actions to save energy for residents, businesses, and municipalities, and new Gold Star Standard for Energy); NJM Insurance Group Building, 840 12th St., Hammonton; register at <https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07eexi04a2301de90e&oseq=&c=&ch=>
- Sustainable Jersey Small Grants Program deadline: February 28, 2018 <http://www.sustainablejersey.com/grants-resources/sustainable-jerseysmall-grants-program/pseg-cycle/>
- Application Deadline, Natural Gas Vehicle Grant Program, April 2, 2018, information at <http://www.nj.gov/bpu/commercial/cng.html>

Respectfully submitted,
Vicky Binetti