

Teaneck Environmental Commission

Annual Report for 2018

Completed July 2019

INTRODUCTION

This report for 2018 was prepared in accordance with Township Ordinance Section 2-125 and NJSA 40:56 A-4 which requires the Environmental Commission (EC) to make not less than annual reports to the Township Council in writing. This report includes data collected in 2018 on site plan reviews. In this report, information is provided on the site plan reviews for 2018, conducted by the Commission as provided by the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) for Environmental Commissions which have an Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI), as does Teaneck. Data are shown on tables appended to this report and discussed below. Additional information contained in this report includes training, grants, projects worked on during the year, Commission budget and expenditures, goals for 2019, recognitions and acknowledgements.

The Commission provides advice to the Council via the Manager on environmental issues. It may conduct special Township-wide meetings to inform the public on specific environmental issues and get public input.

Below is a summary of the many activities performed by and monitored by the Commission during 2018.

SITE PLAN REVIEW (*Allowed as provided for by MLUL, if Environmental Commission has an Environmental Resource Inventory, which Teaneck has. Data is shown on two tables appended to this report, and discussed following.*)

1. Eighteen Zoning Board Permit Refusals were received for preview. Of that number, only two were deemed as needing full EC review should they proceed to Referral status. None were received for full EC review as Referrals. However most all with increased lot and/or building coverages were returned with a note to check for increased on-site stormwater retention opportunity, in light of the new stormwater regulations from NJDEP.

2. Five Planning Board permit refusals were received for preview. None were deemed as needing full EC review should such Refusal proceed to Referral Status.

In addition to the above, the EC reviewed the following:

- Application to NJDEP for flood hazard area verification for 836 Cedar Lane, Block 201 lot 2. EC sent letters to NJDEP.
- Application to NJDEP for major modification of a flood hazard area permit for Overpeck Park improvement, Block 3501 Lot1, and Block 3608 Lot 1. A letter was sent to NJDEP objecting to the application.
- Site remediation results for the Holuba property (former soap factory). A letter was sent to NJDEP regarding data submitted to NJDEP on CD-ROM but not to our Clerk's office.

[see list of site plans in Appendix]

COMMISSIONER TRAINING

Each commissioner had to complete the “Asking the Right Questions in Stormwater Review Training Tool (2015)” by June 15th, 2018, provided by the Township Engineer.

GRANTS

The commission assisted Girl Scout Jessica Baloolal with a grant proposal for her pollinator garden project in Bookstaver Park. It was granted to her in July 2018 by ANJEC, and she will be utilizing the funds for planting in late Spring '19.

STATUS OF 2018 GOALS

1. Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

- A version of the Complete Streets Ordinance was passed by Council in May 2017. It differs from the draft plan submitted by Rhodes, Kissileff and Chin in 2015 in that no set percentage of the total expenses is bound to be allocated towards Complete Streets specifications.
- Advocate for implementation of other plan goals (signage, street improvements) - No action

2. Assist Hackensack River Greenway Advisory Board

- Maintenance along the trail at FDU with vistas across from the benches - FDU has been clearing the vistas, the Greenway would like the vistas expanded.
- Improving the trail at Riverside Drive - it would be ideal to upgrade the trail to ADA handicap accessible, and it would benefit the senior center nearby greatly. Unfortunately frequent vandalism happens on that part of the Greenway, which needs to be addressed before money and effort are allocated.

3. Sustainability

- Styrofoam recycling: the EC has suggested to DPW and Township Manager that a collection bin be provided at the DPW, so it can be trucked to Foam Pack Industries in Springfield, NJ when filled by residents.
- Plastic bag fee ordinance was sent to Council in September 2015. The ordinance was passed in June 2017 to be implemented a year later, but it was not enforced in July 2018. Township awaiting NJ State action.
- The EC organized a design contest at Teaneck High School for a “Let’s Keep Teaneck Green!” logo design, to be printed on reusable bags, and handed out to residents at the time of the plastic bag fee ordinance implementation.
- NJ State Water Plan: propose the Water Conservation Ordinance, by Sustainable Jersey. The EC sent a letter to Council (July 2018) asking the Township to have our Town Engineer verify our EC concern and to advise of the residential landscape irrigation ordinance urged by NJDEP.
- Trash Collection Proposal: introduce public waste collection, minimizing the waste and traffic of multiple carriers serving the same streets, by presenting a bidding process for each of Teaneck’s eight collection zones, as well as submitting PAYT proposal to Council. Proposal was presented to the Council in November 2016.

- Leave the Leaves initiative / Lawn Maintenance Restrictions: an amendment to the Township's noise ordinance was submitted, to limit usage of leaf-blowers especially during the summer months. Also, produce a leaflet similar to the one of Englewood, which promotes using leaves as mulch instead of sweeping them into the streets.
- Meadowland Power Plant – a resolution, modelled on the one passed by numerous Bergen towns, was adopted by the Council, Teaneck is opposing the construction of the Power plant.
- At the request of the Mayor, a fire pit ordinance was drafted and presented to the Township Fire Marshall. No action so far.
- No-idling campaign was put into NJ law.

4. Recycling

For some 15 years, the EC had been tracking residential recycling categories (batteries, building materials, compostables, glass, aluminum, other metal, etc.) using data in the DPW Annual Report to NJDEP. With the occasion of China's cessation of accepting recyclables, the ability to sell such has dropped dramatically. Categories which previously provided income to the Township now cost the Township for removal.

Furthermore, EC access to DPW data seems more complicated (due to the fluctuating categories), and the Township Engineer / DPW are better enabled to provide Council (and the public) with reports on the efficacy of recycling and economic effects on the Township. While the EC will cease reporting on Township recycling numbers, it will remain aware of the topic through public media reports and articles. The EC will continue to support recycling, however an even more effective way to cut down on landfills is through reducing waste, and reuse of already existing materials.

5. Public events

- The Teaneck EC had a table at the Overpeck EarthFest event, organized by the Hackensack Riverkeepers in May.
- Participated in Township's "Arbor Day."

6. Stormwater Management

- Advocate and educate to reduce stormwater runoff: as stated under Commissioner Training above, each Commissioner had to complete the "Asking the Right Questions in Stormwater Review Training Tool (2015)," provided by the Township Engineer.
- Update Building Code. No action as it is not in EC purview.
- Work with Zoning Board and Planning Board, continuing through EC site plan review.

7. Trees and Parkland

- Tree Protection Ordinance for private trees – An ordinance, based on the Tenafly Private Tree Ordinance, was sent to the Shade Tree Advisory Board and the EC Council Liaisons, first in August '17, then in August '18. No response so far.
- Advocate for pedestrian access to Overpeck County Park from Teaneck – no action.
- "10 Minute Walk" initiative – Adopted by the Township. It will be incorporated into the OSRP.

The following information was received from Fran Wilson, Director of Public Works about Township Street Trees (no data on street trees removed by residents, or park trees removed by DPW):

2018: 0 trees planted, 205 removed (no budget)

2017: 0 trees planted, 202 removed

2016: ? trees planted, 273 removed

2015: 10 trees planted, 172 removed

2014: 0 trees planted, 231 removed

GOALS FOR 2019

1. Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

- Explore creation of steering committee on Complete Streets and the Master Plan.

2. Sustainability

- Advocate for Sustainability through proposed legislation and restart of the Advisory Board on Sustainability.
- Without a plastic bag ordinance, promote a (BYOB) Bring Your Own Bag campaign. Encourage retailers to provide reusable bags.
- Urge the Council to consider either transitioning to Township wide garbage collection, or to implement the competitive “Waste Collection Small Business Opportunity Plan” presented by the EC, which proposes eight (or more) collection zones with trash collectors to bid on contracts for each zone. Each street is served by one collector, and residents pay by number of bags or bins per collection. Waste is a problem world wide, and incentives are needed to reduce it.
- Partner with the business community to increase recycling and reduce plastic bag and Styrofoam use.
- Urge the Township to begin a recycling program for cans and bottles in all parks (especially Votee) and sports fields.
- Work with public and private schools towards Sustainable Jersey goals.
- Look at ways for Teaneck to shape New Jersey’s Clean Energy Future.
- While many of the Township building codes comply with Sustainable NJ recommendations, explore the potential for instituting additional green building codes. Advocate for Green Infrastructure. (Sustainable Jersey)
- Keep exploring opportunities for recycling, such as textile, and making sure that the Styrofoam recycling remains.

3. Site Plans

- Get site plan review on track with Planning Board and Zoning Board (and Building Department) so that the EC gets to review site plans it deems as needing full Commission review.

4. Stormwater Management

- Advocate and Educate to reduce stormwater runoff.
- Suggest known remedies for variances.
- Work with Zoning Board and Planning Board.

5. Trees and Parkland

- Assess advocating for some Tree Protection Ordinance for private trees, such as the one submitted to Council.
- Advocate for pedestrian access to Overpeck County Park from Teaneck .
- Participate in Arbor Day Celebration.

6. Open Space Preservation

• Advocate for a greater percentage of MOST funds to be used to preserve open space. Here are the reasons (as listed in ANJEC's Environmental Commissioners' Handbook): Open space serves a wide range of vital functions that contribute significantly to the quality of life:

- recreation (active or passive);
- water storage and flood retention;
- groundwater recharge;
- wildlife habitat;
- carbon sequestration;
- aesthetic and scenic values;
- farmland preservation;
- air and water purification;
- vegetation and species preservation; and
- microclimate control.

ANJEC reminds us that while development can generate revenue, it can also lead to costs exceeding that revenue.

- Encourage developers, builders, and residents to build smarter using porous paving, rainwater harvesting and rain gardens.

7. Outreach and Community Education

- 'Keep Teaneck Green' public campaign – write articles to be submitted to local newspapers. Also, obtain numbers demonstrating the high cost of leaf removal, and promote the initiative of a "Leave the Leaves" campaign with a leaflet.
- Expand outreach activities to Teaneck residents on Teanecknj.gov website and on social media.
- Work with other community and civic groups to increase awareness on all environmental issues.
- Participate in public activities such as the Hackensack Riverkeepers' EarthFest, Arbor Day, National Night Out, etc.

BUDGET FOR 2018 (idem for 2019)

	suggested by engineering dept.:	spent by EC:
- ANJEC dues and training	\$750	\$350
- ERI update	\$10,000	\$0 (EC will wait another 3 yrs)
Total:	\$10,750	\$350

PERSONNEL (end of term)

Bettina Hempel-Gilbert	Chair and Secretary	(June 30, 2020)
Philip Rhodes	Vice Chair, MOST representative	(June 30, 2021)
Don Daume	Site plan reviewer, drafts minutes, rep. to STAB, rep. to Preserve Rt 4 Greenbelt, alt. rep. to MOST	(June 30, 2021)
Karen Orgen	Representative to Planning Board	(June 30, 2021)
Roslyn Turner		(June 30, 2020)
Aryeh Meir		(June 30, 2019)
Paul Hutt		(June 30, 2019)
Peter Goldman	1st alternate, rep. to Hackensack River Greenway	(June 30, 2019)
Ken Hoffman	2nd alternate	(June 30, 2020)
Keith Kaplan	Council Liaison	(began July, 2018)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The EC acknowledges with gratitude the help of William Broughton, Township Manager, and Maureen Ince, Secretary of the Engineering Department, for keeping track of our files and preparing packets for each meeting. The EC also thanks Township Engineer, Farah Gilani, for sharing her time and expertise, as well as Fran Wilson, DPW Manager. The EC also thanks Keith Kaplan for serving as Environmental Commission liaison to the Township Council, and all members of the Council for their support of the Teaneck environment.

APPENDIX

Site Plan Review summary

Zoning Board # (2018)	Address	Block	Lot	Description	Coding per EC Checklist	Full EC "Official" Review
1	706 Camperdown Avenue	1601	11	New Proch, Deck, Drive, Walk, Portico	A2a, A7	
5	520 Palmer Avenue	2414	14	2 story + 2nd story addition, 2 A/Cs	A2a, A7, B6?	
7	654 Sunderland Road	1608	1	1 story + 2nd Fl addition, Portico, A/Cs	A2a,A7,B6?	
12	1290 Hastings Street	1718	20.02	1 story addition, Patio, Gen, A/C	A2a, A7	
13	123 Tryon Avenue West	5106	14	Convert Store to Self Storage	A2b, A7, B1	
17	557 South Forest	1611	6	2 story side + rear	A2a,A7	

	Drive			addition + Patios		
18	446 Warwick Avenue	1807	4	Expand basement w/ terrace above	A7,A2a	
21	484 Sunderland Road	1606	1	Side 2nd story w/ 2 story addition	A7, A2a	
24	1285 Trafalgar Street	1721	4	1 story rear addition, patio, deck + porch	A2a, B5, B6	
27	349 Cedar Lane	2603, 01	4	Convert interior exist bldg -Pet Hotel	A2a, A7, Trash ?	
28	589 Tilden Avenue	602	28	2 floors rear addition	A2a, B4,5,6	X
30	528 Churchill Road	1803	15	2 story addition, Driveway	A7, A2a, B5, B6	
31	513 Ogden Avenue	1813	12	2 story addition	A2a, A7,B5,6	
33	909 Sheffield Road	3905	6	1 story addition, rear + side	A7, A2a, B5,6	
35	1650 Palisade Avenue	5102	1	2 story + 1 story additions	A7, A2a, B1	
37	230 Park Avenue	3301	14	2 story addition, front + side	A2a, B4,5,6	X
38	1673 Irene Court	5510	5	Dormer + addition over garage	A2a, A7	
41	623 Winthrop Road	1804	1	New 2 1/2 Fl home, deck, A/Cs - remove existing house	A1, B4, B6	

Code
A
A1 - New construction on vacant lots
A2 - Alterations to existing buildings - a)same use b) different use
A3 - Replacement/conversion of existing buildings to another use
A4 - Antenna installation
A5 - Landfill cleaning and capping (Overpeck Park)
A6 - Subdivision
A7 - No environmental effect/no need for EC review (i.e. not reviewed)
A8 - Merge lots
B - Problems/Issues
B1 - No environmental impact (after review)
B2 - Parking inadequate
B3 - Sky glow and/or inadequate presentation of lighting plans
B4 - Crowding
B5 - Excessive lot coverage
B6 - Storm water run-off

Planning Board # (2018)	Address	Block	Lot	Description	Coding per EC Checklist	Full EC "Official" Review
3	780 Palisade Avenue	2506	5	Convert existing misc/ off bkdg to daycare	A2b, A7	
8	65 Irvington Road	5306	13	Subdivide, build new house	A6,A1, A7 Trees (3)	
16	1297 Dickerson Road	2103	31	Subdivide - transfer parcel	A7, A6	
19	336 Queen Anne Road	2309	4	Expand Café (Victoria's)	A2a, A7, B6?	
22	125 Ayers Court	5004	7	Demolish Garage, add parking	A2a, A7 12 Trees	

Code Same as above