

DATE: January 5, 2011  
TO: Township Committee  
FROM: Nelson Dittmar, Chair  
Cranford Environmental Commission  
RE: 2010 Annual Report

In accordance with the ordinance that established the Commission, this will serve as our annual report to the Committee. The Commission was comprised as follows:

Members: Nelson Dittmar, Chair	John Hrebin (Planning
Ann Darby	Board member)
Lynda Feder	Steven Jandoli
Donald Ehrenbeck	Matt Polsky

Alternate Members: Dave DesRochers and Daniela Shebitz

Associate Members: Carol Berns, William King, Ronald Margulis, Ana Pinto, Mary Reilly, and Mary Sudiak

Township Committee liaison: Mark Smith

We are very proud of our accomplishments this year. We think that, in a small way, they have enhanced the quality of life and the environment in Cranford. We are very grateful for your support. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Generally, we meet monthly to discuss matters relating to the environment, including recycling, and ways in which educational information can be distributed to the people of Cranford. On a regular basis, we review the potential environmental impact of site plans submitted to the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment, and provide comments to the Boards, as appropriate. We also review on an as-needed basis various legal notifications received under the requirements of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) regulations. Our major activities and accomplishments were as follows:

- In November, the Sustainable Jersey Program certified the Township as a Sustainable Community. In May 2009, the Township Committee passed a resolution stating that the Township wished to pursue local initiatives and actions that lead to this certification. Sustainable Jersey is a partnership of the League of Municipalities Mayors' Committee for a Green Future, the Municipal Land Use Center at the College of New Jersey, NJDEP, and the Board of Public Utilities (BPU). Over

320 communities in New Jersey have registered for the program, of which sixty- seven have been certified. The Green Team, formed under the leadership of Mary Reilly, completed seventeen actions under the program. These included organizing an energy audit of the Community Center, partnering with the Environmental Club at Union County College to hold a Green Fair at the College, presenting an environment-related lecture series at the Community Center, conducting a Mayor's wellness program, initiating a green business recognition program, installing a community garden at Walnut Avenue School with eight plots available for residents, creating a tree canopy goal, promoting the rain garden at Hanson Park, and creating the Rake for the Planet program, which encourages residents to rake leaves. Mary Reilly and Nelson Dittmar presented these accomplishments to the Township Committee in November. Mary, Nelson, Matt Polsky, Green Team member Gregg Spadaro, and Mayor Mark Smith received a plaque at an Awards Program luncheon honoring Sustainable Jersey Certified Municipalities held in Atlantic City on November 16.

- In January 2009, we launched a new web site, My Green Cranford. This contains information about the Commission's activities and serves as a resource guide for residents for issues relating to the environment, energy-savings ideas, and environmental events. The site has a photo gallery of wildlife seen in Cranford. There are also an events calendar and a resource page with links to helpful green web sites. Visitors have the option to sign up for the e-mail newsletter, which offers monthly tips and news. We have approximately 125 subscribers. We prepared and printed 500 postcards promoting the site that were distributed throughout the community. During the six months ended November 30, we had almost 4,000 visitors to the site.
- In February, Nelson Dittmar presented the goals of the Commission to the Township Committee at a workshop meeting and in December, Nelson reviewed the accomplishments for the year with the Committee.
- In 2008, with the support of the Township Committee, we became a Community Partner in the Clean Energy Program of the BPU. One of the programs is Clean Power Choice. It seeks to encourage more people to choose renewable energy as an energy choice. Another is the Change the World, Start With ENERGY STAR program, which encourages residents to take actions to save energy such as switching to compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) and purchasing ENERGY STAR qualified products. During this year, we sought to promote these programs with the following actions and results:
  - The ENERGY STAR pledge-program year starts on Earth Day in April. For the year ended in April 2010, we reached over 300% of our goal with savings of over 2.3 million pounds of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Over 230 people took the pledge. For the current year, we have a goal of 500 residents and 1,780,000 pounds of GHG emissions. As of the end of 2010, we had 81 individuals who had pledged, but we achieved 88 percent of the GHG goal.
  - We had a table at the Earth Day Fair at Kean College and at the Green Fair at Union County College at which we distributed literature about the Clean Energy programs and CFLs. The CFL distribution at the latter event qualified for a \$300 rebate to the Township from the Clean Energy Program.
  - At both of the above events and throughout the year, we collected 79 signatures of people who expressed interest in Refrigerator/Freezer Recycling

Program. Respondents received a \$50 cash incentive. We received a \$600 rebate from the Clean Energy Program.

- Ann Darby, Mary Reilly, and Ana Pinto attended workshops on community energy outreach programs sponsored by Sustainable Jersey and the Clean Energy Program. Nelson Dittmar participated in a webinar on the same topic.
  - Nelson Dittmar made a presentation to the Wednesday Morning Club about the Program and other energy and money-saving ideas.
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- In 2005, we began to organize meetings of officials from towns in the Rahway River watershed. Because of flooding and water-quality problems, the Commission decided to heighten the awareness of other towns along the river and introduce the concept of regional planning. During 2007, the Rahway River Association assumed the responsibility for these meetings. The Association designated the year as “2010: Discover the Rahway River.” Activities included watershed-wide cleanups held by many of the towns along the river and many educational programs and walks. In January, Steve Jandoli made a presentation about the Rahway River Greenway Plan that was prepared by a group of Rutgers graduate students at a meeting of the RRA.
  
  - In 2005, we drafted an ordinance, which was enacted by the Township Committee, adopting the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Rating Systems for certain construction in Cranford. These systems, developed by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC), use an approach that reduces the environmental impact of construction-related activities while producing meaningful savings to the owner. In 2008, the Mayor created a committee to implement LEED-EB (for existing buildings) as required by the ordinance. The committee consists of Mark Smith, Sandra Caceres-Cardenas, Steve Robertazzi, Kelli Glasgow (a LEED-certified architect), Mike DeChiaro (a LEED-certified professional), and Nelson Dittmar. It met one time during the year by itself and three times with the Conservation and Renewable Energy Task Force. In the latter part of 2009, we installed sensors in the Community Center to obtain temperature, light usage and other information on each room. The resulting data was used to determine an Energy Star Rating Number. The rating did not meet the minimum required by the LEED-EB prerequisites. Consequently, it was decided to take steps to remedy the situation. Using the recommendation of one of the members of the Task Force, the lighting was upgraded to more energy efficient bulbs throughout the facility. However, in order to meet the LEED-EB prerequisites, the HVAC system must be upgraded. This is pending at this time. The joint committees also reviewed the draft audit report for the Community Center and provided its comments to the auditor. Meetings will continue in 2011.
  
  - Nelson Dittmar, Matt Polsky, Dave DesRochers, and Mary Reilly attended meetings of the School District’s Environmental Education Committee. Some of our involvement with this committee included:
    - Mary Sudiak, a member of the Board of Education, and Lisa Hayeck, a CHS science teacher attended The Cloud Institute’s New Jersey Learns Leadership Training, using the strong recommendation of Matt Polsky. They have begun a sustainability education program that will include the schools, senior citizens, and the public.

- Dave DesRochers made a presentation about the Rake for the Planet Program mentioned below. As a result, the Board of Education approved a resolution supporting the program. Two memos were sent to the school community encouraging participation.
  - At other meetings, Nelson and Mary discussed the Green Team and the Sustainable Jersey program.
  - Mary Reilly has been working with the Committee to promote the anti-idling program. Its goal is to make parents more aware of the problem and to reduce automobile idling at the schools. Bloomingdale Avenue School was chosen in 2009 as the first school in the program. Signs were placed in the parking lot, and information and surveys were sent home with the students. The program was very successful. Forty more signs have been purchased and the Committee plans to expand the program to all schools next year.
- In 2009, we joined with the Jersey Central Arts Studio and the Cranford Community Center to cosponsor an art installation at the Community Center, which makes use of recycled materials. The “Flip Your Lid for Art” project involved the collection of recycled plastic lids and their threading on a series of long strings that were hung from the ceiling in the atrium as a temporary exhibit in January.
  - Ana Pinto, Mary Reilly, and Nelson Dittmar attended a meeting in January held by the Union County Improvement Authority (UCIA) to present their Renewable Energy Program. The goal of this program is to install solar panels on buildings in the County. Mary and Nelson met with the Township Committee to discuss this program. The Township did not apply to this program, but the Library Board did and, in July, they were informed that their building had been accepted into the program. Nelson Dittmar and the Library Director, John Malar organized for Ryan Scerbo, the attorney for UCIA to attend a Township Committee in August at which Mr. Scerbo made a presentation concerning the program. Subsequently, the Committee adopted a resolution approving Cranford’s participation.
  - Matt Polsky, Mary Reilly, and Nelson Dittmar met with May Li, a solar products consultant, in November 2009, concerning the possibility of installing solar panels on one or more of the Township’s buildings. May gathered information with the help of the Assistant Engineer and the Director of the Pool and made a presentation to the Township Committee in January recommending the installation of solar panel on the pool building. It was later decided that the condition of the roof of the pool was not good enough to support this installation.
  - In January, we organized a presentation to the Township Committee by a representative of PSE&G concerning their energy audit program. The Committee approved an audit agreement with PSE&G. Subsequently, however, PSE&G withdrew from the program. Coincidentally, we decided to pursue an audit of the Community Center in connection with the BPU’s Local Government Energy Audit Program. We prepared a resolution, which the Committee adopted, authorizing the submission of an application to the Program. We prepared and submitted the registration form to the Program. Upon approval, we prepared and submitted a Request for Proposal to the five audit firms authorized by the Program. We reviewed the proposals and selected the firm and with

7the approval of the Mayor, we submitted the contract to the Program for its approval. Upon approval, a meeting was held with the auditor, Steve Robertazzi (Director of Parks and Recreation), and Nelson Dittmar. Then, the audit was performed, a report was prepared, reviewed, and approved. After a final meeting with the auditor, the report was issued in December. The report contains many energy and money-savings recommendations, which must now be approved and implemented.

- In January, Nelson Dittmar, Warren Hehl, and Wayne Rozman met with John Pallitto of the Township's recycling company to discuss the possibility of recycling Types #3-7 plastics. It was decided to proceed by placing a container at the Conservation Center. This was done during the summer. We publicized the program by issuing a press release to the newspapers, placing flyers around town, putting a notice on My Green Cranford, and distributing a Community Go Green flyer through the School System. The program appears to be a success.
- This autumn we again urged residents to forgo the use of powered leaf blowers and rake leaves on two designated Saturdays. The Rake For The Planet program was endorsed in a resolution by the Township Committee. We pointed out the benefits of raking in flyers that were posted around town and in a press release, which appeared in local newspapers.
- We initiated a project to educate the community about how to identify and control invasive plant species. Led by an Eagle Scout candidate, Kevin Swan, Boy Scouts removed invasive plants, such as Japanese knotweed and garlic mustard, from Hanson Park. Kevin designed and distributed to all homeowners living along the Rahway River a brochure describing the invasive species and what could be done about them.
- Mary Reilly, Mary Sudiak, and Nelson Dittmar met with Bob Carfagno, School System Business Officer, in February to discuss the possibility of placing solar panels on the new roofs that will be installed in the summer. Mr. Carfagno filed an application for all of the schools in the system with the UCIA solar program noted above, but it was not successful.
- Nelson Dittmar was elected President of the Board of Trustees of ANJEC in October. Nelson presented a section at one of ANJEC's Environmental Commissioners Courses on How Effective Commissions Operate. Mary Reilly attended one of these courses. Nelson and Mary attended the annual ANJEC Congress. Mary conducted one session on dealing with differing opinions at the Congress.
- Mary Reilly made a presentation to a Girl Scout troop about energy conservation and performing energy audits. Mary also made a presentation on energy conservation to the Sisterhood at Temple Beth El and a presentation to the Rotary Club on Green Team initiatives.
- In November 2006, Mayor Aschenbach signed the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Cranford is now one of over 1040 towns nationwide, including 105 in New Jersey, to sign the Agreement.

- In 2002, we launched an Environmental Commission web page as part of Cranford.com. The page, which is in addition to the My Green Cranford web site described above, includes information about the Commission including its minutes, environmental information and tips, and links to other environmental Internet web sites.
- We reviewed thirty-one proposed site plans and provided our comments on such proposals to either the Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Adjustment, as appropriate.

Finally, our budget for 2010 was \$2,100. Our total expenditures were \$1,778, which included \$670 for annual dues for ANJEC, \$400 of fees relating to our Internet web site and \$550 to purchase signs and sign posts for the anti-idling program. As noted above, our participation in certain of the Clean Energy Programs earned the Township \$1,100 in awards.

cc: Marlena Schmid, Township Administrator  
Sandy Batty, ANJEC Executive Director