

**FRANKLIN LAKES ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
MINUTES – June 15, 2015**

**In Attendance:** Carole Holden, Larissa Symbouras, Sue Barbuto, Don Scine, Skip Williamson, Gary Sheppard, and Moira Murphy. Green Team members Bob Clark and Liz Morris. Council Liaison Ann Swist.

**Absent:** Omar ElRafei

The June meeting of the Franklin Lakes Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:05 p.m. and held in the municipal building on Monday, June 15, 2015. The minutes of the previous meeting were not read, but were approved as written.

**Chair's Report:**

Carole has been working on 5 areas of recertification that Sustainable Jersey wanted the town to redo and/or update, as the information provide in the past had expired. The current certification is good until June 2016. The one area giving Carole a lot of trouble is updating the ERI, which cost the town at least \$12,000 when it was initially done. Carole is trying to find out what exactly Sustainable Jersey wants, as when she approached Princeton Hydro, who did the original ERI, they came back with a bill for \$3,200 to update the report, which was just completed 5 years ago. An ERI is supposed to be good for 10 years.

Greg & Carole decided that Carole will have meeting with Eileen Bolan and see if they can't come up with plan to address it without having to pay \$3,200, and find out how much Boswell would charge for the update. There are 8-10 areas of the ERI that Sustainable Jersey wants updated, and a question arose whether we can pare down to fewer. Costs will need to be compared, as Boswell will charge per hour.

Sue commented that there have been a LOT of massive changes in this town in the past 5 years, so the updates might make sense.

Gary suggested approaching the town for a budget, then returning to Princeton Hydro to see what they can do within that predesignated budget.

The plan is still for Carole to talk to Eileen first, and Ann believes that Eileen would offer a recommendation without charge.

Gary suggested approaching Princeton Hydro with a proposal for a reduced initial cost, with a further 10-year contract for yearly updates, which could then just be a line item in the town's budget.

Discussion was held as to the purpose of Sustainable Jersey certification. Carole explained that it helps with grants, and that the town did receive one such grant, although

not another to make the nature preserve wheelchair accessible. It's also a bragging point, and puts the town in a more favorable category. Sue suggested that with the recertification we could be more aggressive in going for grants, but that we'd need to have the manpower for projects. We could write more grants, and probably should be writing more.

Carole suggested that she would talk to Eileen first, identify two or three points to update, then go back to Princeton hydro with those few and a promise to go back to them when the report is 10 years old to redo/update it, to perhaps keep the project cost effective that way.

Discussion was had as to the value of an ERI, and Don explained that it's something good for the planning board to look at, with many areas in it the town can use for planning purposes, but acknowledged that our planning board doesn't tend to use it. Don emphasized that they should.

Companion Animal Management Pledge as a part of Sustainable Jersey recertification: The pledge says to enforce animal control & rabies statutes, work to improve animal cruelty statutes, cat licensing, increase the town's percentage of licensed dogs & cats, educate the public, identify alternatives to euthanasia of adoptable pets, increase the capacity of shelters, etc. We can educate on spaying & neutering & not relinquishing animals for no reason. Then we can move beyond the pledge onto the plan, which is more points.

Over our off month, it was suggested that each member of the EC researches the Sustainable Jersey website and finds an action that fits and that they can promote/work on and come back with a plan in August.

The point was raised that septic systems, like those existing in Franklin Lakes, are much better than sewers – and the question raised as to whether this can fit a sustainable jersey action.

Cleanup day: Carole got in touch with Harriet Sugarman to try to piggyback on their date to get a better turnout next year.

### **Member Reports:**

**Pilgrim Pipeline, Water** – Michael – N/A

**Public Education and Outreach** – Sue – The Green Film Festival committee had its wrap up meeting, and found that close to 50 people attended the first film; after that around 35 attended each. Next year will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual, and the committee is already researching films for next year. The committee is going to try Sunday afternoons in April rather than weekday evenings in May next year to see if attendance picks up, and have some child-friendly films.

Liz: We had more publicity before the festival this year, but the numbers weren't significantly different from the prior year. She pointed out that the committee did more to get the message out & it didn't seem to have an impact. She is going to do eblast to everyone who came with questions such as "how did you hear about the festival?" to find out the best way to push publicity. Since the people who attended are already involved, we need to determine how to widen that and get more.

It was pointed out that the FLOW festival was cost effective because expenses were shared between three towns – about \$150/town, which are donating the videos that were purchased to BCCLS system for more people to see.

The committee is also looking at how to better encourage the film contest from kids – there were two submitted this year, one last year. It was suggested that maybe there's something on Sustainable Jersey on involving schoolkids.

Last speaker of film fest doing class on permaculture in Vermont if anyone's interested.

**Energy** – Skip – Nothing to report

**Recycling** – Liz & Don – We should be very happy that we didn't move toward single stream recycling like some towns did, as it's causing major problems in the system. Three plants have shut down, one facility is on the verge of shutting down. In the cross contamination of glass with paper, glass is embedded in paper & they can't make more paper out of it, so it's garbage. The participation level gets higher with single stream, but it's not a proven method.

John Hopkins did a 5-year study, and found that over 30% of our food is still thrown out in the U.S. We generate 4.3 lbs of garbage per person per day, which went up 1.6 lbs. Over 60% still goes to landfills. Over 90% of NJ's waste leaves NJ to other landfills, etc. A vote upcoming in Trenton about keeping food waste separate from other trash.

An eblast is coming out tomorrow or Wednesday about recycling, which returns to Robby the Raccoon as a recycling mascot.

April recycling was the highest it's been in 3 years.

The town website now has a performance dashboard, and now the garbage and recycling area has information in that section, including graphs regarding recycling and garbage rates.

We've now started tracking construction tonnage, as now Liz finally has someone who understands what needs to be done & why. Construction tonnage counts into tonnage amounts for recycling, a benefit to the town. DON commented that we MAKE the garbage, it doesn't just happen. Once you combine food waste with your plastic fork & straw & the paper napkin, you create it all as garbage

rather than some being compostable. Discussion was held as to possible ways to remedy this and encourage composting.

Liz: There's a recycling award from the Association of New Jersey Recyclers; you can nominate a business in your town for one of these awards. We have an excellent example of good recycling habits in Stop & Shop. They have a guy who buys their waste meat, they compost, they have a plastic bag recycling program. The manager has provided a bunch of reusable bags for the EC to hand out, they send plastic bags to be made into plastic benches. Sustainable NJ also has an awards system we can look into after this initial one.

We're no longer collecting plastic bags as a town because people were using it as plain trash.

Recycling bins – we're selling 10-15/month, and it's become self-propelled as an endeavor.

**Planning Board** – Gary – Nothing to report

**Environmental Contaminants/Bees** – Larissa – Larissa has received a response regarding setting up a date with the scout leaders to see the hives, but there's still discussion as to a specific date and time that will work.

### **Old Business**

N/A

### **New Business**

Sue – The Northern NJ Sierra Club wants to do a beginning of the year meeting talking about recycling. They want to come to one of our meetings & incorporate our knowledge into their meeting & collaborate.

### **Action Issues**

Town Fair: September 19 - Larissa, Liz, and Sue working on the theme and booth

Ecotips: each of us should be able to take something we've discussed and write a paragraph to contribute.

Don is going to update us on trends in recycling.

The next meeting is set for August 17, at 7 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Larissa Symbouras