

Lambertville Environmental Commission
Annual Report
2018

The Environmental Commission (EC) saw significant membership changes in the end of 2017, when all but two of the existing Commissioners left the organization and five new residents began attending the meetings and later became members. Shortly after the beginning of 2018, Cyndy Jahn was approved as the new EC Chairperson, Matthew J. Nogier was approved as EC Secretary, and Gina Fischetti approved as EC liaison to the City Planning Board.

- Gina Fischetti (standing member)
- Matt Nogier (standing member)
- Cyndy Jahn (new)
- Elizabeth Peer (new)
- Kelly Klapper (new)
- Mark Donlon (new)
- Lauren Kovacs (new)

In early February, Cindy Ege requested that the EC assist in completing the City's Sustainable Jersey application with the help of Keziah Groth-Tuft, a paid assistant hired expressly to compile and submit the City's application. The City later applied for and was granted Silver status.

The EC also began discussing measures to expand the Third Can program to all residents and businesses. This is an ongoing initiative that we look forward to implementing in 2019-2020. A revised "Tree Ordinance," separate from the Shade Tree Commission Ordinance, had been drafted at some time previously and the EC made comments on the existing draft. In August, a request was made by the EC to partner with the Shade Tree Commission on development of the Shade Tree and proposed Tree ordinances. An ordinance to ban fracking in the City was discussed and later passed.

In March, new members Mark Donlon, Kelly Kappler, and Lauren Kovacs were sworn in as Commissioners. At that time, a partner project with SEUZ Water to remove the invasive species Water Chestnut (*Trapa natans*) from the Swan Creek Reservoir was discussed; the project was developed and successfully implemented in June under the management of Matthew in coordination with SUEZ representatives. The event was well attended and made significant progress in controlling the Water Chestnut.

The EC was approached by the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) about reinstating the EC's membership in their group. As ANJEC provides valuable support and training, the EC made the decision to rejoin. Training was scheduled for 2019.

The EC reestablished contact with the City's social media manager and began occasionally posting content to Facebook for the first time since the previous Commissioners departure. Later in the year, Kelly took the lead on the Communications Subcommittee and developed a Twitter and Instagram account.

In June, the EC began researching the feasibility of drafting City legislation regarding prohibition of plastic bags prior to New Jersey legislation expected to pass during the summer. The City later passed the Single Use Plastics Ban in September and goals for education and outreach were discussed. During June, the EC also discussed the problem of dog waste on the canal and the possibility of placing additional trash cans on City property near the canal access points.

Starting in July, a number of meetings were spent brainstorming, refining, and formally goal-setting for the near and long terms.

Twice during the year, Lester Myers, Jr., Public Works Director, was invited to and attended EC meetings to discuss the City's waste management program status, goals, and coordination with the EC for outreach. At the earlier meeting, labels for compost and recycling cans were discussed to discourage pedestrians from placing their waste in the wrong cans; this idea was abandoned due to cost and the belief that public education would be a more holistic solution. Lauren began working on an outreach program at that time. In the fall, the EC began discussing possible outreach items that could be funded through the Public Works Department.

In late summer, a goal of providing rain barrels to residents was formalized. Lauren organized a rain barrel building event for March 2019 in partnership with the AmeriCorps NJ Watershed Ambassador for the Central Delaware, Fairfax Hunter. Lauren also set a goal to educate the community about invasive plant species and scheduled guest speaker Michael VanClef of the NJ Invasive Species Strike Team to present to the community; the speaker fee was donated by her employer, Spiezle Architectural Group.

Additional items that were brought to the EC's attention and still under review are the US Army Corps of Engineers proposal to build a floodwall along the canal in the north end of the City, the Shade Tree Commission's desire to apply for tree seedlings for distribution to residents, review of future affordable housing plans.