

DATE: January 2, 2019
TO: Township Committee
FROM: Nelson Dittmar, Chair
Cranford Environmental Commission
RE: 2018 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	Steven Jandoli
Carol Berns	Zach McCue
Dave Coughlin	Kathleen Murray (Planning Board member)
Ronald Margulis	

Alternate Members: Ann Darby and Patricia Pavlak

Associate Members: Daniel Aschenbach, Michael Bond, , William King, Frank Klapinski, Edward O'Malley, Ana Pinto, David Pringle and Mary Sudiak

Township Committee liaison: Mary O'Connor

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, some of which are parts of programs commenced in prior years, were as follows:

- In March, I met with the Township Committee to discuss the goals for 2018 and our accomplishments for 2017. Among the goals discussed were our recommendation to install charging stations for electric vehicles, the Committee's pledge to reduce impervious surface and ways to accomplish that, the recommendation to purchase more fuel-efficient Township vehicles, and our My Green Cranford website. See below for discussion of some of these items.

- We had numerous discussions during the course of the year about the possibility of installing electric car charging stations. Although this has not happened yet, we continue to support this project. Don Jones met the Rahway Environmental Commission about what Rahway is doing. Nelson Dittmar and Don Jones met with Electric Vehicle Coordinator of Secaucus concerning how that city deals with the charging stations they have installed. In April, we passed a resolution to join ChargeEVC, an organization that among other things supports the installation of charging stations.
- During the year, we worked with the Downtown Management Corporation (DMC) to install recycling bins in downtown Cranford. The first of these was placed in Eastman Plaza. We also prepared a flyer entitled “19 Ways To Keep Cranford’s Businesses Plastic Free in 2019” that the DMC sent to businesses in Town.
- In February, we heard a presentation from GEC Communities, Inc. on Carbon Credits. GEC proposed to calculate the town’s carbon footprint as measured by looking at the impact of vehicle fleets (e.g., Public Works, Police, Fire, and EMT) and town-run buildings. GEC would perform a free analysis of Cranford’s carbon footprint. In May, GEC made a presentation to the Township Committee. Action on this matter is pending.
- In September 2014, using a \$2,000 grant from Sustainable Jersey, the Commission led other community members including Township Committee Commissioners, Master Gardeners of Union County, Hanson Park Conservancy members, Boy Scout Troop 80, and Viridian volunteers in the installation of a rain garden on the front lawn of the Municipal Building. Over 80 plants were installed. We continued to maintain the garden in 2018 and made new plantings, as necessary. Visit the Facebook page “Cranford Rain Garden” for photo, video, and other related content.

The garden was designed to receive runoff from the Municipal Building roof. This runoff previously discharged directly to the street by PVC pipe. By disconnecting this discharge and routing it through the rain garden, this project demonstrated an effective and attractive solution to urban runoff, a solution that is especially needed in our flood-prone town.
- In the past few years, we have been working with the Township Committee to implement its pledge to reduce impervious surface. During 2015, Commission member Alyssa Frediani performed a survey of all Township-owned properties to determine the amount of impervious surface. In 2017, the Township reduced impervious surface by including gravel areas in parking lots that were being repaved. In 2018, the Township removed the paved parking lot across from the Roosevelt School site. We continued to believe that this is an important project.
- In January 2017, Rifat Salim of the Army Corp of Engineers and several of his colleagues made a presentation to the Commission concerning the Rahway River Flood Risk Management Study. In February 2017, we submitted a comment letter to the Corp. We continue to monitor this.
- In May 2016, a team of volunteers from the Commission, Township Commissioners O’Connor and Giblin, Friends of Roosevelt Park and volunteers from Viridian created a Monarch Butterfly habitat in Roosevelt Park. There was an educational program with live butterflies and caterpillars provided by Stacy Nick. The team replanted milkwood

wildflower seeds in January 2017 in order to re-establish the core habitat for Monarch butterflies. We continued to maintain the garden during 2018.

- In 2013, we organized and sponsored a presentation to the Planning and Zoning Boards by Christopher Obropta, Ph.D., P.E., a Water Resource Specialist from Rutgers Cooperative Extension on Stormwater Management and Regulations. Among other things, the training focused on helping municipal officials understand the questions they should be asking of applicants to ensure that they are complying with the stormwater regulations. The two-hour session was recorded by TV 35 and, in 2016, copies were given to Planning and Zoning Board members for their viewing. New Board members are required to watch the recording of this presentation.
- To educate the community concerning flood-related issues, in 2012, we produced a four-page leaflet entitled Stormwater Run-off Impacts and Management, and purchased the Benefits of Trees brochure published by the International Society of Arboriculture. In 2013, we printed a brochure “1,000 Rain Gardens in the Rahway River Watershed,” which was prepared by ANJEC. We distributed these during the year, and made them available on our website.
- At our suggestion, the Cranford Public Library again had a special display in April, in honor of Earth Day, of environment-related books and DVDs. Some of the books were donated by us to the Library in prior years.
- Working with the Chamber of Commerce and the Green Team, in 2011, the Commission developed a Green Business Recognition program to recognize local businesses for taking sustainability actions, i.e., those that benefit the environment while being economically beneficial. One-hundred businesses have been certified as green businesses. Cranford is one of a small number of communities in New Jersey to have such a program. These businesses have demonstrated sustainability practices such as energy efficiency, recycling, minimizing or composting waste, and fair trade and socially-responsible product sourcing.
- Our web site www.mygreencranford.org, launched in January 2009, contains information about the Commission’s activities and serves as a community resource guide for issues relating to the environment, energy-savings ideas, and environmental events. The site was redesigned in 2016 and is updated monthly. At its annual Congress in October 2012, the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) awarded our Commission one of its Environmental Achievement Awards for the development and content of our website.
- In 2014, we expanded our community outreach by creating a Facebook page, My Green Cranford. By the end of this year, we had over 321 followers.
- The Rahway River Watershed Storm Water Advisory Board was formed in February 2013 by Dan Aschenbach. The Board has members from the communities in the Watershed. Carol Berns and Frank Klapinski are members of the Board.
- We are working on a project to educate the Community on the benefits of installing pervious pavement driveways.

- 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 consisted of the Assistant Township Engineer, Steve Robertazzi, Kelli Glasgow (a LEED-certified architect), Mike DeChiaro (a LEED-certified professional), and Nelson Dittmar. We have not met for over three years. 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 Renewable Energy Task Force, the lighting was upgraded to more energy-efficient bulbs throughout the facility. We hope to start meeting again in 2019.
- Nelson Dittmar continued to serve as Past President of the Board of Trustees of ANJEC.
- We reviewed fifty-eight proposed site plans and provided our written comments to either the Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Adjustment, as appropriate.

Finally, our budget for 2018 was \$3,500. Our total expenditures were \$815 which included \$675 for annual dues for ANJEC, and \$100 for membership in Charge EVC.

cc: Jamie Cryan, Township Administrator
Jennifer Coffey, ANJEC Executive Director