

## 2020 Environmental Commission Report to Mayor & Borough Council

### Atlantic Highlands, NJ

**Regular members:** James Krauss, Chair, France Karras, Larry Goldberg, Paul Wright, Linda Peng-Grooters, Ellen O'Dwyer-Woods

**Alternate members:** Donald Gates, Blake Deakin

**Planning Board members:** John McGoldrick, Brian Dougherty (alternate)

**Council Liaison:** Jon Crowley

It was an unusual year. The January and February meetings were held in person in Borough Hall. March and April meetings were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Meetings for the balance of the year were conducted virtually through use of ZOOM software managed by Council Member Lori Hohenleitner, except for the October meeting which did not occur because the ZOOM link was defective.

Lenape Woods - Steward Blake Deakin monitored the condition of the woods and reported to the EC on a regular basis. Blake removed several downed trees from the trails and did some trail clearing during the year. Blake pursued a grant for trail signage and beautification. The grant was awarded.

Waterfront - Steward Linda Peng-Grooters monitored the Borough's waterfront and reported to the EC on a regular basis. The Spring Clean Ocean Action beach sweep was cancelled due to the pandemic. Brian Dougherty served as the Beach Captain for the COA beach sweep in town on October 24.

Bayshore Watershed Council - On a rotating basis, members of the EC attended the meetings and reported back to the EC.

Monmouth County Environmental Council - France Karras, an EC member and a county council member, reported to the EC on a regular basis, as well as on her membership on the Naval Station Resiliency Project advisory board.

McConnell Tract - Monitored the litigation to overturn the planning board's approval of development on the site. Passed a resolution urging acquisition of the property for the purpose of creating a public waterfront park. Monitored the negotiations with the Borough, the citizens group and the developer subsequent to the litigation.

Hudson Springs - Monitored Princeton Hydro inspection and recommendations for repair. Recommended that the Borough offer the property to Monmouth County and/or pursue grants to fund the repair proposal.

Plastics - In conjunction with the implementation of the plastics ordinance, distributed reusable bags at Foodtown on January 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

New Jersey Natural Gas Remediation - Many Mind Creek - In response to a resident's concerns about the start of a new phase of the remediation and the removal of trees and vegetation, recommended that the Borough Engineer review the resident's concerns.

Open Space Acquisition - At the request of the Open Space Committee, reviewed a proposed donation of land contiguous to Lenape Woods in honor of Paul Boyd.

Stormwater Ordinance - Ellen O'Dwyer Woods worked with the Borough Engineer and Administrator on state mandated revisions to the Borough's stormwater ordinance.

Arborist Ordinance - Reviewed proposed ordinance requiring an arborist's review of trees planned to be removed in conjunction with road work. Recommended that the ordinance be adopted.

Ongoing issues - Monitored and discussed various issues including the Raritan Bay pipeline proposal, proposed county recycling plant, butterfly garden, temporary suspension of plastic bag ordinance enforcement, proposed flood ordinance revisions and possible St Agnes acquisition.