

MINUTES
HOPE TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION and GREEN TEAM
May 19, 2015

The meeting was called to order by the Vice Chairman, Cathie LaBar

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT:

The secretary read the "Open Public Meetings Act"
Under the provisions of the "Open Public Meetings Act", adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by publishing notice in the Express Times and the Star Gazette on February 5 and 6, 2015, respectively, and by posting notices in the Hope Post Office and on the Township Bulletin Board. .

Present at this meeting were: Vice Chair Cathie LaBar and members: Ellen Benoit, Virginia Caballero, Betsy Peterson, Evan Rupff and Jennifer Wallace. Absent were members: John Lucas, Patty Maertens and Chairman Monica Sobon

MINUTES The minutes of the meeting of, April 21,2015 have been tabled until the June meeting in light of the roundtable discussion planned for this meeting with representatives from Sustainable Jersey and neighboring municipalities.

At this time, Vice Chair, Cathie LaBar introduced the Sustainable Jersey representatives, Randy Solomon and Lauren Skowronski and turned the meeting over to them.

Solomon began by explaining that he was one of the founders and is currently the director of Sustainable Jersey. He also noted that Lauren Skowronski is the project director for community engagement. He explained that small towns can pool their resources / work together to get Sustainable Jersey points toward certification. He also mentioned that regional hubs are being created to help townships share ideas and resources.

At this point, he asked everyone to go around the table, introduce themselves and explain their connection or experience with sustainability. The townships of Frelinghuysen, Liberty, Belvidere, Knowlton and Hope were represented.

Solomon explained the process involved in coming up with the Sustainable Jersey Certification Program. He noted that it took two years of study and debate to come up with the program that is in place now. He added that it takes 150 points to become certified at the Bronze level. The projects that are proposed for certification have been tried and tested. Some programs are no longer in place and new programs have been instituted. The projects are developed to help municipalities sustain their quality of life over the long term.

Solomon continued explaining that there is no charge to join, this is a volunteer effort and there are grants available in \$2,000, \$10,000 and \$20,000 amounts. He added that there are multiple grant cycles throughout the year. He also noted that approximately \$800,000 in grant money has been given out between the schools program and the municipal program. These grants are privately funded and there is a need to prove, to those funding the grants, that the work is being done.

Solomon then went through the steps that municipalities must take to become certified. He made the group aware that Sustainable Jersey is at a point where municipalities who certified initially are up for recertification and he noted that 95% of those towns have chosen to recertify. At this point, Solomon pointed out that some of the items that the municipalities had initially gotten credit for, such as energy audits, do not need to be redone, the towns will get credit for them again, but some items, such as green fairs need to be done again in order to gain those credits.

A lengthy discussion was held during which time, the representatives from neighboring municipalities let the Sustainable Jersey representatives know of their problems and concerns. The following items were brought up and discussed during that discussion:

- Solomon noted that in some municipalities the Environmental Commission IS the Green Team and that's OK, everyone is working with a limited number of volunteers.
- Smaller municipalities seem to be penalized when it comes to some of the projects. The suggestion was presented that perhaps Sustainable Jersey could consider basing the requirements for certain projects on the percentage of the population as opposed to just a specific number.
- Small municipalities can band together to work on a project. Points awarded are the same for the project whether the municipality is seeking certification or recertification.
- Sustainable Jersey will need assurance (read: proof) that each municipality is contributing to the event in measurable ways, in the case where two or more municipalities are working together to attain points.
- Green Fairs, Film Showings, Healthy Eating / Farmer's Markets are the types of projects that municipalities can work together on, creating larger events, to garner points.

At this time, Skrowonski asked LaBar to give examples of the types of projects that Hope completed to attain their certification. LaBar showed examples of the items that the commission gave to residents along with informational inserts explaining each project. The secretary noted that each project was introduced, annually, at the appreciation dinner held at the beginning of the year. Each person attending the dinner (numbering approximately 150) was presented with the project information and took home the giveaway. After that, the project was promoted and the item given away to all residents throughout the year. The secretary also noted that the items that pertained to reducing/reusing/recycling were purchased with the Township's Recycling Tonnage Grant money. LaBar also noted that our 2nd annual Green Fair was held this year on

April 12th. Letters of invitation were sent out to surrounding municipalities about joining the effort but the commission received little or no response. She added that the next Green Fair would be held on April 8th of next year if anyone were interested in participating. At the end of this presentation, LaBar presented Solomon and Skrowonski with an insulated, reusable bag filled with the items that the Environmental Commission and Green Team had created.

At this time, Skrowonski reviewed the relatively new concept of the Hubs. She explained that in some counties, the Green Teams are sending representatives to meet approximately 4 times a year to share their experiences and their resources. Some Hubs are even hosting events that are open to the public. Skrowonski added that there is some financing available for speakers for events such as these.

Shrowonski then introduced the concept of “Base Camp” and interactive online platform through which towns can communicate to share ideas and resources. She added that she would contact each person present at this meeting by email and set them up on Base Camp.

ADJOURNMENT There being no further business before the commission, a motion was made by LaBar, seconded by Wallace to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Gabel

Linda Gabel, secretary