

LIVINGSTON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
2016 ANNUAL REPORT



TO: Livingston Township Council and Township Manager
FROM: Gary Schwartz, Past Chair, Livingston Environmental Commission (LEC)
DATE: January 17, 2017

A. MEMBERS

The following individuals were members of the LEC during 2016. Attendance is noted at every meeting and recorded in the meeting minutes by the assigned Corresponding Secretary:

Gary Schwartz (Chair) - Resigned end of 2016, 11 years in service
Art Altman (Vice Chair) - Resigned end of 2016, 6 years in service
Walter LeVine (Treasurer)
Norman Gudema (Secretary)
Pearl Hwang (Correspondence Secretary)
Lauren Tabak-Fass (Member)
Dawn Spango (Alternate 1) - Resigned September 12, 2016
Bob Hunter (Alternate 2)
Al Anthony (Town Council Liaison)
Sam Ratner (Planning Board Liaison)

B. COMMITTEE PROJECTS

1. **Orchard Hill Trail** - LEC has been the driving force in envisioning and coordinating the effort in making Orchard Hill Park accessible to the public. The Livingston Boy Scouts troop was first to clean up and create a nature path through the Orchard Hill Park. The Livingston Public Works Department then cleared more original nature trails, installed wood mulch, lined the edge of the path with fallen tree trunks, and rope banisters along the Heritage School steep slope entryway to the trail. The LEC provided funding for purchasing and installing three (3) kiosk communication bulletin boards at the entries of the Orchard Hill Trails, one at the Community Center parking lot, one near Heritage Middle School, and one at the Hillside Avenue site frontage. The Township Engineer affixed the Orchard Park trails map on each of the three kiosks enclosed bulletin boards. A “ribbon cutting” event was held on December 19, 2016 with township officials, LEC members Gary Schwartz, Sam Ratner and Bob Hunter. Future Orchard Hill Park development projects and activities being considered and planned for the purpose of engaging and disseminating such topics including, but not limited to, wildlife, natural preserves, eco-gardens and ecosystems

information to the public, and student poster design contest to create a larger trail map for the kiosks.

2. **Tree Ordinance amendments** - Per the request of the Zoning Officer, Marty Chiarolanzio, LEC has reviewed and discussed a list of suggested changes to the Tree Ordinance in order to clarify the requirements. LEC has documented our responses and recommendations as well as the section of the ordinance that will be affected. The proposed changes were discussed via meeting with Peter Klein of the Planning Board, as well as sent a copy to the the Chair of the Zoning Board. The final compiled responses were sent back to the Zoning Officer and the Township Attorney. However, the draft amended ordinance did not address several critical concerns raised by the Zoning Officer, therefore, the LEC awaits Marty Chiarolanzio to specifically provide a confirmation that the revised draft ordinance is to his satisfactory prior to issuance to the Town Council for adoption.
3. **Bamboo Ban Ordinance** - At the requests of concern residents, LEC has researched and prepared a Bamboo Ban ordinance to the Livingston Town Council for review and approval.
4. **Green Brochure** - At the suggestion of Councilman Shawn Klein, LEC has compiled a best practice brochure to advise residents to consider a more sustainable material selections and design when renovating or building their homes. These would include items that are more high-tech, efficient, and could have long term money saving benefits. Some of the suggested areas of considerations including but not limited to: roofs, windows, insulation, solar, energy star appliances, LED lighting, low water consumption toilets, wood from sustainable sources, solar water heater, electric vehicle garage plug-in outlet, solar-tube, alternative energy sources, and construction tips. LEC has been researching and compiling reliable sources to include some basic tips and reference links for homeowners to consider. The next step is to design the graphics for the trifold and develop content for future website pages. Walter LeVine and Lauren Tabak-Fass are leading the effort.

C. COMMITTEE LIAISON EFFORTS

1. **Memorial Park Master Plan Advisory Committee** - Gary Schwartz and Walt LeVine as alternate member serve on the Memorial Park Master Plan Advisory Committee. Several meetings were held. LEC has submitted extensive comments in February 2016 to the consultant, in response to the draft Memorial Park Master Plan dated 12/23/2015. No further progress noted in the Park planning. The LEC will continue its participation and attend any scheduled meetings in 2017.
2. **Livingston Green Team** – Walt LeVine attended the meetings of the Livingston Green Team and served as the primary liaison for the LEC.

3. **Recycling and Reclamation (R&R) Committee** - The LEC is a member for the R&R committee. Walt LeVine was the primary liaison to this committee and conveyed the various R&R projects with the LEC. LEC members assisted and participated in various R&R events.
4. **Complete Streets** - Gary Schwartz served as the LEC liaison to the Complete Streets Committee. Jeannette Harduby, Township Engineer scheduled a few meetings with the Complete Streets Committee to initiate and implement the Town Council approved program. LEC hopes to apply for a Safe Routes to School Grant in the future for striping and signing the bike paths.
5. **Open Space Committee** - Art Altman and Sam Ratner served as the LEC liaison to the Open Space Committee. They provide reports on applicable projects and other issues that the Open Space Committee is handling. The LEC is also responsible for ranking the environmental features of the open space parcels proposed to be acquired by the Open Space Committee by using the “Criteria for Open Space Preservation”, but none were required this year due to the Open Space Committee being inactive.

D. COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

1. **Electronics Recycling/Paper Shredding Events** - LEC members continued to support the Recycling and Reclamation Committee by volunteering in the three sponsored Electronics Recycling and Paper Shredding events. These events were held on Sunday, April 3; Saturday, June 11 and Saturday, September 24, 2016.
2. **General Public Education and Press Releases** - The LEC has kept residents aware of environmental events through the township website and local media. LEC publications, West Essex Tribune press releases, photographs and important links are provided on the LEC township website. The LEC has included the monthly LEC topic agenda and minutes on the website.

E. ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

1. **Arbor Day** - On April 29, 2016, LEC Chair Gary Schwartz attended the tree-planting event with Mayor Alfred Anthony, Councilman Michael Silverman, Deputy Township Manager Russell Jones and Gary Schwartz and Walter LeVine of the Livingston Environmental Commission and others met at the Oval on Friday morning to plant the tree.

2. **Bike Livingston** - On June 11, 2016, LEC members assisted with the West Essex YMCA a family-oriented bike tour to through the town's neighborhoods utilizing 3 bike tours loops. Since Bike Livingston is part of HCHY now, the LEC ended its formal support to the event in 2015 but has continued to assist on a resident voluntary basis.

F. SITE PLAN AND DOCUMENT REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the LEC to review and comment upon applications that are pending before the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The LEC also recommends the approval or denial of Environmental Impact Statement Waiver requests.

A representative of the LEC regularly attends (on a monthly schedule) the Technical Review Advisory Committee (TRAC) meetings and conveys environmentally related comments to the applicant based upon the LEC's review of the application. Over the course of 2016, the LEC considered and commented on the following applications and EIS waivers:

- January - A&M Associates, Eisenhower Parkway (retaining walls near wetlands)
- February - Sunrise Livingston (assisted living facility)
- March - Livingston Car Wash, Livingston Circle (relocated car wash facility)
- April - Kushner Academy (athletic facility expansion)
- July - Craftsman Quality Homes (duplex development and subdivision)
- August - NJ Energy, (new 7-Eleven at former Exxon on Northfield Rd.)

G. ADMINISTRATIVE

Pearl Hwang continued to serve as the Webmaster and editorial support for the LEC webpage on the Township's website to provide updated and current information. This position also is responsible for posting meeting agenda, archiving meeting minutes onto the LEC website for public view and to regularly contribute informational articles onto the LEC website. Pearl also serves as the LEC corresponding secretary compiling regular site plan review comments to the Planning Board.

H. COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

1. LEC awarded \$135 to a local FIRST LEGO League team, RoboDevils, to purchase recycling collection bins to collect used school supplies from various Livingston schools in order to donate them to the local charities.

2. LEC will continue to encourage the planting of an array of Cherry trees in honor of the past Bicentennial. This event is subject to LEC obtaining adequate financing for the purchases of the trees and to inaugurate the restoration of Memorial Park Master Plan.
3. Maintaining a communication and collaboration with the Township Engineer to obtain updates and offer advice during the creation of future Complete Streets. This would provide an opportunity to evaluate a tangible means to further promote a sustainable and traffic calming/pedestrian/bike friendly community.
4. Promoting efforts of the Recycling and Reclamation Committee in maintaining and expanding recycling opportunities (e.g., household hazardous waste).
5. Continue to collaborate and support with the Livingston Board of Education and Livingston Education Foundation and Town Council to sponsor an environmentally related projects and programs at Orchard Hill Park.
6. Solicit ANJEC grants and arrange the preparation of such grants through Livingston Town Hall personnel to budget for various projects sponsoring Orchard Hill.

I. BUDGET

LEC had a budget of \$3,000 for 2016. LEC funded two (s) more kiosks at the Orchard Hill Trails in 2016. The total amounted to \$1,753.70 plus shipping.

LEC proposed a \$4,000 budget for 2017.