

# Environmental Commission Report of Activities for 2015

**Citizens Stormwater Advisory Committee:** Art, Joan and Cathy were reappointed. The chair provided the necessary Stormwater Education for Township Officials in 2015.

**Review of applications from the Planning Board:**

Members reviewed the application from Investment Group LLC (Strober) for Block 3 Lot 21. The application is for a 10,000 sq.ft. warehouse with 1474 sq.ft. of office space and a new parking area. This property is located on Route 179 and is zoned HC. Members noted that many waivers were being requested including an EIS and wetlands report. Of concern was the indication that no stormwater management was being proposed. Art reported our findings at the next planning board meeting.

Members reviewed the application for Block 8, Lot 38, minor subdivision: it was noted that since there was to be no new construction, that the waivers were appropriate.

**Bylaws:** Members reviewed and updated the Environmental Commission by-laws.

**JCP&L ROW permit maintenance application:** Members reviewed the lengthy application for the maintenance of the transmission lines. This was not only for West Amwell, but included all counties and municipalities which JCP&L serves. Of particular interest was the section on the Natural Heritage Program Database Information, which included Goat Hill.

**Permit application for the replacement of the Swan Creek foot bridge:** Members reviewed the application for the crossing the D&R canal in Lambertville.

**Algonquin and Texas Eastern Permit application for Statewide Pipeline Maintenance Project:** Members reviewed the maintenance plans.

**Woodlands Ordinance mitigation:** JCP&L planting of approximately 2000 trees to mitigate those removed during their substation upgrade: Members discussed and decided that plantings on the municipal property would create a maintenance problem for the DPW. The Commission agreed with Parks and Rec that Hewitt Park would be a very suitable place for the new trees/shrubs. The Commission researched pollinator friendly plantings and presented this information to the Township Committee. The material was forwarded to Parks and Rec.

**Proposal by Rutgers Eco-Complex:** Members discussed an assessment to be done by Rutgers Eco-Complex regarding anaerobic digestion of organic waste. Rutgers would apply for a \$20,000 USDA Rural Development grant to ascertain the feasibility of working with a local dairy farmer to utilize the manure along with restaurant waste to produce biogas, fertilizer and compost. Members discussed the positive aspects of reducing waste, but withheld any comment until they received further information.

**NRI:** The NRI was updated to reflect changes in the Woodlands Ordinance and was placed on the website.

**EC Letter to NJDEP:** Letter sent to NJDEP with concerns over the proposed PennEast pipeline.

**Soil Removal ordinance:** Members began working on amending the ordinance as requested by the Planning Board engineer.

**NJDEP Water Quality Rule Changes:** Members discussed the new proposed rules that would make it easier to encourage development: Environmentally sensitive areas would be shrunk. The 2008 rules were much more stringent than the rules now proposed. Sewer development would shift from the planning process to a permitting process. Rules would use GIS DEP data, rather than rely on an Environmental Impact Statement. Rules for establishing sewer service areas would be diluted.

**Proposed changes to the Flood Hazard rules:** Members reviewed the proposed changes and agreed that the changes would streamline minor activities, would simplify stormwater regulations, and make it easier for permits by rule for farmland.

**319h grant:** The Environmental Commission worked very closely with the NJDEP and Princeton Hydro to assess projects suitable for the grant. The chair met with Nick Zripko, Jay Springer, and Dave McPartland to discuss these projects. The DEP wanted changes made to the Scope of Work and the quarterly reports which the EC and Princeton Hydro provided. The EC is concentrating on a rain garden and bioretention system on the municipal property. There have been major concerns as to the proposed projects and continuation of the grant. The observable behavior of the DEP has made it difficult to proceed with this project. The 319h grant project manager has changed three times. The EC will continue to pursue this.