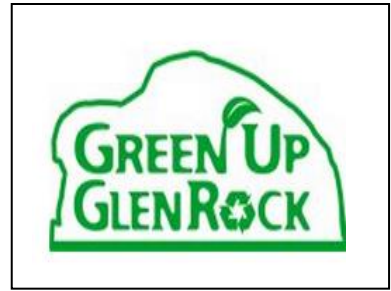


GLEN ROCK ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

2014 Annual Report



GREC Responsibilities:

NJ State Legislation 40:56A which established Environmental Commissions empowered commissions to “study and make recommendations concerning open space preservation, water resource management, air pollution control, solid waste management, noise control, soil and landscape protection, environmental appearance, marine resources and protection of flora and fauna.”

Today the GREC and other environmental commissions are involved in a broad range of activities, such as:

- Advising their governing bodies and boards of health on a variety of environmental issues,
- Informing and advising municipal planning and zoning boards about environmental impacts of proposals for development,
- Informing residents on environmental matters and ways to help protect the environment,
- Interacting with neighboring commissions and other organizations to tackle regional and state problems, and
- Helping to explain to other local officials and residents the programs and regulations of the NJ DEP and communicate local concerns to the NJ DEPC.

2014 Priorities:

- 1) Advise the Borough Council, Planning Board and Municipal officials on environmental issues and the environmental impacts of borough policies and actions
- 2) Work toward Sustainable Jersey recertification with goal to apply for recertification at June 7, 2015 recertification cycle deadline.
- 3) Work with the Glen Rock Schools to involve students and administration in programs relevant to the environment including the Sustainable Jersey for Schools program.

2014 Objectives:

- Create a current Green Up Glen Rock Team
- Start Home Energy Audit program with Outreach
- Start Energy Audit All Municipal Buildings
- Complete SJ Green Fair action
- Expand SJ “Community Garden” action
- Launch SJ “No Idling” action
- Launch SJ “Buy Local” action
- Advance community understanding of environmental issues
- Launch additional Actions selected for SJ recertification
- Continue to increase environmental expertise of Commissioners
- Provide formal comment letters and reports on site plans and major issues
- Increase involvement of students in GREC activities
- Encourage the Glen Rock Schools to join SJ for Schools



2014 Accomplishments:

Create a Current Green Up Glen Rock Team

The establishment and active involvement of a municipal Green Team is required for a community to be certified by Sustainable Jersey. The GREEN UP GLEN ROCK TEAM was created in 2009 by the Glen Rock Council Resolution No. 103-09 Resolution for Sustainable Glen Rock to lead the effort to help Glen Rock achieve certification as a Sustainable Community by Sustainable Jersey. In July 2012, the Glen Rock Borough Council reaffirmed its commitment to pursuing Sustainable Jersey certification and the continued role of the GREEN UP GLEN ROCK TEAM. Glen Rock received its first certification by Sustainable Jersey in NOVEMBER 2012. In July 2014 The GREC unanimously voted to be the core of the GREEN UP GLEN ROCK TEAM for the 2015 Sustainable Jersey Recertification process. Each commissioner agreed to select several of the Action programs that will add up to over 150 points needed for recertification, and to seek other residents who will help with the Action programs and be part of our GREEN UP GLEN ROCK TEAM. Paul Sharar agreed to serve as acting chair of the GUGR Team for the 2015 recertification process. The Glen Rock Council reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable Glen Rock by resolution and the Mayor formally appointed the 2015 Green Up Glen Rock Team members. The Green Up Glen Rock Team working on the 2015 recertification of Glen Rock by Sustainable Jersey and other environmental matters that affect our town is composed of: Paul Sharar, Lead; Adian Curshen, Lesley Elton, Naomi Gamorra, Scott King, Christopher Leishear, Charles Nebbia, Sylvia Rabacchi, Amy Martin, Diane Schlegel, Elaine Silverstein, Mary Jane Surrago, Carol Thielke, Robert Tiserio, Francesca Trousdale, and Mayor John van Keuren.

Energy Smart Rock Homes Program and Outreach

In order to reduce air pollution and improve the environment the State of New Jersey has set up a program called the New Jersey Home Performance with Energy Star. The GREC found that a number of communities had successfully used the program and recommended it to the Council in 2013. Glen Rock requested bids from qualified contractors and 6 bids were received by the deadline. The bids were carefully reviewed, references were checked, and the Council approved the recommended contractor, Ciel Power. Thorough Home Energy Audits were offered to Glen Rock homeowners for \$49.00 under the program during 2014 and 2015. During 2014 some 117 homeowners used the program and received written reports with findings and recommendations. After review homeowners are free to decide if they want to move ahead with any of the energy upgrade recommendations and whether they wish to use the auditing firm or another qualified contractor whose work can qualify the homeowner for up to \$5000.00 in state grants and up to \$10,000 in no-interest loans. The GREC led the public information and education program with presentations at Borough Hall and various community organizations. All homeowners received a brochure and a letter from the Mayor explaining the program. Stories about the program appeared in local print and electronic media. The GREC plans a survey to sample the views of participating homeowners.

Complete SJ Green Fair action Earth Day Program

The Earth Day Green Fair on April 26 was well received. Students from the Environmental Club at the High School and Middle School developed posters and programs to illustrate this year's theme of "The Right Tree in the Right Place." A brochure with the same title

informed residents of the tree varieties that respond well to the New Jersey climate and soil conditions. In addition, new signs were unveiled identifying trees in the Arboretum, made available through a Sustainable Jersey small grant.

Community Garden

The Glen Rock Community Garden was founded in 2010. As interest in the Garden grew, the site is now expanded to 28 plots, which are approximately 10 by 20 feet long. Some of these are used by single families; some are shared by two families. There is also a small communal area for herbs, as well as a communal grape vine and kiwi along the fence. Participants in the garden try to help one another out by watering plots and tending to each other's gardens during vacations. Plots are offered to residents on a first come, first served basis and there is currently a waiting list. The town has taken on the responsibility for liability insurance, as well as the cost of water. The Community Garden has been very prolific and is a wonderful activity to have available in town.

No Idling/Air Quality

Commissioners worked with local officials to plan an anti-idling public education program and are coordinating with the DPW and Police Department to identify additional locations for "No idling" signs. The Glen Rock BOE Superintendent supports the "no idling" policy on school property, and suggested ways to use electronic media to get the message out. Another town-wide No-Idling campaign is planned for the spring of 2015.

Buy Local

The Glen Rock Environmental Commission initiated a partnership with the Glen Rock Chamber of Commerce and Glen Rock Merchants for the Shop Small / Buy Local campaign. We timed the kick-off to coincide with the American Express Small Business Saturday, the day after Black Friday, providing materials from American Express, including window signs, POS hand outs, signage and accessibility to online promotional materials. Merchants were encouraged to display the flyers and promotional materials in their windows, mailings, advertisements, and on their websites. A press release was issued and printed in the Glen Rock Gazette, promoting the Buy Local initiative. Additionally, the Environmental Commission arranged for the use of the electronic display sign at the heavily traveled center of the Rock Road business district, to promote the Shop Small / Buy Local initiative. Buy Local messages first appeared to promote Small Business Saturday ("Shop Small in Glen Rock, Small Business Saturday, November 29th, The Glen Rock Environmental Commission invites you to Buy Local all year long"), again in December and February, including the partnership between the Glen Rock Environmental Commission and local merchants ("The Glen Rock Environmental Commission and the Glen Rock Chamber of Commerce reminds you to Buy Local all year long").

Advance community understanding of environmental issues

The Glen Rock Environmental Commission has a long-standing, productive collaboration with the town Thielke Arboretum and together they organize a few activities each year devoted to community outreach related to sustainability. These activities aim at offering

residents opportunities to learn about sustainability and to implement sustainable practices. In March 2014 an "Arboretum clean up" event, was organized where GREC commissioners helped advertise the event in town and recruited students from the Middle and High school to help clean up the Arboretum from debris and refurbish/mulch the trails after the winter. The GREC then sponsored an Earth day/Arbor day event in April 2014 and contributed to the "2014 Fall Festival" that took place at the Thielke Arboretum. During these events the GREC displayed and presented educational posters demonstrating some of the on-going activities of the Commission. Most of the posters were prepared by MS and HS students on topics they have been involved in. This is a way to let people know about the Commission and to recruit students and volunteers for future projects.

In September 2014 the EC sponsored a presentation by naturalist/horticulturist Ms. Elaine Silverstein, certified in Sustainable Landscape Management by the New York Botanical Garden titled "Backyard sustainability for homeowners: keep Glen Rock clean" at the public library. Several topics were discussed, including sustainable practices to reduce the use of herbicides/pesticides and chemical fertilizers, and how to use the natural fertilizers derived from leaves, both by mulching leaves, and collecting leaves for composting ("leave the leaves", "composting" and "grass- cut it and leave it" programs). Information about these programs were posted on the borough website:

<http://www.glenrocknj.net/departments/boards-and-committees/detail.php?id=ENVIR>

The Commission is also active in advertising sustainability-related events/presentations that take place in the area: we advertised the NY 2014 Climate March September and organized a group of residents/students to travel together and participate to the March.

Launch additional Actions selected for SJ recertification

Fleet Inventory

This is a priority action for recertification of the Borough's Bronze Certificate with Sustainable Jersey. The action, which was started in September 2014, requires preparing a detailed inventory of the Borough's vehicles, including make, model year, total mileage in the baseline year, i.e. 2014, total fuel usage, all data to be entered into the supplied Excel spreadsheet template. By year's end some 80% of the data had been entered with the intention of completing the spreadsheets by March and then asking the Borough Council to pass a resolution agreeing to use the Commission's recommendations to reduce fuel usage by 20% by May 2019.

Energy Audit All Municipal Building

This is a major 50 point action which will become part of the GREC effort to recertify the Borough's Bronze Certification with SJ. The requirements are a detailed inventory of all the Borough's buildings together with their energy usage be produced, ultimately leading to Energy Audits being performed on each with the intention of determining how and where energy efficiency can be improved. The Borough Council has passed a Resolution agreeing to the audits. The cost of these audits will be covered by the NJ Clean Energy Program. Thereafter RFP's will be sent to the designated energy auditing firms after approval by the Council. The GREC will review and recommend one of the resulting proposals along with its rationale for action by the Council.

Continue to increase environmental expertise of Commissioners

Commissioners participated in a webinar to learn about the SJ for school program, which allowed them to introduce it to the school district superintendent and business administrator. Commissioners also participated in a webinar by SJ on recertification to be prepared for the recertification process.

Provide formal comment letters and reports on site plans and major issues

No formal site plans were reviewed by the GREC during 2014, however, discussions were held about the potential sale of the Herrold Farm property to Walgreens, and the Building Committee for the Arboretum presented its plans for an educational center there. The GREC endorsed the request of the Arboretum Board to the Borough Council for financial support in some form to cover the remaining \$200,000 of the \$600,000 capital budget. The GREC updated its 2011 Report on Artificial Turf Considerations recommending that if the bond referendum passed that effort be made to find an alternative infill to crumb rubber due to conflicting data about its long-term health and environmental safety. The GREC also recommended whether or not the referendum passed, that the Mayor appoint a select committee to analyze the long-term recreational needs and resources of Glen Rock with sound data. Such a committee has been appointed.

Increase involvement of students in GREC activities

High School students from the Environmental Club presented their ideas for recycling, water stations, and replacing cafeteria Styrofoam trays with compostable trays to the GREC requesting advice and assistance in moving forward. Seven high school students volunteer to be trained and conduct a survey of all the merchants in Glen Rock regarding the elimination of single use plastic bags. All Fourth graders participated in the annual Water Day co-sponsored by the Arboretum.

Encourage the Glen Rock Schools to join Sustainable Jersey for Schools

GREC leaders participated in the Board of Education Community Forum on Educational Priorities for 2015-2018. The Environment was one of the three top priorities to come out of that planning process. GREC leaders met several times during 2014 with the new Superintendent of Schools to discuss environmental issues, ways the GREC could work with students and administrators most effectively, and to present the new Sustainable Jersey for Schools program. Dr. Valenti welcomed the information on recycling, water stations, anti-idling, and grade school programs. She also suggested ways the GREC can be helpful, and at our last session indicated that she was recommending to the Board that the District register for SJ for Schools program.

2015 Objectives:

- Complete SJ Home Energy Audit Program and survey
- Find ways accommodate additional members in Community Garden
- Complete SJ "No Idling" action
- Complete SJ "Buy Local" action
- Advance community understanding of environmental issues
- Protect water quality and minimize flooding problems in our community; Conduct Build a Rain barrel workshop; Complete SJ "Demonstration Rain Garden" SJ action
- Continue to increase environmental expertise of Commissioners
- Provide formal comment letters and reports on major issues
- Increase involvement of students in GREC activities
- Collaborate with local and regional environmental organizations
- Complete SJ "Energy Star Portfolio Manager" action with Borough Administrator
- Update GREC Website
- Complete SJ "Green Building Policy/Resolution" action
- Complete SJ "Green Building Scorecard" action
- Complete SJ "Composting Workshop" action
- Assist the School District and each school in registering for the SJ for Schools program, and update them on grants as they become available to pursue environmental related projects.

We appreciate the support of the Mayor, Borough Administrator, Council, and other municipal officials and employees as we work for a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable community.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Rabacchi and Paul Sharar
Glen Rock Environmental Commission, Acting Co-Chairs

Paul Sharar

Green Up Glen Rock Team Lead

Submitted: May 29, 2015