



# Resolution of the Township of Bernards

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## Resolution #2022-0156

Acceptance of Bernards Township Environmental Commission 2021 Annual Report

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to 2-18.5. of the Revised General Ordinances of the Township of Bernards, the Environmental Commission shall make an annual report to the Township Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, the Environmental Commission is submitting a report pursuant to this requirement.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Township Committee of the Township of Bernards, that the following report be accepted.

Agenda Date and Vote: 03/15/2022

### CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify this is a true and exact copy of a resolution adopted  
by the Bernards Township Committee on 03/15/2022

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rhonda Pisano, Municipal Clerk

## BERNARDS TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

*The following is a summary of the 2021 activities of the Bernards Township Environmental Commission ("EC" or "Commission").*

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

*The Bernards Township Environmental Commission is responsible for ensuring that the environmental issues in Bernards Township, NJ are given the right priority to protect and preserve natural resources of the Township and surrounding areas including land, water, air, and bios (flora and fauna). As a result of NJDEP having oversight of the NJ Historic Preservation Office, occasionally the EC will offer historic preservation comments in accordance with Bernards Township Master Plan.*

### **GOALS**

*The Commission accomplishes its mission via:*

- a) Taking proactive stances on local environmental matters, and strengthening the local planning process*
- b) Coordinating rational, balanced reviews of development applications for the appropriate township bodies*
- c) Increasing public awareness and understanding of local and regional environmental issues*
- d) Keeping abreast of, and being involved in, environmental issues that affect our surrounding areas and communities*
- e) Staying up to date on ordinances and regulations for Bernards Township with training sessions.*

### **2021 SUMMARY**

#### **Budget:**

*In 2021, the EC spent \$2,017.08 on the annual ANJEC membership (\$400) and the Reusable Bag Challenge.*

#### **2021 Accomplishments:**

- **Development Application Reviews:** *During 2021, the EC held ten meetings, all virtually via Zoom. As an advisory board, the EC continued to provide commentary to the Planning Board, Board of Adjustment and Township Committee regarding environmental impacts and issues. During 2021, the EC reviewed 32*

development applications and revisions: 26 Board of Adjustment and 6 Planning Board. In comparison, during 2020, the EC reviewed 28 Board of Adjustment and 8 Planning Board. Note: Of the 26 Board of Adjustment applications that were reviewed, 10 of them were for a variance for a pool not located behind the rear building line of adjacent dwellings.

- **Master Plan Review:** At the request of David Banisch on behalf of the Planning Board, the Environmental Commission reviewed the Township's Conservation and Open Space Plan Element and the Green Buildings and Environmental Sustainability Plan Element of the Master Plan. Eleven recommendations were made and forwarded to the Planning Board in September.
- **Tree Protection:** The Environmental Commission works cooperatively with the Township's Shade Tree Commission and Engineering Department to assess tree removal applications. The assessments focus on any safety issues associated with the tree, the health of the tree, and canopy impact. In some cases, site visits are warranted. Typically, tree removals are completed in conjunction with replacement/mitigation measures and replacements focus on native species. In 2021, 12-15 of these applications were reviewed.
- **Public Outreach:** Throughout the year, over 15 environmentally themed, educational/awareness pieces were posted jointly to the Township website home page and the EC home page + the Township Facebook page. From there, these pieces were shared to a number of community FB groups such as: Bernards InSight, Bernards Township Community, Basking Ridge Moms, BR Women Lite, Bernards Beat. Topics included different tips on refuse/reduce/reuse/recycle (10 "tips of the week"), plus pumpkin and Christmas tree recycling, and awareness/treatment of spotted lanternfly eggs, nymphs, adults, and ailanthus trees.
- **Advisory and Volunteerism:** The EC provided advice and guidance to a couple of Ridge High School clubs regarding their green efforts and several students attended Commission meetings. Additionally, the EC helped promote other's environmental-related projects such as the Girl Scouts "Caps for a Cause," Parks & Recreation's TREX challenge and the Ridge Girls Basketball fundraiser for Christmas tree recycling. The Bernards Township EC was selectively invited to participate in the first annual GSWA Native Pollinator Plant Sale and promoted the sale via social media. Members also volunteered at the GSWA HQ to prepare all the orders for distribution to the various towns and transported and distributed all the orders from Bernards Township residents.
- **Trips and Events:** In conjunction with Earth Day, the EC launched the Reusable Bag Challenge to all Bernards Township students in grades K-8. The theme was Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Over 100 entries were submitted and of them, 5 winners were chosen. 250 bags customized with the winning designs were ordered and offered at no cost to residents. In June, members of the Commission visited the Colgate Recycling Plant, one of several that Somerset County contracts with for paper, plastic, glass, and aluminum recycling. In November, the EC organized a free Pumpkin Smash held at English Farm/Dogwood Farm to promote keeping pumpkins out of landfills.
- **Partnerships:** As noted above, The Commission partnered with members of the Township's Agricultural Advisory Committee to host a pumpkin smash. Additionally, the EC partnered with the Shade Tree Commission (Jack Gray) to develop a joint statement to residents regarding the identification and treatment of spotted lanternflies and their preferred host, the ailanthus tree. The EC also invited the township's AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador (Sydney Abraham) to a meeting, and she explained their mission and how they can partner with the EC to help with environmental education and community stewardship.

At the end of 2021, the EC said goodbye to 3 members and our TC liaison and welcomed 1 new member. We look forward to serving Bernards Township and its residents in 2022 with a new TC liaison and several new members.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Bernards Township Environmental