



## ***The Borough of Highland Park***

Sustainable Highland Park

County of Middlesex, New Jersey

P.O. Box 1330

HIGHLAND PARK, NEW JERSEY

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### **Minutes of the January SHP General Meeting: 1/24/24**

#### **Attendees:**

Members and Working Group: Tina Weishaus, Lisa Noss, Matt Hersh, Randy Solomon, Irene Marx, Irene Riegner, Paul Sauers, Rose DeLorenzo, Sheree Neese Todd, Alison Wilkes, Chris Perez, Mark Lesko, Meli Shiu, Theo Shiffman  
New: Lisa Bennett, Rebecca Guardado, David Bazzett, Diana Klaser Cheng, Marija Heibel

#### **PROPOSED AGENDA**

##### **1. Intros and welcome**

##### **2. Overview of 2023 Accomplishments**

###### **a. [2023 wrapup](#)**

##### **3. Report from Borough Liaison, Matt Hersh**

- a. Boro is developing community energy plan. Received a grant, have a plan, now working with stakeholders to discuss it. 10-min presentation at Feb. 6 council meeting about this. Internal presentation to public works. Another opportunity for public input on Feb. 27. Work session. Want to adopt a plan at the March 5th Council meeting. Will try to share a doc w/ SHP before the public meeting if there is one.
- b. Emergency Weather Events - Highland Park has a code blue facility above the Main Street office. Apt can hold a number of people who need emergency assistance. Can call the police dispatch line anonymously.
- c. Received a lot of feedback about sidewalk cleaning & questions about who is responsible. If we hear any feedback about this there is info on the Boro website.
- d. Rewriting of inclusionary affordable housing (coming in 2025). Want to think about these requirements & surpass them with the redevelopment plan. Can be creative about the types of housing we have & the materials we use. Going to be a discussion at council meetings over the next few months.

***Randy - application due Feb. 23 for grant for \$250-\$500k for energy. Implementation grant. Things in plan & we have to pick specific things to implement. Sustainable Jersey runs this program.***

##### **4. Report from HS Environmental Club - Theo Shiffman**

Met w/ a Rutgers graduate student before the break. Augmented reality game that takes place in eco-preserve

Project for this winter: assembly of robots from a grant from last year. Mostly robotics club. Environmental club is just helping out. Robot: automated farming <https://farm.bot/>

Environmental club isn't really working on anything. Not really meeting & need guidance

Meli: school wants advice from SHP on what pollinator plants to pick. They want to start planting in the spring.

Tina: our schools are certified by Sustainable Jersey in addition to the boro. We could use more help with volunteering with the schools. Possible team or sub-committee.

## 5. Mission Statement to be approved (sent to members)

***Sustainable Highland Park, a Borough Committee, is dedicated to promoting and advancing sustainable actions and practices that improve the quality of life for those who live, work and shop in Highland Park. We understand sustainability to be inclusive of environmental, social and economic sustainability. Our Committee sees itself as building a learning community in which the seeds of a more peaceful, balanced and just world can be nourished.***

Chris gathered NJ green team statements. See bottom of doc.

Tina - there are wider issues that make HP less sustainable (ex: racism, economic equity, inclusion). These are sustainability issues. Should this be in the mission statement? Why aren't we talking more to renters if they're 60% of the town? Sustainability is as much about sustainability issues as environmental issues

Irene R -include environmental justice to our environmental sustainability

Sheree - We know the effects of climate change are not equal across people. It's shortsighted to not think about the disparities. Also the mission statement is the ideal we strive towards.

Randy - want to keep the economic & social component. That is what sets us apart from the environmental commission. [Definitions of sustainability](#) include economic, social, and environmental implications.

[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Three-spheres-of-sustainability-5\\_fig1\\_303880737](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Three-spheres-of-sustainability-5_fig1_303880737)

Tina: 5 original pillars of SHP: Environmental, economic, cultural, social, health

Matt - do we want to mention the green team exists to work on Sustainable Jersey actions?

Tina - purposely left out Sustainable Jersey from the mission statement since we don't directly work on it, the Boro does.

Matt - We are moving towards a duplicate environmental commission so we need to figure that out. The stated purpose was to work on the Sustainable Jersey certification.

Tina - we do very different things than the Environmental Commission; we are the community facing committee, actions and activities

Sheree - believes we do look towards Sustainable Jersey. Is ok w/ adding it to the mission.

## 6. Finalize Teams for developing new SHP structure

Tina - need teams people can engage with. Lisa Noss & Tina came up w/ this structure after last week's planning meeting.

**Welcome & Orientation Team** - we're growing & being approached constantly. Need volunteers to create an orientation for new members. It would be good to have ongoing contact w/ new people who join us.

**Outreach & Collaboration** - we have been tabling, attending fairs. We added collaboration to this, w/ other boards & commissions, learning from green teams in other towns. We do collaborations w/ the cleanups.

**Programming & Education** - native plants, composting, etc.

**Activities & Ongoing Projects** - some listed below

**Communications** - Lisa Noss has been doing social media. We have a website that needs to be updated.

**Advocacy & Legislative Action** (Proposed but must be Borough directed, development in progress) - ex: did this in 2017 w/ plastic bag ban in advance of the state bill. Leaf blowers can be similar.

Sheree - likes the setup but most important to find out who is interested in each team. & likes team better than sub-committee. Figuring out who is interested in what is the next step

Marija - new, looking forward to joining activities. Likes initiatives. Wants to help w/ native plants and help neighbors w/ planting front yards.

Matt - from a governing perspective have a lot of interest in having these happen. Maybe a Sustainable Jersey team?

Meli - how about small paper bags, packages w/ welcome message, seeds, SHP mission statement & distribute them for earth day?

Tina - we need to rethink Sustainable Jersey certification process & SHP's role  
<https://www.sustainablejersey.com/actions/>

Meli - schools & children as a possible team

Tina - Yes to school team!

Irene R - we have the projects but where do the teams fit in? Something about energy. The projects in "6" then relate to the objectives in "5." NO CONNECTION BETWEEN #5 AND #6 IN THE DRAFT, A DISCONNECT BETWEEN "TEAMS" #5 AND THE PROJECTS, #6. HOW DO THEY RELATE TO EACH OTHER? TWO TIERED SYSTEM.. We need to think about this problem

We can always add another project or a special project.

I suggest that we include the following about team membership: Team membership is open to any participant in an activity under # 6. The participant can choose the team that he/she would like to join.

Lisa - teams help us to have structure so we can do more. Teams can meet outside of the monthly meeting & report back. These teams are not set in stone.

Alison - a lot of people might want to be part of volunteering but not planning. People want to know what activities they can choose from & hop around from instead of just being on 1 team **OR DO YOU MEAN PROJECT?** But there should be people in charge of each team. Need to get activities up & going b/c otherwise what are we recruiting people to?

Irene M - people might not want to sit in on a meeting but we need volunteers for staffing, Farmers Market, Cleanups. Not asking for a lot of commitment if you don't want it.

Diana - agrees w/ having defined activities to do. Ex: where, when, & how long are the cleanups typically? There's only a tentative schedule of dates. First Sat & third Sunday every month 10-12. Don't know exact locations in advance. Mark needs more help.

Diana is saying we're not putting out enough info to know what to do about the activity.

**Add time & more info about cleanups to website**

**7. Finalize ongoing volunteer opportunities:**

Adopt-a-Drain volunteer and oversight  
Clean-Ups Team  
New Member Welcoming Team  
Earth Day Planning Committee - Sunday, May 5, 2024  
Leaf Blower & Lawn Care Education  
Gardening, Native Plants & Composting Education  
Apartment / Renter Outreach  
Farmers Market Tabling

8. **Communications** - switching to Mail Chimp for SHP newsletter for large list & Google Group for internal communication

**9. New Ideas, Business**

Need volunteers for Earth day - + h.s.

Need volunteers for welcome orientation

Matt - wants to work w/ Mark on providing more cleanup support from the boro

Marija - interested in joining gardening, native plants, composting education

[marija.heibel@gmail.com](mailto:marija.heibel@gmail.com)

Meli - schools, PTOs, Earth Day, action teams

**Next step: Create survey of volunteer opportunities/interests, email it out - Lisa to create**

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## **New Jersey Green Team Mission Statements**

The Scotch Plains Green Team is a group of residents, township volunteers and business representatives who work with the Mayor and Town Council to create policies and practices which provide a clean, safe and sustainable community to live, work and play for this and future generations.

The City of Asbury Park's Green Team is dedicated to guiding and assisting its residents, businesses, and city government in becoming a community that meets the needs of the present while preserving the resources available for future generations.

The Egg Harbor Township Green Team Advisory Committee will advise the Township Committee on ways to improve municipal operations with "Green" initiatives which are economically and environmentally sound through research and evaluation.

In order to achieve our vision, the Robbinsville Green Team Advisory Committee pledges to lead the effort to empower the community and create paths to a more sustainable future **through education, cooperation and action.** It further aims to improve the quality of life in Robbinsville and its surrounding communities for this and future generations to come.

Green team mission is to assist Toms River Township to become certified under the Sustainable Jersey program and to maintain such certification. They are tasked with advising the Township governing body with recommendations to make the community more sustainable and overall a more livable community for its residents.

**The Westfield Green Team's mission is to help improve our quality of life and become a more sustainable community – environmentally, socially and economically – in a way that can be sustained to benefit future generations. With the help of Westfield residents and staff, and through discrete initiatives, we can make a difference, in Westfield and Beyond.**

Sustainable Gloucester Township (SGT) aims to improve the conditions of our only home, Earth, not just for ourselves but for future generations to come. This can only be attained by beginning the laborious journey to sustainability with one step forward. By organizing and encouraging community-based task forces such as the Green Team and educating our residents on important matters regarding sustainability, we strive to assist our community in achieving a more sustainable environment.

Bringing people, businesses and the community together to develop policies and practices to create a sustainable Andover Township for all to enjoy

**The Green Team works to create an environmentally friendly community and improve the quality of life in Barrington through the support and creation of sustainable programs and practices. It is a collaborative effort in which volunteers work with Borough officials, local businesses, residents, schools, and other community organizations to foster and initiate programs and raise awareness throughout town to enhance the quality of life for current residents and for future generations.**

The Oakland Green Team is dedicated to supporting the creation of a more

environmentally sustainable community and improving the quality of life in Oakland. Our mission is to create a community that understands its environmental assets and resources and will act to protect and enhance them.

The mission of the Harrington Park Environmental Commission is to promote in general an environmental, ecological conservation and natural resources program for the Borough. The HPEC will study and make recommendations to the Mayor and Council on matters that concern open space, water resource management, air pollution, noise pollution, solid waste, soil and landscape protection, environmental appearances, marine resources, and protection of flora and fauna. In addition it is charged with research into the use of existing or potential open land areas within the municipality, as well as working with other organizations or unofficial bodies concerned with open space and environmental issues.

To increase sustainability by engaging in educational campaigns, collaborating with community and municipal groups to implement sound environmental initiatives, connecting with the arts and the creative sector and functioning in an advisory role to the council and other municipal entities.

The Green Team focuses on reaching out and working with all the groups in town who want to green our environment – The Borough Council, Departments, Commissions, Committees, clubs and schools – to help Mountain Lakes become more environmentally sustainable. Using the program Sustainable Jersey, we complete actions for Certification.

The Ewing Green Team envisions a Ewing Township that incorporates sustainability into the actions and decision-making processes of community members and municipal offices. Ewing will be a community that leads in efforts to: create and maintain sustainable ways of living; build strong and diverse economic opportunities; and cultivate a community that welcomes people from all walks of life.

To educate and engage the Fanwood community about sustainable living; and implement community-wide initiatives that support a healthy environment and maintain Fanwood's certification with Sustainable Jersey.

The Livingston Green Team strives to help make our Township environmentally friendly and strong.

Upper Township Green Team - Working toward a more sustainable Upper Township. The Bernards Township Green Team Advisory Committee will advise the Township Committee on ways to improve municipal operations with "Green" initiatives which are economically and environmentally sound through research and evaluation; "Green" practices will be incorporated into Township operations by the staff representatives.

The Mount Laurel Green Team is a collaborative, grassroots organization in which volunteers work with municipal representatives, businesses, non-profits, civic, and religious groups to foster community involvement to reach sustainable, environmental and fiscally responsible goals. We strive to improve the quality of life in Mount Laurel Township and are dedicated to supporting the creation of a sustainable community by educating the residents, so they understand its environmental assets and resources and

will act to protect and enhance them.

The Borough of Fair Lawn Green Team Advisory Committee is committed to work with the Mayor, Council, other Borough Committees and citizens to maintain a vital and beneficial community. This shall be achieved through the implementation of environmental practices and initiatives which will provide a healthy and sustainable Borough and enhance the quality of life for our citizens and their associations.

The Chatham Borough Green Team seeks to nurture, support, and sustain environmentally safe and healthy practices and products; to educate the public about sustainable activities and to maintain our Sustainable Jersey policies, practices and filing deadlines.

Preserving Quality of Life for Us and Future Generations (Hawthorne, NJ)

The Burlington Township "Green Team", which was established in July 2009 by the Governing Body, is a group of appointed volunteers that will review and evaluate sustainable initiatives and make recommendations to the Mayor & Council regarding the feasibility of implementing these initiatives with the goal of creating a "greener", more sustainable community that meets the present needs of its citizens without compromising the ability to provide for its future generations.

The mission of the Dunellen Green Team Advisory Committee will be to advise the Mayor and Council on ways to improve the municipality through "Green" initiatives which are economically and environmentally sound through research and evaluation.

The goal of the Eatontown Green Team is to improve Eatontown's quality of life and make our Borough "Greener" for future generations.