

2015 Oakland Environmental Commission Achievements

The Oakland Environmental Commission had a busy year. Projects like the FLOW Environmental Film Festival and the EC table at the town carnival and Green Fair took months of planning. The EC has also been very active in the progress being made with Oakland's newest park, Great Oak Park. We met every month this past year with a quorum.

Stewart Woods Park

During the early spring, bike racks and bird feeders were installed in the park along Ramapo Valley Road thanks to the generous donations of Larry Levine, an Oakland resident.

Another phase of the Stewart Woods Park plan began in the late summer. After meeting with boy scout, Riley Beach of Troop 49 several times at the park to discuss an eagle scout project, his plan was approved by the Mayor and Council during the summer. He has begun construction of a kiosk that will be installed along Ramapo Valley Road during the spring of 2016. Nature stations will be installed as well that will correspond to a nature pamphlet that the EC is working on. We are looking into posting QR codes with links to our web for more information.

Crossroads

An article was submitted and included for each Crossroads that was published in 2015. Initiatives included in the Crossroads: Recycling information and the proposed Pilgrim Pipeline information.

Great Oak Park

EC members participated in routine meetings of the Park Committee to review and discuss potential uses of the park. The EC led the Great Oak Park committee in another a stream channel restoration work day in October. EC members and girl scouts worked on this project

Town Carnival Booth

Information table was set up at the annual Town Carnival. Our focus this year was of recycling education; helping the residents understand our current recycling rules. We had a lot of free educational handouts as well. We had a second display on protecting our ground water resources.

Recycling Flyers

We created two recycling flyers. One developed by a Valley Middle School student with the guidance of the EC and that was used during the town carnival. That was family friendly with both fun facts and information about what, how and why to recycle. The second flyer was developed after the carnival when it became evident that people needed to see examples of what they can and cannot recycle in very clear terms help them make good choices. We got in touch with the towns recycled material handler to verify what they were currently accepting. Then developed a full page, color flyer which was then used by the DPW in their annual recycling newsletter. A QR code was also generated for the EC website and placed on this flyer.

Pilgrim Pipeline

In September 2013 the EC presented their report on the proposed Pilgrim Pipeline to the Mayor and Council and based on that a resolution was passed opposing the proposed Pilgrim Pipeline. Since then the EC has continued to follow the development of this proposal, attending several Coalition Against the Pilgrim Pipeline meetings, as well attend both Mahwah and Oakland planning board meetings as both towns prepared to write an ordinance to help protect the Ramapo aquifer from the threat of the proposed Pilgrim Pipeline.

Environmental Achievement Award

The Oakland Environmental Commission received its second Environmental Achievement Award by the Association of NJ Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) at the organization's 42st Annual Environmental Congress on Friday, Oct. 23, 2015. The ANJEC Environmental Achievement Award program recognizes exceptional projects carried out by environmental commissions to protect natural resources, health and open spaces in their towns. The Oakland EC, along with Franklin Lakes EC and Wyckoff EC, received the award for their joint work in the month long FLOW Green film festival that took place in May 2014 and 2015

Planning Board Support

The EC reviews site plans as they are submitted to the Planning Board. We check for consistency with the master plan and ordinances.

Website

An EC member had maintained website for the EC and Green Team This is a useful resource for updated information and initiatives. The new website is <http://mygreenoakland.org>

ANJEC Annual Meeting

In October, EC members attended the annual meeting for ANJEC. This is an inspirational meeting that helps us learn what other Environmental Commissions are doing throughout the state as well as a source of resources that are available for our town to better its environment.

Open Space:

In October, several EC members meet with the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund regarding the Pinnacle/Bi County property. The Environmental Commission explained the importance of the property for ground water, stream protection, wetland protection, stormwater control, and wildlife habitat. The property is part of the Highlands Preservation Area. The following month the Trust Fund voted to approve recommending 4.9 million dollars toward the purchase of the property. This is now awaiting further approval by the Bergen County Freeholders.

FLOW Green Fair

In March the first ever flow Green Fair was held as a one day event at Ramapo HS. The Oakland EC and Green Team helped with the initial planning and then the FL EC did a fabulous job with all the details and all the work that really needed to happen. The Oakland EC participated that day with a table and display about Ground Water and how to protect it. There were various handouts available on public prescription drug disposal, contamination of ground water due to improper medication disposal into septic systems and hazards of unwanted run-off into borough storm drains.

FLOW Green Film Festival

EC members met and coordinated a series of environmental movies with speaker panels for the month of May. This event was offered for the FLOW towns and was held at the Wyckoff Public Library. The Oakland EC developed the flyer for this event.

Earth Day plans

The EC participated in the Great Oak Park clean up.

Black Bear Program

This presentation is a free service provided by the NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife and covered a wide range of topic relating to black bears. The program held at the senior center on Tuesday, April 14. Over 50 people attended this program which was very much enjoyed by everyone.

Oakland Public Library Display

For the month of September the EC had the libraries main display case filled with information on recycling. Examples of confusing items for displayed to help clarify current rules for residents. The new recycling flyer was available.

Potash Lake

EC members met and reviewed the condition of the trail adjacent to Potash Lake along West Oakland Avenue. Recommendations were made to remove dead trees, remove abandoned tires and bank stabilization.

Camp Tamarack

EC members had a site walk of the Camp Tamarack property gain details to help the County begin a cleanup of the open space property. Several attempt were made to arrange meetings to discuss the cleanup but there has been no progress as of yet.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Krause
EC Chair