October 2013: Email regarding MOU, Green Team, SHT and SHT with ANJEC article

Hi, Gwenne and Barb.

ANJEC (the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions) requested that I write an article on the MOU between the Environmental Commission, Sustainable Haddon Township, and the Township. I drafted a 700-word article, knowing that it would be edited down to 400, and just received the edited version back from ANJEC. I had told them I wanted to run it by you before it was published, so I’d be grateful if you could review it (attached) and let me know as soon as you can whether it’s okay for publication. As I say, I had a lot more in it, but the editor selected what she felt was appropriate for the publication within that length constraint, so it may not include everything we would have wanted to put in.

Again, please give me your comments as soon as possible.

Thanks.

Peter

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**Memorandum of Understanding Between Haddon Township’s Environmental Commission and Green Team**

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**DRAFT 3: April 29, 2013 (399 words)**

**\*NOT YET APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION\***

Since its creation in 2002, Haddon Township’s Environmental Commission has been the “official” environmental advocate in town, and has a good working relationship with its governing body—the three-person Board of Commissioners, and the departments that handle public works, planning and zoning, community affairs, and public safety. Over the years, the Commission has prepared an Environmental Resource Inventory, and provides input on municipal legislation and Planning/Zoning Board issues. In addition, the Environmental Commission has been assigned responsibility for managing the Saddler’s Woods Conservation Area which includes a stand of old growth trees, and is a partner in managing the Township’s Environmental and Historical Center, a repurposed municipal-owned building providing office, meeting, and exhibit space.

Haddon Township’s Green Team was established in 2010 and took the lead on the Township’s application for bronze certification from Sustainable Jersey. The Green Team is coordinated by the Township public works office manager/recycling coordinator with a small group of volunteers.

With certification accomplished, the Green Team looked for a way to revive its original energy and discussed various options, including spinning off a separate nonprofit or having its functions absorbed by the Environmental Commission. In May 2012, several formal and informal conversations between the two groups yielded an approach that:

1. maintains and encourages the energy of the Green Team;
2. clarifies and recognizes the different roles and responsibilities of the Environmental Commission and Green Team so that each entity is free to take its own (and potentially conflicting) stands when needed; and
3. strengthens the communication and working relationship between the two groups.

Converting the Green Team to a new independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations was dismissed as too burdensome an alternative.

A written agreement was forged that keeps both groups operating independently with separate funding, but encourages collaboration and cooperation between the two, through an Environmental Commission subcommittee. To acknowledge the importance and parameters of this arrangement, a memorandum of understanding was approved by all parties (the Environmental Commission, Green Team—now known as Sustainable Haddon Township—and the Board of Commissioners).

The arrangement has been successful. The Environmental Commission has been keeping abreast of Sustainable Haddon Township initiatives (and vice versa), endorsing and providing input on its new community garden and critically assessing the suggestion of backyard chicken raising. Sustainable Haddon Township members attend Environmental Commission meetings. And the orbits of two independent environmental organizations in Haddon Township are now in sync.