



Acting Locally to Protect Green Spaces: Community Engagement & Government Support



- **EC Powers: Roles & Responsibilities**
- **Local Open Space Plans**
- **Building Relationships in support of Open Space Stewardship & Education**
- **Working Towards Environmental Justice**
- **ANJEC Open Space Grants: April 19 deadline**



What the law requires

Enabling Legislation

NJSA 40:56A:

Five to seven members and two alternates
appointed by mayor,
one of whom shall be a member
of the Planning Board



What the law requires

EC serves in **advisory** role



Commission powers

- Study and make recommendations on water, air, waste, noise, landscape protection, environmental appearance, flora and fauna
- Create an Open Space Index and recommendations (sometimes called a ROSI)
- ERI/NRI
 - Highlands council producing digital ERI



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CRANBURY TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION Environmental Commission 2019 Goals

2019 Master Plan Re-exam – Review and provide updates to the Master Plan for the MP Re-exam Subcommittee for Chapter 6: Conservation Element and Chapter 13: Green Buildings and Environmental Sustainability Plan. Identify sustainability items to be included in the MP.

Environmental Resource Inventory – The EC will maintain the ERI and develop a plan to continue to promote the use of the ERI to ensure that all development is undertaken with sensitivity toward the natural environment. The EC Member on the DRC will continue to use the ERI to review Land Use Applications.

Household Environmental Activities - The EC will promote the following:

- Reduction of single use plastic bags and encourage reusable bags
- Use of rain barrels to prevent stormwater runoff
- Use rain garden in Village Park to educate the public about green infrastructure
- Proper use of fertilizers and grass clippings on lawns to reduce nutrient runoff
- Use of native plant species to diversify habitat and encourage pollinators
- Household energy conservation practices to reduce energy consumption

Educational Activities – The EC will promote educational activities as follows:

- Place documents and articles on the Township's website.
- Host a Cranbury Day booth with environmental activities for visitors.
- Participate in Wellness Fair with activities that promote the importance of a healthy environment in everyday life and walking trails on the preserves
- Place articles about EC activities in each of the Township's newsletters.
- Promote green building and sustainability as contained in the Master Plan.

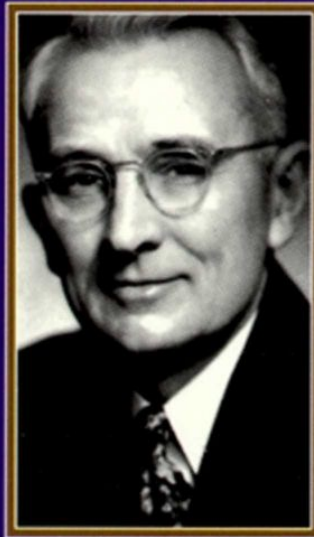


Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commissions

2021 Virtual Training
Workshop 1: EC powers and
responsibilities



HOW TO WIN FRIENDS & INFLUENCE



**YOUR ELECTED
OFFICIALS**

THE FIRST—AND
STILL THE BEST—BOOK
OF ITS KIND—TO LEAD
YOU TO SUCCESS

Read by Andrew MacMillan



by
CARNELLY

How to become an influential EC

- Give electeds easy wins
 - Small grant project, movie night, etc
- Attend council/committee meetings
- Be willing to listen and learn
- “Thanks & spanks”



Berkeley Heights Mayor Devanney and Councilman Yellin help cut the ribbon on their new community garden, led by the EC Chair Rich Leister

Dealing with a Challenging Administration

- Offer solutions, not just opposition
- Build a base of support in community
- Work on projects that are of interest to governing body
- Don't take it personally

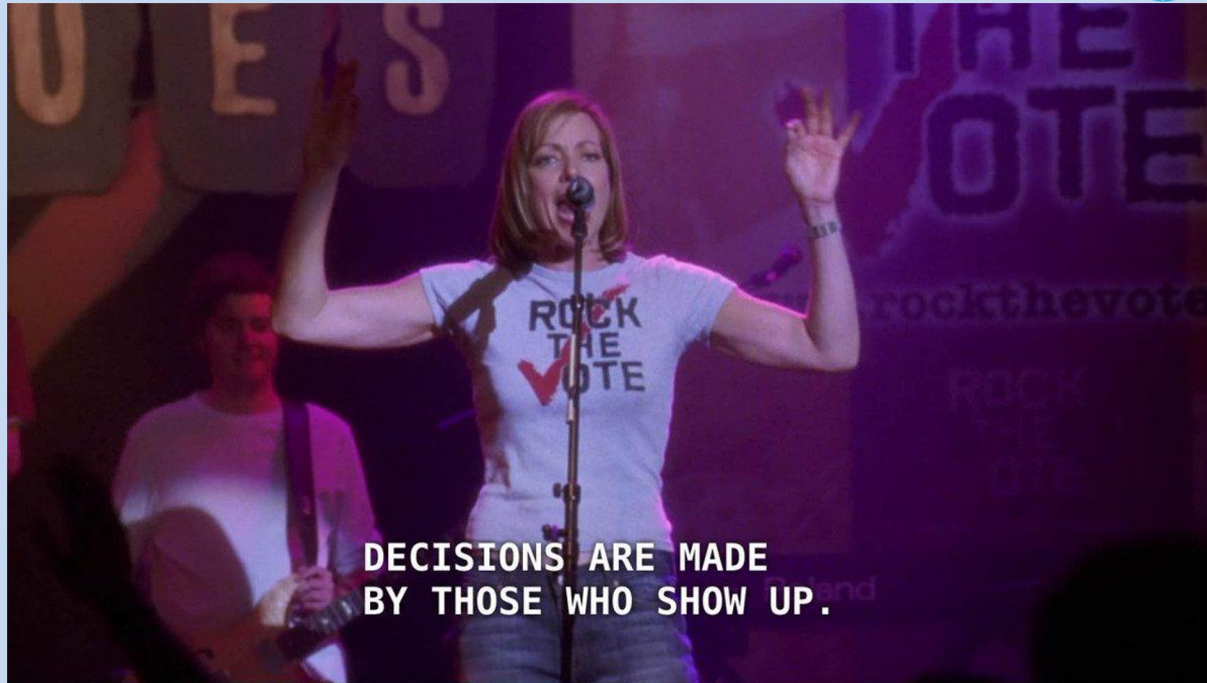


Creating trust



- Seek alliances
- Find common ground, shared needs
- Be open to new ideas
- Pool resources
- Share credit liberally
- Demonstrate value

Be an informed citizen



- Attend council meetings
- Make yourself known to PB, EC, Council/Committee
- Know your rights
- Reach out to resources

Advancing Environmental Justice in Your Community

- What is an overburdened community (OBC)?
- What does open space in OBC in your municipality look like?
- How do activities in your municipality affect (positively or negatively) OBC

Overburdened Communities (OBC)

Under the Environmental Justice Law

Data from 5 Year American Community Survey (2015 to 2019)

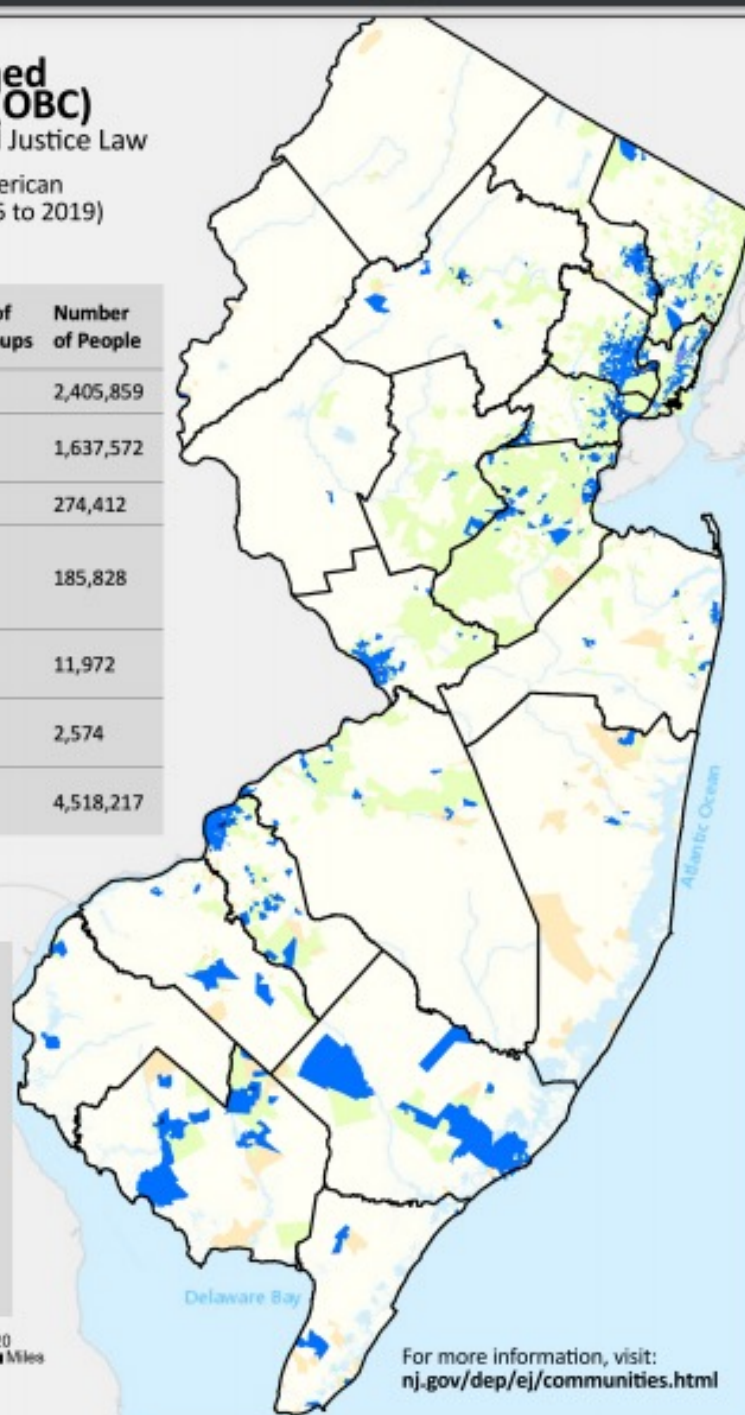
Category of OBCs*	Number of Block Groups	Number of People
Minority	1,670	2,405,859
Low Income & Minority	1,165	1,637,572
Low Income	197	274,412
Low Income, Minority, & Limited English	122	185,828
Minority & Limited English	12	11,972
Low Income & Limited English	2	2,574
TOTAL	3,168	4,518,217

□ Counties

*The Environmental Justice law defines OBCs as block groups with:

- (1) At least 35 percent low-income households; or
- (2) At least 40 percent of the residents identify as minority or as members of a State recognized tribal community; or
- (3) At least 40 percent of the households have limited English proficiency

0 5 10 20 Miles



For more information, visit:
nj.gov/dep/ej/communities.html

ANNOUNCEMENT

Grant Application

ANJEC is now accepting applications from environmental commissions for grants of up to \$1500 each for local open space stewardship projects.



Suitable projects for the grant funding include, but are not limited to:

- pollinator gardens
- trail building, signage, maintenance
- printed or online guides, maps, inventories of open space, trails
- open space or trails assessments, plans, maps

Supporting Open Space Initiatives



Environmental Commissions at work!



ECs work the problem!



Green Infrastructure Projects



Q&A



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