

To: LMT Board of Supervisors

January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011

From: LMT EAC

Subject: 2010 Year End Review

2010 has been another active year for LMT's Environmental Advisory Council; one again in which the EAC has brought money into the township, saved tax-payer monies through implementation of EAC recommended programs and provided recommendations on land use particularly with regard to storm water management and low impact development. The EAC has been active in improving township land through the planting of gardens and trees, both programs funded through grant money. In addition, the EAC sponsored several lecture series geared towards regional and local issues.

The following is a list of 2010 accomplishments, as well as projects we intend to work on in the coming year.

1. Drainage Basin Naturalization Program – LMT is responsible for maintaining over 100 drainage basins. As opposed to clean cutting basins, an alternative proposed by the EAC is to allow controlled naturalization of basins, which has been shown to have tremendous ecological and economic benefits. Over the past two years, drainage basins have been identified for inclusion in the Drainage Basin Naturalization program. Basins selected for the program are allowed to naturalize and are maintained with just a fringe cut around the edges. The minimized mowing of the basins allows them to return to their natural state. In addition to the ecological benefits of returning natural vegetation and habitat for birds, the basins absorb more water. An added benefit to the township is lower maintenance costs. Through this program, the 2010 basin costs are projected to be \$87,000, down from \$132,000, a savings of \$45,000 to LMT residence. More basins will be added to the program in 2011.
2. Open Space Inventory – In an ongoing effort to preserve open space in LMT, the township Manager requested the EAC to assess properties in the township as candidates for the open space program. The EAC Open Space Committee (a subset of EAC members) reviewed and made recommendations on which properties to include in the Open Space program. While the process is ongoing, to date, none of these properties have yet been acquired.
3. Recycling – Last year the Township received a grant for \$115,745.00 from the State for recycling 4,886 tons in 2008. This total includes recycling by both the residential and commercial sectors. The EAC took several actions to increase recycling in the Township. One involved the three large sports tournaments that occur in the Township each year; the Mother's Day weekend girls' soccer tournament, the Father's Day weekend girls' softball tournament, and the Columbus Day weekend boys' soccer tournament. Before each of these events the tournament directors were contacted by the EAC. It was requested that a sufficient number of recycling containers be made available at the events and that a large dumpster be placed on-site where the recycling containers could be emptied for collection by the waste hauler. With the help of the Township's portable recycling containers, the collection effort at the Father's Day weekend girls' softball

tournament was very successful. Unfortunately, very few additional recycling containers were made available during the Mother's Day and Columbus Day soccer tournaments and no recycling dumpsters were placed on-site. In the coming year the EAC will continue to work with the soccer tournament directors to improve the recycling at these community events.

4. Sustainability Action Plan –As part of the Cool Cities resolution adapted by the BOS, an action plan was required to be written. Accordingly, a group of over 30 LMT residents came together on a non-partisan basis and wrote up a plan which was completed in draft form in December 2010.
5. Smart Power – As a further recognition of LMTs successful completion of the Clean Energy Campaign, Smart Power presented LMT with signage acknowledging LMT's accomplishment. The sign is displayed in front of the Township Building Entrance near the PV installation.
6. Tree Planting – Roelofs Road Softball Complex – Two dozen native bare root trees (oaks, maples, chokecherries, river birches, redbuds) were planted at the Roelofs softball complex along Oxford Valley Road on April 10, 2010 by a group of community volunteers led by the EAC's Tree Tender subcommittee. The trees were secured through a Pennvest grant sponsored by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. The value of these trees is approximately \$2400. The group of volunteers, organized and led by Laura Brandt of the LMT EAC, continued to water and care for the trees throughout the long, drought-ridden summer. Brickman, a commercial landscaping company based in Langhorne, kindly donated Gator Bags to help with the watering efforts. These 15-gallon bags allow the water to release slowly over a 24-hour period for more effective watering. Most of the trees are doing well despite the tough weather conditions in 2010. This dedicated group will continue to water the trees in 2011, and probably periodically in 2012, depending on weather conditions.
7. Cell Phone Recycling – In February 2010, the EAC started an ongoing campaign to recycle used cell phones through the TerraCycle recycling program. A collection box has been placed in the lobby of the administration building. Proceeds of this collection go to the LMT Veterans' Memorial Park Fund. At least 100 cell phones were collected in 2010. This program was started to increase awareness regarding recycling efforts and keeps cell phones that contain toxic compounds such as precious metals, copper and plastics, out of our landfills.
8. Newtown R-8 Line Resolution - The Pennsylvania Transit Expansion Coalition gave a detailed presentation to the EAC and LMT residents which provided a balanced view on the proposal to re-open the R8 Newtown train line, linking downtown Newtown to Philadelphia, The R8 line currently terminates at Fox Chase. The EAC supported the proposal and recommended that PA-TEC give a presentation to the BOS and as a result the BOS approved a Resolution on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 in support of the R8 line expansion. Several surrounding townships, including Newtown have also passed similar resolutions. Most recently, the state's Department of Transportation has identified the Newtown commuter rail corridor as one of the many potential commuter rail expansion projects within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
9. EAC Newsletter – An EAC Newsletter is sent out electronically that captures upcoming lecture series in the region as well as providing timely information on current environmental issues.

10. LMT Native Plant Garden – The LMT EAC received its second Bucks Beautiful grant in 2010 (\$100 50/50 match LMT/BB = \$200 total). As a result of planting more native plants and colorful annuals, the LMT EAC was awarded First Place in the Community Garden category in the annual Bucks Beautiful garden competition (a program of the Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce). The native plant demonstration garden (located on the Edgewood road side of the LMT bldg) contains a blend of attractive native shrubs and perennials, with annuals in the summer and serves as an inspiration for the community, as well as an educational garden. The LMT EAC received nearly perfect scores and beat out several other area gardens when judged on overall design, artistic impression, imaginative ideas, and proper planting techniques and cultural practices. This EAC subcommittee will continue to maintain and beautify the garden each year with help from community volunteers. This highly visible garden, viewable from Edgewood road, has elicited many favorable comments from LMT personnel, as well as from the citizens of our town.
11. Birdtown USA – In October, the EAC hosted a presentation from the Audubon Society on “Birdtown USA”, a program for municipalities and residence on how to improve habitats for birds across the community. This project that started in 2010 will be worked on further in 2011.
12. Marcellus Shale Legislative Hearing Witness – the EAC was asked to participate in PA Legislative Hearings re: the Marcellus Shale Project, one of which was held at LaSalle University on October 13, 2010. The EAC expressed their concern that state of the art environmental safeguards should be in place before any drilling takes place and that state forest lands should not be exploited for the extraction of fossil fuels.
13. Environmental Lecture Series - The EAC sponsors lectures every year on topics of interest to the citizens of LMT. In 2010, the topics of these well-attended lectures were as follows:
  - a. Marcellus Shale Controversy – A joint presentation with “Transition Towns.”
  - b. Newtown R8 presentation – This presentation on the proposal to restore the R8 train line to the Newtown station was well attended at the LMT township building. In addition, this was the EAC’s first live web-cast of one of its lecture series.
  - c. Coal Country – A poignant film, shown in a joint presentation with the Sierra Club.
  - d. Birdtown USA – Presentation given by the Audubon Society on the state of migratory birds and how home-owners can play a part in preserving the diversity of birds that migrate along the Delaware river basin.
  - e. Earthship – This presentation on the construction of state of the art emission-free homes featured Lorraine Skala of the Silver Lake Nature Center.
14. Outreach Presentations –Due to LMT’s pro-active environmental role, other communities continue to reach out to us to learn the keys to our success. Accordingly, on 14 separate occasions in 2010, EAC representatives gave programs on recycling, on our unique Native Plant Ordinance, and on other state-of-the-art initiatives, as well. The recycling component was especially well received in the School and Scout community and several LMT residents were enlisted by the EAC to give those presentations. A sampling of some of the communities we have reached out to is as follows:
  - a. The Pennsbury School District

- b. Bucks County Environmental Stewardship Council
  - c. Highland Park N.J EAC
  - d. Hopewell Township N.J. EAC
  - e. The New Hope Solebury School District
  - f. Bowmans Hill Wildflower Preserve
  - g. Yardley Harvest Day
  - h. Girl Scout and Boy Scout Groups
14. Land Use Reviews – As per a resolution by the BOS, the EAC is required to comment on all LMT land use applications. For the year 2010, the EAC performed detailed reviews for the BOS on the following subdivision requests:
- a. Dogwood Drive
  - b. Edgewood Crossing
  - c. Flowers Field
  - d. Freeman’s Farm
  - e. The Jennings Tract
  - f. Middlemiss Subdivision
  - g. Matrix – Octagon Center
  - h. Toll Brothers – Regency at Yardley Project
  - i. The Zubaida Foundation
15. Application Completeness – The Township currently deems preliminary plan applications for development as complete when the applications sometimes lack all the required supporting information. The EAC believes this is in violation of our ordinances and can result in insufficient review time for important submittals such as traffic analyses, stormwater management plans and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs). This matter was brought to the Township Solicitor and BOS attention in a May 17, 2010 EAC letter and several follow-up e-mails.
16. Conference Attendance – To advance skills, EAC members are encouraged to attend seminars and conferences that showcase new or innovative environmental programs. The following list details some of the programs attended by EAC members during 2010:
- a. Land Ethics Symposium – Sponsored by Bowman’s Hill Wildflower Preserve
  - b. Newtown R-8 Train Line presentation (PA-TEC)
  - c. Annual P.E.C. (PA Environmental Council) Conference
  - d. Audubon Bird Town Presentation
  - e. P.E.C. Regional Seminar for riverine communities
17. Awards and Recognitions – LMT continues to be held up as an environmental model which other communities hope to emulate. As in past years, our town continues to receive positive feedback and recognition in the form of awards, grants and letters of commendation, some of which follow:
- a. Sierra Club commendation – On February 3, 2010, Dennis Winters, PA State Chairman for the Sierra Club, delivered and read a commendation letter to the BOS that recognized LMT’s role in adopting the first Small Municipality Green Building Code in the

State of Pennsylvania as well as commending us for the adoption of our Cool Cities Program.

- b. LMT Native Plant Garden – In October, 2010, the LMT EAC accepted the First Place, Community Garden Award from the Bucks Beautiful organization in its annual garden competition.
- c. Bucks Beautiful Grant – LMT received a \$100 matching grant from Bucks Beautiful to be used to expand the Administration building Native Plant Garden.
- d. Tree Grant – Over \$2,000 worth of trees were received via a grant from PennVest that was administered by the PHS (PA Horticultural Society.) These trees were planted and tended during a drought-filled summer by EAC and community volunteers.

The following is a list of projects that the EAC intends to pursue in 2011.

1. Revising the Neshaminy Creek and Delaware River South Stormwater Management Ordinances – The PA Stormwater Management Act (ACT 167) requires that the Township revise its Neshaminy Creek Stormwater Ordinance to reflect the new requirements and guidance in the Bucks County Model Ordinance. This revision must be completed by May 16, 2011. As part of the process, the EAC will recommend that several of these new stormwater control requirements be added to the Delaware River South ordinance so that the amount of stormwater generated throughout the entire Township is reduced and to provide rule consistency between both watersheds.
2. Sustainability Plan – Cool Cities – The projects listed in the Cool Cities Plan for LMT will be prioritized by Cool Cities Committee Members and the draft completed in 2010 will be thoroughly reviewed and edited by the EAC before it is presented to the citizens of LMT and the BOS.
3. Green Building Code – Residential and Commercial – The EAC will explore some innovative approaches to encourage the application of Green Building principles in the township.
4. Solar Applications for LMT – The Township Manager and EAC personnel will continue to work with energy providers, installers, and capital providers to assess the possibility of a significant solar application for our town. The goal is to have outside funding pay the bulk of the cost of such an installation.
5. Drainage Basin Naturalization – In 2011, basins will be added to this very successful program initiated by the EAC several years ago.
6. Open Space Program – At the request of the Township Manager, the EAC will prepare a list of possible acquisitions from its prioritized inventory list of projects that can be funded by the grant from the County. The EAC will continue its advocacy to start spending down the 15 million bond referendum moneys as it is our considered opinion that, due to the still distressed economy, property acquisition at this time makes great economic sense. Now, when our purchasing power is at its height, is the time to act; our citizens, who overwhelmingly approved this referendum, will be thanking us down the road.

7. Environmental Lecture Series – Within our budget constraints, we will continue to provide our citizens with first class presentations of environmental interest.
8. Expand Joint Ventures – Because of the realized synergies and cost efficiencies we will continue to hold joint programs with organizations like the Sierra Club, Bowman’s Hill et al
9. Makefield School “ Learning Garden” – As members of a newly constituted committee the EAC is supplying on board horticultural expertise to help design a native plant garden in the new, interior section of the Makefield Elementary School. This “Learning Garden” will also feature composting and recycling components and will augment the traditional student curriculum with some hands on environmental experiences.
10. Bird Town USA - The EAC will work towards designating LMT as an Audubon Bird Town. Bird Town is a joint project of Audubon Pennsylvania and municipalities across the commonwealth to recognize a township for its commitment to stewardship. A subcommittee will be working towards this goal which includes educating residents of our township to increase their understanding how they can increase healthy habitats for birds in their backyards and in schoolyards. If LMT is designated as a Bird Town, it would serve as a model for the state since it would be one of the first townships designated as such.
11. Bucks Beautiful -The LMT EAC will seek to obtain another grant this year to add more native plants to the LMT native plant garden.

2010 proved to be another active year for the EAC and 2011 will be no exception. The EAC remains dedicated to improving the environment and the quality of life for the residents of Lower Makefield Township. We look forward to working positively with the BOS to identify opportunities to further build on the successes realized in the township from implemented programs.

Cordially,

LMT EAC

Cc: T. Fedorchak – LMT Manager  
J. Majewski – Township Engineer  
LMT EAC Members  
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