

To: LMT Board of Supervisors

Jan. 31, 2012

From: LMT EAC

Subject: 2011 Year end Review

As is our custom, the LMT EAC is submitting a year-end review highlighting the various projects we have worked on throughout the year. This review is widely distributed so that the people of LMT and the BOS become aware of the positive work being done in and for our community by a dedicated group of volunteers. And, in these tight economic times, EAC projects, such as the Basin Naturalization Program and Recycling Improvement that return significant moneys to LMT, are even more important to our community.

The following listing details some of the more noteworthy projects the EAC was involved with in 2011 as well as a list of items we will be pursuing in 2012.

1. **Drainage Basin Naturalization Program** – LMT has approximately 150 drainage basins and open space areas that they are responsible for maintaining. Several years ago, the EAC proposed a naturalization program that entailed cutting back significantly the mowing regimen required to maintain those areas. This year, as in others, we have undertaken road tours with Township personnel and added more basins and open space areas to the program. This program that is kind to the environment (natural vegetation restored, more water absorbed, bird habitat restored) is also kind to the Town's pocketbook. With this year's inclusions, this program is saving LMT well over \$50,000/year in taxpayer dollars.
2. **Cool Cities – Sustainability Action Plan** – The Cool Cities plan is a national concept underwritten by the Sierra club, whose goal is to make communities environmentally sustainable. LMT was the first community in Bucks County to sign on to this innovative program. The Action Plan was completed June 8, 2011 and presented to the BOS on October 19, 2011. Close to 50 LMT residents were part of the various committees that helped to draft this plan so it is truly a document for this Town written by the people of this Town. The plan is literally a living document, a guide and pathway to LMT's environmental and economic sustainability. Currently, committee members are being drafted again to select, and implement, specific plan projects. If you want to be part of this exciting venture, e-mail Committee Chair Gail Stringer at ggstringer@comcast.net.
3. **Open Space Acquisition** – In April of 2011, the EAC met with the BOS in Executive Session to discuss and prioritize future open space acquisitions. It is our recommendation that, due to the overwhelming public support for this project, and the fact that because of the economic downturn property values are at a depressed level, that now is the opportune time to purchase open space. As of yet, the BOS has not acted on our advice and authorized any large scale acquisitions. However, the EAC, in an advisory capacity is, and has been, working with the BOS to procure a smaller 7 acre tract that can be purchased with moneys allotted to the Town from the Bucks County Open Space Bond Fund.

4. **Recycling** – In 2011, the Township received a grant for \$85,901 from the State for recycling 4,130 tons in 2009. This total includes recycling by both the residential and commercial sectors. The Township also received approximately \$55,000 for residential recycling material taken to the Otters Recycling facility (currently owned by Waste Management.) The EAC compiled a list of all items that could be recycled with the new single-stream recycling system adopted by all residential waste haulers in the Township. This list was placed on the Township’s web site and cable TV station and included as an insert in the property tax bill sent to all homes in July. The EAC continued to work with PAA and YMS to improve recycling at their large sports tournaments which translates into more recycling dollars for LMT.
5. **Revising the Neshaminy Creek and Delaware River South Stormwater Mgt. Ordinances**
The PA Stormwater management Act (ACT 167) required that the Township revise its Neshaminy Creek Stormwater Ordinance to reflect the new requirements and guidance in the Bucks County Model Ordinance. To improve on the Bucks County Model Ordinance, the EAC recommended that additional stormwater control parameters be added to the Township’s ordinance. We also recommended that these new requirements be added to the Delaware River South ordinance. This will result in improved stormwater management throughout the entire township and will provide rule consistency between both watersheds. The EAC made positive comments on the proposed changes at the Planning Commission and BOS meetings when the issue was discussed. The BOS approved these revisions to the Neshaminy Creek and Delaware River South Stormwater Management Ordinances at their May 18, 2011 meeting.
6. **Audubon’s Bird Town Program** – The Township approved the EAC’s involvement in the Audubon Bird Habitat Recognition Program. Over the course of the year the EAC plans to demonstrate how homeowners can conserve their land and create a more sustainable environment for birds in the LMT community. Currently, EAC member Laura Brandt is the Bird Town coordinator. Lower Makefield joins Newtown Township, Penndel Borough, Doylestown Borough and Doylestown Township in their conservation efforts in this national Habitat Recognition Program. So far, over a dozen homeowners have supported these efforts in LMT by registering their properties in the program.
7. **Makefield School Learning Garden** – After the successful Green Building rehabilitation of the Makefield Elementary School, a large learning garden (approximately 40x60) was proposed for the large, unused central courtyard area. The garden project, the brainchild of 3rd grade teacher, Tom Guest, is intended to be part of the curriculum and will feature native plants and shrubs and a large growing area for vegetables as well. The LMT EAC supplied technical expertise in designing the native perennial and shrub garden, as well as supplying hands on planting assistance on May 3, 2011 to supplement the efforts of the students, parents, teachers and administrators. This project was accomplished by donations, grants and volunteer sweat equity and no taxpayer dollars were used in its creation. The prestigious PHS (PA Horticulture Society) thought enough of this project to award it first prize in their community garden category. This project was a poster child for how a community and a school can come together for a common purpose.
8. **Afton School Learning Garden** – The Makefield School Garden project has caught the interest of the community and the Afton School community is thinking about a garden project for the

central courtyard in their school. A meeting was held in November to lay the groundwork for this project. As in the Makefield School Garden, the LMT EAC is supplying technical plant and gardening expertise to help this project become a reality.

9. **Environmental Lecture Series** – The EAC generally sponsors 2-4 lectures each year on environmental topics we feel to be of great interest to the community. While our restricted budget did not allow us to hold as many events as in past years we, nonetheless, were able to hold the following two, well-attended events:
 - a. Geothermal – Heating and air conditioning – May 14, 2011
 - b. Green Business Vendor Expo – October 22, 2011 – In a collaboration with the Economic Development Commission, the EAC sponsored a local Green Business Expo that featured over 25 local, green businesses from the LMT, Yardley, Morrisville community. This expo was held at the newly renovated Makefield Elementary School and samplings from the over 300 attendees attested to the value of this and like-minded ventures. It is our intention to hold a similar event in late 2012 or early the following year.
10. **Outreach Presentations** – As an acknowledged environmental leader, other committees have continued to reach out to LMT to discover how we made things happen in our town. As in past years, we have upon request, spoken at other communities to discuss the keys to our success. Bristol Township and Tullytown Boro were two of the communities our outreach program touched last year.
11. **Land Use Reviews** – The EAC, as per a BOS resolution, is required to comment on the various land use applications that are submitted to LMT. During the year 2011, the EAC submitted detailed review letters on the following proposals:
 - a. Regency – 2 response letters
 - b. Aria Hospital sub-division
 - c. Flowers Field – 2 reviews
 - d. Grace Point Church
12. **Conference Attendance** – EAC members have been continually encouraged over the years to attend environmental conferences that have enabled us to find out “what’s out there” and to bring back to LMT ideas of merit for the scrutiny of the BOS that we feel have a place in our Town. The following highlights some presentations attended by EAC members over the past year:
 - a. The Citizens Energy Forum –LMT Administration Building
 - b. The 14th annual PA Environmental Council Conference – Villanova, PA
 - c. Bowmans Hill Land Ethics Symposium
 - d. Macro Invertebrates – Stroud Water Research Center – Bristol, PA
 - e. Stormwater Management – E.P.A. and Heritage Conservancy

The following is a list of projects that the EAC intends to pursue in 1012:

1. **Drainage Basin Naturalization** – Additional basins and open space areas will be added to this very successful program. Naturalization techniques involving a drastically reduced mowing

regimen was brought to the attention of the BOS several years ago; this environmental, economically sound program, is returning over \$50,000/year to the taxpayers of LMT.

2. **Sustainability Plan – Cool Cities** – The action plan required by participation in the Cool Cities Program was presented to the BOS in late 2011. In 2012, committees will be formed to tackle some of the projects singled out for inclusion in the program. A Buy Local, Buy Green initiative designed to bolster support for local businesses and agriculture will be a high priority item for the newly formed committees to address.
3. **Recycling** – We will continue to promote recycling in Lower Makefield for both environmental and economic reasons. It is our intent to expand homeowner and business recycling by working with the administration to get the word out that recycling is required by law and that it returns significant dollars to LMT. Since 2006 the EAC's efforts in this area have yielded over \$200,000 for the Twp. that otherwise would have been lost.
4. **Environmental Lecture Series** – Within budget constraints it is the intention of the EAC to hold environmental programs we feel will be of interest to the citizens of LMT.
5. **Solar Applications for LMT** – EAC personnel will continue to work with the LMT Administration to determine the economic feasibility of bringing a significant solar installation to the Town. The goal is to pay for such a project primarily from outside funding sources.
6. **Open Space Program** – In a past referendum and during an economic downturn over 70% of the voters approved a 15 million dollar open space bond for LMT. We feel that, although the economy is showing significant signs of improvement that there are still depressed property values that make open space procurement a wise choice for the Town at this time. Accordingly, we would like to meet with the BOS throughout the year to provide information to them regarding some of these currently available attractive options.
7. **Tree Planting and Procurement** – The EAC will be working on a project in 2012 to replace some of the trees that died off during the severe drought of the previous summer. Since several developers "owe" trees to the Town, we will work with Township officials to procure and plant these trees at no cost to the community.
8. **Bucks Beautiful Garden Grants** – The beautiful native garden in front of the LMT Administration Building was almost entirely paid for by outside grant monies. In order to expand the garden, we will continue to seek further grants from the Bucks Beautiful and other similar organizations.
9. **Afton School Childrens' Learning Garden** – At the request of parents and teachers, the EAC will supply whatever expertise it can to further the goal of a childrens' learning garden that would be located in the Afton School central courtyard area. Success breeds success. The Afton Garden Committee was formed after reviewing the very successful Makefield Garden project that was accomplished primarily through grants and donations.
10. **Expand Joint Ventures** – The joint Green Vendor Expo showcasing of local business by the EAC and the Economic Development Commission was highly successful. We will continue to look for other similar opportunities with other organizations that will benefit the LMT community.

Even within the budget constraints we have had to live with we feel we have made a positive environmental impact on our community during the previous year. And a nurtured

environment translates into a positive economic flow of dollars to the Town as can be seen by the significant savings realized on some of those projects. We look forward to working with the BOS in 2012 on projects that will both enhance the lives of our citizens and continue to position LMT as a model environmental community. As always, it is a pleasure to serve the people of Lower Makefield.

Sincerely,

The LMT EAC

Cc: T. Fedorchak – LMT Manager
LMT EAC Members
LMT Planning Commission Members
N. Frick – LMT ZIP Director
J. Garton – LMT Attorney
V. Torbert – CTC Chairperson
D. Frichey – Parks and Recreation Chairperson