

BORDENTOWN: City earns Green Town nod for environmental programs

By Vanessa S. Holt, Managing Editor

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BORDENTOWN CITY — On Monday, the city will be recognized for its environmental efforts with a Green Town award from the New Jersey Environmental Lobby.

The 2008 Green Town USA award recognizes towns that satisfy a number of requirements including having an Environmental Commission, a Planning Board that looks for sustainable future development, a Shade Tree Committee that maintains street trees in town, and an annual Arbor Day tree planting.

Previous Green Town USA award winners include Hamilton Township, Cranford Township and West Windsor Township.

Planning Board Chairman Sam Surtees, Environmental Commission Chairman Mike Hunninghake, and local supporters are expected to attend, said Mr. Hunninghake.

“This award validates the tremendous efforts over the last seven years of the Bordentown City commissioners, Planning Board, and Environmental Commission to foster a more sustainable community in Bordentown City,” Mr. Hunninghake said. “It speaks volumes about the hard work and commitment of our elected officials and volunteers to create a smarter, greener community.”

Mr. Hunninghake said open space funding from Green Acres, Burlington County, and the D&R Greenway Land Trust has allowed the city to begin to acquire and develop urban open space within the 1-square-mile municipality.

Current open space and trails efforts include Lime Kiln Alley Park, Thorntown Creek Greenway Trail and the Railroad Avenue Promenade, which will supply an interconnected series of accessible trails and green spaces within the city.

The city applied for the NJEL award earlier this year. Mr. Hunninghake said he believes the recognition also will help the city in applying for grants in the future. “It will tout the planning we have been doing; it burnishes our credentials,” he said.

“The City of Bordentown worked persistently to update its master plan to ensure a sustainable future and to protect the natural resources of this historic town,” said Anne Poole, president of the NJEL, in a statement.

“The Review Committee was particularly impressed by the active Environmental Commission, its outreach to residents, and the variety of environmental programs and experiences that are offered to the public. It is interesting that many of these programs

and events highlight the relationship between the city's ecology and its history.”

“Living in an urban environment, it is important to recognize the natural environment around you and to educate city residents as to their existence, enjoyment and preservation,” said Planning Board Chairman Sam Surtees. “For Bordentown City, with its urban environment to be awarded Green Town USA speaks well for our city's efforts to educate our residents and the public at large to our natural environment here.”

“There has been too much poor local and regional planning based on sustaining the goal of building something on every piece of open ground in sight,” said Mayor Bill Collom in a statement released by the Environmental Commission.

“We have tried to do it differently in the City of Bordentown. The city is essentially an urban area with a small town aura. We are fortunate in that we still have some areas, primarily stream corridors, that can be preserved for open space and we work hard to preserve our urban forest. We are fortunate, too, in having volunteers on our various boards who understand the need to balance sustainable growth with preservation of a healthy environment.”

The Green Town award will be presented to the Bordentown City Commission at its regular meeting on at 8 p.m. at Bordentown City Hall, 324 Farnsworth Ave