

The Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission was established to protect, develop or use natural resources, including water resources, located within the Township. The Environmental Commission is an advisory group with the responsibility to recommend plans and programs to the Planning Board for the development and use of open lands and wetlands. The commission is a statutory board of seven regular and two alternate Berkeley Heights residents. One regular member is designated as the Chair, and one is also a Planning Board member. All the members volunteer their time on a variety of projects and tasks, including:

- Reviewing all applications for development filed with the Planning board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment and recommending steps to assure the preservation and protection of natural resources to the appropriate board before the public hearing of the applications;
- Recommending policies and practices to the Township Council, the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment concerning open space preservation, water resource management, air pollution control, solid waste management, noise control, soil and landscape protection, environmental appearance, marine resource and protection of flora and fauna. Recent examples include the drafting of an update to the ordinance protecting trees in the Township and support of the new ordinance regulating construction on steep slopes;
- Promoting environmental awareness programs in the Berkeley Heights schools;
- Maintaining a Natural Resources Inventory, the Community Forestry Management Plan and Tree City USA status;
- Assisting with the street tree planting program;
- Working together with various other groups to preserve and improve the open space in Berkeley Heights. Some examples include the Passaic River Park Walkway and Peppertown Park. Both of these projects won ANJEC awards.

Currently, the commission is developing a Sustainability Action Plan for Berkeley Heights. This program, if enacted, would make recommendations regarding “green” energy use, conservation practices in Township buildings and operations, and management of tree resources and open space. It would also extend recommendations to the public to reduce energy use, incorporate low emission energy sources and develop practices that reduce undesirable air, water and solid waste emissions.