

FEBRUARY 2017 SUSTAINABILITY HERO



MATTHEW R. VON DER HAYDEN Green Team Leader and Manager of Capital Planning, Ocean City (Cape May County)

Matthew von der Hayden served as the Manager of Capital Planning and the green team leader for the City of Ocean City, New Jersey from 2014 to 2017. He serves on the Sustainable Jersey Local Economies Task Force, is a steering committee member for the Sustainable Jersey Atlantic-Cape May Hub and was the city liaison to Ocean City's Environmental Commission from 2015 to 2017. Matt grew up in Gloucester County and now lives in Cape May County.

Friendly and genuine, Matt is known as a hardworking, multi-tasking, action-oriented guy who has a knack for seeing the big picture and then motivating his team to get things done. This has certainly been true as Matt led Ocean City to receive silver-level Sustainable Jersey certification in 2016. Matt has coordinated multiple dune plantings and a successful eco-lecture series in Ocean City. He participates in beach cleanups led by Clean Ocean Action and enjoys speaking at Villanova University and mentoring current students. Matt is leaving his position in Ocean City to become the new Deputy Administrator for Egg Harbor Township where we expect big things from him as well!

Grants move sustainability forward: "I have found that everyone will have an opinion when you start talking about sustainability," said Matt. "But if you can get grant funding for your innovative projects and then those sustainable projects or renewable energy projects save your town money and serve to bring the community together, well most people come around to supporting sustainability." He added, "I have been lucky to work with the leadership and green team members in Ocean City who understand the value of sustainability and step up to do the work to get it done."



Matt put together two successful grant applications that received funding from the Sustainable Jersey Grant Program. The first was a \$2,000 grant that was used to help advance a new "Ecotourism" brochure to promote Ocean City's green initiatives. A second grant for \$30,000 is being used to purchase an electric vehicle for the city fleet which will be used to promote to the public new charging infrastructure in Ocean City. Ocean City has also secured and managed more than \$11 million in grants since Matt began working with the City.

Ocean City achieves silver-level Sustainable Jersey certification: The Ocean City Green Team meets monthly and includes city staff, residents and representatives of civic groups and organizations. In 2015, Matt was put in charge of the green team and he led the group to help Ocean City become recertified with

Sustainable Jersey at the bronze-level. Matt said, “After we achieved bronze, we knew we wanted to do more and we went straight back to work to get certified in 2016 with 430 points to achieve silver-level certification.”

To achieve certification, the green team completed and documented a number of sustainability actions including: a community garden, a green building policy, a demonstration dune, safe routes to schools, a complete streets plan, an eco-lecture series, raingardens, a sustainable land use pledge, a natural resources inventory, a green purchasing policy, a municipal communications strategy and more.

To read about all of the actions achieved for certification, visit the [City of Ocean City Sustainable Jersey Certification Report](#). The green team is currently looking into the Sustainable Jersey gold star in the energy category for 2017.



Atlantic-Cape May Sustainable Jersey Hub connects green teams:

Before working for the City of Ocean City, Matt was a project analyst at the Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA). The director of ACUA, Rick Dovey, is the chair of the Sustainable Jersey Board of Trustees. Rick encouraged staff to get involved with Sustainable Jersey on a volunteer basis. Based on this prompting, Matt helped Sustainable Jersey set up a number of workshops at ACUA and soon became a fan of the Sustainable Jersey program. Matt was invited to serve on the [Atlantic-Cape May Sustainable Jersey Hub](#) steering committee. The Atlantic-Cape May Sustainable Jersey Hub supports green team communities in Atlantic and Cape May counties. The Hub has facilitated a "Down Beach Green Team" to support a plastic bag education campaign that so far has led to the passage of New Jersey's first bag fee ordinance in Longport, and soon to come in Ventnor.

Best location for a green fair - Ocean City Music Pier in August:

As part of its Sustainable Jersey certification, Ocean City held a green fair. Matt said that the green fair was a task that brought the community together since many different people and organizations pitched in to participate.

Matt said, “The fair introduced sustainability to all members of the community. It helped to educate about the difference that conscious efforts in conservation and recycling can make. We hope people left with tools they could use at home. We also sought to celebrate the community’s green success, as well as support local green businesses.”



At the height of the August tourist season, the green fair was held on the boardwalk to attract local residents as well as the visiting vacationers. Twenty-four organizations participated and there were over 300 attendees. The City is planning to make this an annual event.

Event participants included: Atlantic City Electric, BikeOC.org, Busy Bees – NJ, Cape Atlantic Conservation District, Cape May County Mosquito Control, Cape May County MUA, Clean Ocean Action, the City of Ocean City Environmental Commission, the Ocean City Ecumenical Council, the City of Ocean City Public Works

Department, the Ocean City Community Rating System Program, the Ocean City Shade Tree Commission, the Utility Advisory Commission, the Ocean City Free Public Library, the Community Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity - Cape May County, Jalma Farms, Nature Center of Cape May, New Jersey American Water, New Jersey Clean Energy Program, Rutgers COOP, Solar City, South Jersey Gas, Stevens Institute of Technology, and the Surfrider Foundation – South Jersey Chapter.

Education and past experience: Matt obtained a Bachelor’s of Science Degree in Biological Sciences from Rowan University. As a testament to his work ethic, Matt worked full time at Home Depot while he was going to college, and this money in addition to a small scholarship, enabled him to leave Rowan University debt free. He obtained his Master of Business Administration (MBA), Finance and Accounting degree from Rutgers University and his Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree from Villanova University.

Matt has over ten years of experience in the public sector, eight of which have been related to finance, project management, grants and public management. He has worked with federal, state and local organizations, along with the public, to complete projects for both the City of Ocean City and the Atlantic County Utilities Authority.

In Ocean City, Matt managed a \$98.5 million dollar capital plan for the City of Ocean City, while also serving as the Community Development Block Grant coordinator, municipal housing liaison, Council on Affordable Housing administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency grant coordinator for disasters and storm events, grant writer and manager, Alternate Insurance Fund commissioner, Sustainable Jersey green team leader, liaison to federal, state and local regulatory agencies and liaison to the City’s Environmental Commission. Matt is an active member in the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), a member of the Emerging Local Government Leaders (ELGL) and a Water Environment Federation member.



What you may not know about Matt: Educated in Gloucester and Camden County Catholic schools, he spent time between his family home in West Deptford and his father’s family clothing store located in Paulsboro. Matt is an only child and growing up in a number of places he was able to meet and know people of all different backgrounds.

Matt said he gets his work ethic from his entire family, but especially his mother whom he watched go to school at night while he was a kid. She served as the director of human resources for Cooper Hospital. Matt said, “I certainly could see how hard my mother worked to give me a good life and I hope to do the same for my family.” Matt met his wife Melissa at Rowan University and when she graduated the couple moved to Upper Township where they have had a home for nine years.

They have a five-year-old son named Luke who is within the Autism Spectrum. Matt said, “Luke is social and likes to be around people, so we like to go out. I have learned so much from Luke already.” As a family, they like to get outside and be active by doing walks, hikes, canoeing and visiting the beach. Matt has run a 5-k race for Autism Speaks and has participated in the events of [POAC Autism Services](#).