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## Going Green Doesn't Have to Cost a Lot of Green

Hopatcong environmental commission chairman seeks sustainability, at little or no cost to community.

By [MaryLynn Schiavi](#) | [Email the author](#) | August 25, 2011



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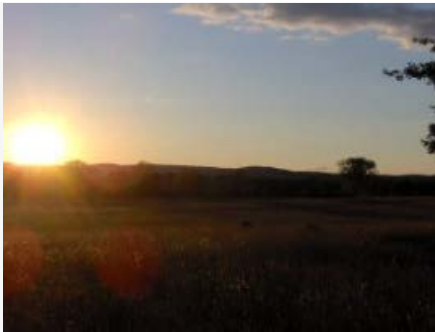
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With an eye on achieving bronze status with the Sustainable Jersey program by next year, Jerry Scanlan, chairman of the Hopatcong environmental commission, said he is determined to achieve it with little or no cost to the taxpayers.

When a municipality has made a commitment to sustainability and has taken significant first steps, it earns the Sustainable Jersey bronze level of certification.

Scanlan, who works in business development for Alcatel-Lucent, has served as the commission's chairman for two years, and also serves on the planning board.

He said he became interested in sustainability and environmental issues early in his life when he was an Eagle Scout, and later as a Water Scout on Lake Hopatcong.

"We don't have a lot of money, so my objective is to see how we can achieve our desired status without spending any money," Scanlan said.

**Sustainable Jersey** is a certification program for New Jersey municipalities seeking to become more environmentally responsible, create a more sustainable quality of life, and accomplish these goals in the most efficient and economical way.

The program offers a list of initiatives that towns can seek to implement to become certified and be considered an example of a sustainable community.

According to Scanlan, the program provides guidance and tools that make it very clear for communities seeking to take environmentally positive action.

There are also grants available to help municipalities reach their goals.

The Sustainable Jersey program encourages sustainability focused on three principles:

- Prosperity -- initiatives should support the local economy and utilize community resources
- Planet – practice responsible environmental management and conservation
- People -- embrace social equity and fairness.

Scanlan said he is very excited about the program that was launched in February of 2009, but began to evolve as early as 2006.

"There are a number of initiatives that we could take and as we complete them we will earn points toward becoming a sustainable community," said Scanlan.

For instance, the town will get points for forming a green team and for ensuring that our buildings are energy efficient.

He said at this point, what is most important, is taking inventory of what the town is already doing with regard to sustainable practices.

"The green team was officially formed last year. Essentially the environmental commission is serving as the defacto green team which includes a number of department heads, and the mayor," Scanlan said.

"But in order for us to earn the points we need by next year, we need to make this a community wide effort," Scanlan said.

He said he is not sure the town can achieve bronze status by the end of 2011, but certainly by the end of 2012.

"It's going to require a lot of documentation," he said.

"I want to focus on things we can do and what's great about this program is that it provides the help that municipalities need to achieve their goals."

Scanlan said he hopes that members of the community will step forward and essentially take action on the initiatives that interest them the most.

"There are more than enough opportunities to help out with this effort. I say, focus on what is of interest to you. Pick one or two things – and then go for it," Scanlan said.

He said it's not necessary to join the commission and attend lots of meetings to make a significant difference.

He advises those who are interested to go on the Sustainable Jersey Web site and look at the list of recommended initiatives then let the commission know what kind of action they would like to take—so it can be documented and count towards the town's certification.

Scanlan said what the commission really needs help with is documenting the town's green efforts that are already in place or underway.

According to the Sustainable Jersey Web site:

*"New Jersey is the first state in the nation to have a comprehensive sustainability program for communities that links certification with strong state and private financial incentives, and a fully resourced program of technical support and training. Sustainable Jersey has streamlined, incentivized and guided the process."*

\*\*

For more information about the [Sustainable Jersey program](#), visit the Web site. Sustainable Jersey can also be found on Facebook.

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**PJ\_Wolf**

8:15 am on Thursday, August 25, 2011

As long as Mayor & Council are not involved - this might actually work.

[Log in to reply](#)

**Terry Bond**

12:30 pm on Thursday, August 25, 2011

If you follow the link provided, and then click on Actions for Sustainable Communities, there's a whole list of things that can be done. There's a section about Food. If you click to see the subactions under Support Local Food and Food Production, they mention Farmers Markets and Community/School Gardens and Gardening on Municipal Land. I know there was an article in Patch a while back about someone who was trying to start a community garden and there have recently been discussions about getting a Farmer's Market in town. These are good things, in and of themselves, but they would also earn points.

I also just read in the Musconetcong News that Netcong will now be recycling more types of plastic, not just 1 and 2. They will be taking 4, 5, and 7 also. It also says they are recycling "boxes used for liquids and frozen food, such as soup boxes, drink boxes and milk and juice cartons". Can Hopatcong PLEASE start taking these items? I'd barely have any garbage to put out if they did. I don't have much garbage now, with everything we already recycle, but if they took these other items too, it would really decrease.

[Log in to reply](#)

**Heidi**

1:59 pm on Saturday, October 22, 2011

Terry,  
I agree we need to recycle everything we can and starting with taking more than just 1 and 2 plastics would be great.!

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