

Getting Ready for Certification Focusing Your Green Team

Lori Braunstein
Founder/Chair
Sustainable Cherry Hill



Green Teams

Forming a green team is a first step in establishing a community's participation in Sustainable Jersey, a certification program for municipalities that want to go green, save money, and take steps to sustain their quality of life over the long term.



Green Teams

According to the Sustainable Jersey web site, green teams leverage the skills and expertise of team members to develop plans, implement programs, and assist with educational opportunities that support the creation of a sustainable community.



Green Teams

They can be called by any name, but the role of the green team is the same: *lead and coordinate the sustainability activities of the community.*



Green Teams

What many people do not realize is that a successful green team must be built upon a foundation of strong leadership, clarity of purpose, strategic planning, communication and more.



Pick a strong leader.

The Green Team should have a clearly defined leader, whose role and responsibilities have been determined and documented.

Having leaders from both the municipal and community sides of the team can be effective.



Create a mission statement.

Everyone involved should have a clear sense of purpose.

The role/scope of the group is best defined as a group exercise with input from diverse interests.



Make a plan. Visit it often.

Achieving certification can take several years.

Having a strategic plan with long and short-term goals helps to keep the team focused and moving forward.

Revisit the plan at each meeting to keep on track.



Divide the work.

While strong leadership is vital to the success of your team, it is helpful to assign other group members tasks such as scheduling meetings, creating agendas, arranging rooms, sending out emails, updating spreadsheets, uploading documents, etc.

This helps decrease leader burn out and enables other group members to take ownership of their roles on the team.



Schedule regular meetings.

Choose a regular meeting time and stick with it.

Creating a yearly meeting schedule and communicating it to members can make the difference between a successful effort and one that gets “fit in” when convenient.



Be clear about how decisions are made.

Meeting and decision making procedures should be clearly defined and understood by the group.

Transparency can eliminate power struggles and hurt feelings.



Think diversity!

Take an honest look at who is on your team.

Does it include representatives from municipal government, residents, businesses, faith groups and schools and reflect the demographics of the town?

The more diverse voices at the table, the more robust and authentic the effort will be.



Get municipal support.

Sustainable Jersey is administered by the municipality, so your team cannot succeed without municipal support.

Does your team have access to municipal staff or consultants in the areas of planning, engineering, legal matters and purchasing?

Be mindful of how partisanship may influence the decisions or progress of the group.



Communicate...then communicate some more.

Regular, formal communications should go out to green team members, municipal leadership and the community.

Keeping everyone informed helps everyone celebrate progress and involves others in the process.



Hone your community organizing skills.

It is vital for the community at large to be aware of and support the efforts of the Green Team.

Create a community outreach plan that includes building email lists, sending out regular communications, hosting educational events and holding a community visioning event.



Don't do it all yourself.

Your community likely has existing initiatives, resources and programs that may count towards certification.

Look to your environmental commission, shade tree commission, business association or schools.

Research, document and celebrate these efforts.



Network, network, network.

Every community has groups like Rotary Clubs, PTA's, swim clubs and civic associations that have their own resources.

Visit these groups, ask them to send out your information, have a table at their events and look for every opportunity to connect with assets that already exist in your town.



Connect and learn.

Look for opportunities to connect with your neighbors and others doing this work.

None of us are experts and we all have something we can learn from each other.

Take advantage of the free trainings offered by Sustainable Jersey.



My contact info

Lori Braunstein

Founder/Chair, Sustainable Cherry Hill

Lori.Braunstein@sustainablecherryhill.org

609.238.3449

