

AUGUST 2017 SUSTAINABILITY HERO



ADRIANNE SPOTA Founding Member/Chair, Marlboro Township Green Team Monmouth County

Adrienne Spota is a founding member of the [Marlboro Township Green Team](#) and has served as the chair for the past seven years. In 2012, Adrienne became a [Marlboro Township](#) employee, working in the administration office and as an assistant to the Mayor's Aide. She is hardworking and dedicated in her pursuit of a more sustainable Marlboro Township. She is always ready to assist other towns in her role as a member of the Sustainable Jersey Monmouth County Hub. Adrienne said, "Basically, if it needs to get done, just ask me because I am happy to help."

Adrienne has innovative ideas and is never opposed to trying new things. She has a background in land use, having early experience on various township boards and committees including: the Community Pride Committee, the Master Plan Committee, the Visioning Committee, the Open Space Committee and the State Hospital Property Review Team. Adrienne served five years on the Marlboro Township Zoning Board, acting as board secretary for two years.

Adrienne is quick to point out that sustainability work in Marlboro is made possible because of the support of Mayor Jonathan Hornik, the Township Council and the Business Administrator Jonathan Capp. She said, "The green team, which is a great team, would never have been successful working alone. It takes all departments of municipal government, community organizations, local business partners and residents to get projects done. I'm so proud of the political leadership and volunteers in Marlboro. Our Department of Public Works is always willing to help, the Mayor's Office is available for guidance and publicity, the Township Engineer keeps an eye toward sustainability, and more."

Mayor Hornik has taken a leadership role in advancing Marlboro's sustainability agenda with initiatives like founding the Marlboro Township Green Team, resurrecting the Shade Tree Committee and Economic Development Committee and spearheading environmentally protective ordinances. "When Mayor Hornik took office," she explained, "the climate in Marlboro changed for the best, encouraging innovative ideas and involvement at all levels. It opened the door for the green team to move forward."

Sustainable Jersey Certified: Beginning primarily as a function of the green team, Adrienne helped Marlboro Township achieve its first Sustainable Jersey certification in 2010. The process evolved for the 2013 and 2016 certification cycles with the Township Administrator and Township Engineer taking on a critical role. "So much of the certification actions are in areas ranging from town planning, energy, public works, shade tree, open space, economic development, so the list of contributors goes on. Sustainability really is a town wide team effort," Adrienne said. The Marlboro Green Team is proud to be a part of this total township initiative, meeting monthly and maintaining an extensive outreach schedule. You can review the full certification report: [Marlboro Township Sustainable Jersey Certification Report](#).



Sustainable Jersey Monmouth County Hub: The Marlboro Green Team's work has expanded to the county level through participation in the Sustainable Jersey Monmouth County Hub. Adrienne said, "Participation in the Hub meetings helped us gain insight into the work of other Monmouth County green teams. It inspired me to work harder. I usually walk away from a hub meeting with really good ideas of things to do in Marlboro and contacts to help get it done." Marlboro members have assisted with several Hub events and also attended Monmouth County Planning Board meetings on the County Master Plan. Adrienne also designed the Monmouth County Hub logo, as well as the Marlboro Green Team logo.



Community Movies: The Marlboro Green Team worked in partnership with the Monmouth County Hub and Whole Foods Market of Marlboro to present a film series, which included the screening of the movie "Bag It." The film examines alternatives to single use plastic bags. Adrienne said, "The team worked with the Hub to decide the location, the activities for children and the educational message. Whole Foods Market, having eliminated plastic shopping bags already, was the perfect community partner, offering the venue, light snacks and a coupon for a re-useable shopping bag. It was another team effort. The Marlboro Mayor's office helped publicize the event locally, the Marlboro IT department assisted in the audio-visual tech set up and the Marlboro Teen Advisory Committee was tasked to assist with a children's activity-decorating a re-useable shopping bag."

Marlboro Mayor Hornik Ice Cream Bike and Stroll: Adrienne is the principal coordinator of the Mayor's Ice Cream Bike and Stroll, that is organized through a partnership with the Monmouth County Parks System, Marlboro Township Administration, Mayor's Office, the Marlboro Township Police Department and Police Explorers and two local businesses. This green team-coordinated event is designed to increase awareness of the Henry Hudson Trail and the health and wellness benefits of the sustainable, free of charge, zero footprint form of recreation and transportation. Adrienne said, "With about 200 participants biking, walking and talking with Mayor Hornik, this event is a good way to get local residents invested in this vital greenway." She added, "The time the Mayor gives to every participant adds to the atmosphere. People return year after year and share their experience with their friends. It's successful thanks to our local business partners, the Bicycle Hub of Marlboro, which has hosted this event for nine years, and Mikey's Ice Cream." Adrienne said, "The green team learned that in order to have the most impact with our message and events we needed to go where people go. So, in addition to stand-alone events, we also take every opportunity to join annual events already happening in town." For Community Pride Day, the green team and Shade Tree Committee partner on a poster contest, often attracting 100 school aged children. At Marlboro Day, the team educates the public on recycling with sustainable back-to-school ideas like re-useable water bottles and lunch bags. Adrienne said, "At Dinosaur Day we highlight the sustainable benefits of staying local for things like fossil hunting, our great recreation programs, the Bike Ride and Shop Marlboro!"



Shop Marlboro! "We're very proud of this program," Adrienne exclaimed. "The Shop Marlboro! Tax Reward program was developed by Mayor Hornik, Deputy Mayor Larry Rosen and the Economic Development Committee. "The green team takes every opportunity to talk it up and look for ways to encourage residents to Buy Local," she added. A [Shop Marlboro](#) website enables registered home owners to accrue tax credits when patronizing participating merchants. Participating businesses are featured on the website. More than 4,000 households are currently registered with the program, which has resulted in savings of over \$240,000 in property taxes to date.

Two record breaking Project Porchlight CFL distributions: In an effort to give Marlboro teens a voice in local government and enhance their leadership skills, Mayor Hornik and Deputy Mayor Rosen created the Teen Advisory Committee (TAC). Recognizing a valuable partner, the green team tapped TAC for a huge outreach initiative. The TAC and green team volunteers worked together on two successful events to distribute energy-efficient compact fluorescent light (CFL) technology to over 8,000 residents. The volunteers canvassed the town and educated the community on cutting greenhouse gas emissions through the use of CFL light bulbs. Each home visited by a TAC teen or green team representative received a free CFL light bulb. The bulbs were provided by [Project Porchlight](#) and [New Jersey's Clean Energy Program](#).



Master Plan Sustainability Element: Form Based Code: Working closely with former Councilman Frank LaRocca, who also sponsored the creation of the green team, Adrienne was instrumental in securing a \$25,000 Sustainable Jersey Small Grant to do a Form Based Code planning study for the Marlboro Village Center. She explained, "Because Marlboro Township shares a similar growth pattern with many other New Jersey towns, Marlboro's Form Based Code can serve as a good example for other communities. Marlboro's growth from agricultural to suburban, and its resulting use driven zoning, which promoted a sprawl environment, has created a need, like many of our neighboring towns, for a creative solution. Form Based Code is that creative solution, with ordinances that are unlike traditional use based zoning regulations." The green team and Environmental Commission partnered to obtain an Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) grant for the development of the Sustainability Element of the Master Plan. Members of the Commission and green team worked in coordination with the township engineer to draft the Sustainability Element and present it to the Marlboro Township Planning Board as an important inclusion within the Marlboro Township Master Plan. The Marlboro Township Form Based Code planning document was also presented and approved at that time and has already had an impact, since the Township is undergoing an extensive design and complete streets improvement program that ties the historic district with the area proposed for a mixed-use village center.

Adrienne's education and career path: Adrienne received a Bachelor of Fine Arts with an emphasis on Editorial Design and Drawing from the State University of New York at Binghamton. After receiving her degree, Adrienne went to work at Chase Manhattan Bank in New York City where she worked in systems. Around this time, she had a serious cancer diagnosis that contributed to her reevaluating her career choices. She got a Certification in Art Education from the School of Visual Arts in New York and completed course work at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Adrienne spent five years as a high school art teacher; a job she really enjoyed. When she moved to Marlboro, Adrienne served as the site director at Marlboro Memorial Middle School and Marlboro Elementary School for the company called Knowledge Universe, Before and Aftercare Program. She built partnerships with the school administration and parents while creating and implementing a district wide art curriculum. Through her volunteer work, she gained insight into the important role of municipal government and wanted to be a part of the process working for town goals and helping local residents.

What you may not know about Adrienne: Adrienne grew up on Long Island, New York, in a large Italian family; she is close to her parents, two brothers, four sisters, five nieces, two nephews and two great nieces. Sports were a big part of Adrienne's life in high school. She was the captain of the track and softball team and she also participated in varsity volleyball and basketball. Adrienne lives with her husband, Jim, in Marlboro. Their family includes four children and one grandson. She is also a member of her church green team. In her spare time, Adrienne likes to go antiquing to add to her collection of antique phones. She is an illustrator of a published children's book. Adrienne said she is most proud that her children are caring and informed, good people with an open and accepting outlook. She has high hopes that they will continue her passion and work for a more sustainable and just world.