



Joseph S. Clark, Jr.

Purchasing Manager (retired), City of Ocean City

Purchasing Agent (retired), Borough of Avalon

Past Board Member & President, Ocean City Board of Education

Cape May County, New Jersey

For more than four decades, Joseph Clark transformed the way New Jersey municipalities approached government procurement. As purchasing manager for [Ocean City](#) for over 40 years and a part-time purchasing agent for the [Borough of Avalon](#) for 21 years, Joe became a pioneer in sustainable procurement and green initiatives. He secured groundbreaking solar energy contracts, embedded creative and green standards into purchasing decisions, and showed other communities that sustainable practices and fiscal responsibility go hand in hand.

Joe's influence reached statewide. From 2006 to 2011, he served on the Mayors Committee for a Green Future, an advisory group that provided candid, on-the-ground feedback to shape what became the Sustainable Jersey program. He was a driving force on the Ocean City Green Team for more than 15 years and continues to be a leader in the [Atlantic-Cape May Sustainable Jersey Hub](#). He contributed to the Ocean City and Avalon Borough Sustainable Jersey certifications, and Ocean City received the first [Sustainability Champion](#) award for a medium-sized city in 2009.

Joe demonstrates that sustainability is built by the steady, thoughtful work of public servants who see opportunity in the everyday. By transforming procurement into a lever for change, Joe helped Ocean City, Avalon Borough, and municipalities across New Jersey become leaders in energy efficiency, solar energy, green purchasing, and waste reduction. But just as importantly, Joe models what it means to serve—with integrity, creativity, and a commitment to making communities healthier and stronger.

Pioneering Solar and Green Purchasing

One of Joe's enduring legacies is his role in making solar energy a reality for municipalities across New Jersey. Seventeen years ago, most towns considered solar installations impossible, due to restrictions in the code. Procurement law limited energy contracts to short three to four-year terms—far too brief to justify the investment needed for solar. But Joe saw potential. "If you know the rules and the contracts," he explained, "you understand where to flex, not break them. My goal was never to be a wall or stop progress for people trying to do new innovative things. I would always try to meet them halfway."

Drawing on his knowledge of the New Jersey Local Public Contracts Law (L.P.C.L.), Joe partnered with Marc Pfeiffer, then Deputy Director of the Division of Local Government Services, to explore new possible pathways for solar applications. Together, they helped develop regulations that allowed municipalities to enter 15-year solar contracts. This shift opened the door for communities to finance renewable energy projects legally and responsibly. The result was historic:

Ocean City launched one of the first municipal solar projects in New Jersey, covering five buildings. It became a landmark application and a model for others. Soon, other municipalities and governmental agencies followed suit, setting a statewide precedent.



Joe's work did not stop with municipalities. Under Title 18A procurement law, his contributions also helped shape the Energy Savings Improvement Program (ESIP), which enabled school districts to finance solar and energy efficiency projects. Today, both municipal and county (NJ Statutes Annotated (N.J.S.A.) 40A) and school (N.J.S.A. 18A) procurement law explicitly accommodate renewable energy contracts—a statewide legacy that traces back to Joe's initial work with the L.P.C.L. At the same time, Joe was building a framework for sustainable purchasing more broadly. He helped write and develop Sustainable Jersey's Green Purchasing Program Actions.

These were not abstract policies. Ocean City adopted a Green Purchasing Policy that Joe developed and added to the municipality's Purchasing Manual as the "Environmentally Preferable Procurement" section. The manual is distributed to every new manager and department head, ensuring environmental considerations became part of daily operations.

Under Joe's leadership, Ocean City switched to recycled paper products for copiers and restroom facilities. Departments purchased greener cleaning supplies, reduced single-use plastics, and prioritized recycled and locally sourced materials. In [Ocean City's 2025 Certification Report](#), the city received 30 Sustainable Jersey certification points for this work by completing the actions: [Green Purchasing Policy](#) (5 points); [Green Maintenance Equipment & Materials](#) (10 points); [Recycled Copy Paper](#) (15 points).

Joe's influence extended beyond Ocean City. For more than eight years, he served on the U.S. Communities National Procurement Cooperative Advisory Committee—now Omnia Public Partners Public Sector—where he hosted numerous procurement summits in Ocean City showcasing sustainable products and championing the use of national procurement cooperatives. His approach became a replicable model for other communities across New Jersey and beyond. The goals of Joe's procurement policies were far-reaching: conserve natural resources, minimize pollution, eliminate toxic materials, strengthen recycling markets, and reward environmentally responsible manufacturers. A lifelong cheerleader for his profession, he was a member of the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) for 41 years, as well as the Governmental Purchasing Association of New Jersey (GPANJ) and the Southern Jersey Chapter of NIGP for more than four decades.

Energy Efficiency and EV Charging

Joe's ability to see opportunities where others see obstacles extended to energy efficiency and electric vehicles. Through [New Jersey's Clean Energy Program](#), Joe successfully secured significant [New Jersey Board of Public Utilities \(BPU\) Community Energy Plan Implementation \(CEPI\)](#) grants for both municipalities. Avalon received \$485,000 to fund HVAC and lighting upgrades, along with an additional \$250,000 CEPI grant in 2024 for further improvements. Ocean City secured \$125,000 for lighting and HVAC upgrades.

When I first approached the staff at the Avalon Borough," Joe said, "They thought the BPU energy efficiency grants were too good to be true. The staff didn't really want to take it on, so I asked if I could prepare the application. The result was two brand-new HVAC systems, upgraded lighting in public works, and \$485,000 in funding."

Joe was also an early champion of electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure. He helped Avalon install one of the first municipal public EV charging stations on the Jersey Shore in 2012, located in front of the Public Safety Building on Dune Drive.



That was just the beginning. Avalon soon added two more chargers near Community Hall, available 24/7 with smart card or credit card payment. Ocean City followed, installing chargers at the Public Works Building in 2017 and City Hall in 2018, with more planned for the Transportation Center in 2024, thanks to a \$150,000 grant. Joe's approach was always grounded in practical observation. He would show up at charging stations at 7:30 a.m. to talk with EV drivers. He discovered most were visitors from outside the municipality who spent money locally while waiting for their vehicles to charge. This insight convinced other surrounding communities to install their own high-speed chargers. Further, Joe collaborated with the Public Works Department to paint the stalls green for better visibility and worked with manufacturers to develop green parking stops and improved signage for the stalls—a suggestion adopted nationwide. Ocean City received 15 certification points for completing the Sustainable Jersey action: [Public Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure](#).

Innovative Contracting for a Greener Community

Joe initiated a rewrite of the landscaping contracts to reduce pesticide and herbicide use, resulting in safer recreation areas, parks and public spaces. He modernized waste management by introducing 96-gallon recycling and solid waste carts in Avalon, eliminating overflow and dramatically increasing recycling rates. People traditionally want to do the right thing as it relates to recycling,” Joe explained, They just needed the cans with increased capacity to do it.”

His creativity extended to some unusual areas. In Ocean City, he assisted in the preparation of the first bird abatement service contract, hiring a company that uses hawks and falcons to deter seagulls along the boardwalk and downtown business district. He later assisted in securing the contracts that brought in trained dogs to chase geese from the city’s golf course and other municipal and school recreation properties.

Joe also helped spearhead Ocean City’s first jitney service contract, introducing clean energy compressed natural gas (CNG) buses that shuttle residents and visitors from May to September. He ensured service was community-focused—adding late-night hours for teenagers working summer jobs and stops at senior centers to serve older residents. I work hard to make sure every contract gets better. And yes, you do need to add all the details in the contract,” Joe said.

Even office operations came under Joe’s innovation. He eliminated dozens of standalone printers in both the City of Ocean City and the school district, replacing them with 58 Energy Star-certified copiers located in hubs. The new system reduced energy use, lowered toner costs, and streamlined workflow. Through cooperative purchasing with OMNIA Public Partners, Joe gave Ocean City access to pre-negotiated, competitively solicited contracts from top suppliers—saving time and money while maintaining high environmental standards.

Community Leadership

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Joe dedicates himself to community service and family. He served as a Board Member, Committee Chairman, President and Vice-President of the Ocean City Board of Education for over 16 years, where he helped shape policies that impacted generations of students. He helped Ocean City schools join the Sustainable Jersey for Schools program and introduced waste reduction and energy efficiency projects. He has chaired the Ocean City Shade Tree Committee for more than 22 years, served as the administrative liaison on the City’s Utility Advisory Commission for 20 years, volunteered with the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) for 19 years, and managed the Ocean City dog park for two decades.



Animals have always been a passion for Joe, who has bred and cared for Pembroke Welsh Corgis and cats throughout his life. He currently serves as vice president of the Humane Society of Ocean City and as president of the Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of the Garden State, blending his love for animals with his commitment to community. For more than 40 years, he has served the Boy Scouts of America as an Eagle Scout and past Scoutmaster of the Ocean City troop. Both of his sons also achieved the rank of Eagle Scout under his leadership, and he has mentored countless other young men along the way.

Joe’s personal journey began outside Philadelphia in Montgomery County, where he grew up riding horses and attending horse shows with his parents. He studied public administration at West Chester University, but a summer job in Ocean City as a beach tag inspector changed his life. It was there he met Susan, his wife of 44 years. Together they raised three children—Andrew, Randall, and Shelby—and are proud grandparents to Maryam and Hunter.

Outside of work and service, Joe is an avid cook who attended Atlantic Cape Community College of Culinary Arts. He enjoys preparing Middle Eastern, German, Welsh, and English dishes, with leek soup as a family favorite. He appreciates fine wines from Cape May wineries, loves the beach, and enjoys outdoor pursuits including cycling, hiking, skiing, and—most recently—riding his new boardwalk cruiser. Now in retirement, Joe continues to champion sustainability initiatives while, in his words, learning how to chill.” Family, community, and a lifetime of service remain at the center of his days.