



## Township of Belleville *New Jersey*

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**For Immediate release**

# **Belleville Earns Statewide Recognition for Efforts to Make the Township Greener and Cleaner**

**BELLEVILLE, NJ – MARCH 1, 2021** – The Township has been recognized by a statewide organization that rewards municipalities and school districts for their efforts to be greener and cleaner.

Belleville has earned the bronze certification from Sustainable Jersey, which will honor the municipality at a virtual awards luncheon on Thursday, March 11. The Township was one of 55 towns in New Jersey to attain the status for 2020.

“This is a great recognition for Belleville,” said Mayor Michael Melham. “It shows that the township is committed to doing all we can to improve the environment and well-being of the residents of Belleville, now and in the future. We look forward to the challenge of continuing to be a sustainable municipality and to attain the next level of certification.”

Councilman Vincent Cozzarelli serves as the Municipal Green Team’s chair.

“Belleville’s Green Team develops plans, implements programs and assists with educational opportunities that support the creation of a sustainable community,” Cozzarelli explained. “I would like to see the municipality continue working on sustainability initiatives, such as limiting energy emissions, encouraging green buildings and embracing green practices that can benefit the township, saving both money and resources.”

To become certified through Sustainable Jersey, Belleville submitted documentation to show it had completed a balance of the required sustainability actions, meeting a minimum of 150 action points.

In addition to reaching 150 points, each certified community had to create a green team and select at least two out of 12 priority action options.

Belleville achieved 160 points through community education and outreach, lead education and outreach, innovative community projects, the establishment of a tree protection ordinance, participation in a community paper shredding day and participation in the materials reuse program.

The Township also received points for participating in the reusable bag education program, the establishment of a creative team, participation in the prescription drug safety and disposal program, recycling and waste reduction education and compliance, a sustainable land use pledge and a pledge supporting the New Jersey wildlife action plan.

Gabrielle Bennett-Meany, the Township's Green Team coordinator and project leader volunteer, said the bronze certification was the culmination of a lot of spirited teamwork. The team has already turned its focus toward achieving silver-level certification.

"I'd like to thank all of the dedicated municipal staff and resident volunteers who either provided me with information, participated in one of our volunteer events or who, without even realizing the very job they do every day, is something that may have contributed to this prestigious designation," Bennett-Meany said.

The Sustainable Jersey Virtual Awards Luncheon, held March 11 from noon to 1:15 p.m., will be streamed on Sustainable Jersey's Facebook page.

Sustainable Jersey provides tools, training and financial incentives to support communities as they pursue sustainability programs. Sustainable Jersey participants (municipalities and schools) have successfully implemented and documented more than 18,500 sustainability actions. More than \$5.9 million in grants has been provided by Sustainable Jersey to towns, school districts and schools for community-based projects that create healthy and sustainable communities in New Jersey.

"With nearly 90% of the New Jersey population living in a Sustainable Jersey community, we know our work has never been more important," said Randall Solomon, executive director of Sustainable Jersey. "Congratulations to the municipalities that achieved certification in a very challenging year. Your hard work brings us closer to the goal of a sustainable New Jersey."

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