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Township of Verona Awarded \$10,000 Sustainability Grant

Verona, NJ – The Township of Verona was awarded a \$10,000 Sustainable Jersey grant funded by the PSEG Foundation. Five \$20,000 grants, six \$10,000 grants and twenty \$2,000 grants were distributed to municipalities in fourteen New Jersey counties.

The grant awards will fund a range of projects including green infrastructure, food waste composting education, single-use plastic reduction campaigns, community gardens, a farmers market, environmental resource inventories, a diversity discussion series, green team capacity building and more.

Verona will be using the \$10,000 toward the construction of a new Community Garden located near H.B. Whitehorne School. The mission of the Verona Community Garden is to provide sustainable gardening opportunities for the physical and social benefit of the people of Verona through the cultivation and maintenance of a common green space. Our community garden will contribute to the vitality of Verona by: creating opportunities for gathering and interpersonal connection, providing an educational resource for people of all ages and abilities, increasing participation in sustainable practices through health and wellness activities for all citizens.

The vision of the Verona Community Garden is to provide opportunities for people to grow food for themselves, increase their healthy activity, get to know their neighbors, and create and maintain a beautiful common space. These essential assets create connections to self, others and the community at large.

"In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, these grants will strengthen our communities and build the groundwork for finding solutions to the sustainability concerns that are reaching a crisis point," said Randall Solomon, executive director for Sustainable Jersey. He extended his congratulations to all of the towns that received grants. "By making preparations today to ensure our future wellbeing, we strengthen our communities and help alleviate future disasters," Solomon added.

The PSEG Foundation has contributed \$2.2 million dollars in funding to the Sustainable Jersey grants program for municipalities and schools. "The PSEG Foundation is committed to helping build sustainable and thriving communities by empowering and investing in the people, environment and infrastructure of the communities we serve, embodying our mission to help build better places to live and work," said Rick Thigpen, senior vice president of Corporate Citizenship at PSEG and chairman of the PSEG Foundation. "Supporting Sustainable Jersey and local municipalities as they build sustainability programs puts resources where they're needed to positively impact the environment and local communities, having a lasting impact on neighborhoods throughout New Jersey."

Proposals were evaluated by an independent Blue-Ribbon Selection Committee. The Sustainable Jersey grants are intended to help municipalities make progress toward a sustainable future in general, and specifically toward Sustainable Jersey certification. Nearly ninety percent of the New Jersey population lives in a registered or certified Sustainable Jersey community. Currently 455 municipalities, or 81 percent New Jersey municipalities, are registered with Sustainable Jersey.

Verona has been registered with the Sustainable Jersey Program since 2013 and has been certified twice at the bronze level and is currently pursuing silver certification this year. Verona's green team, Sustainable Verona, is set by ordinance and includes a mix of Township employees, resident volunteers and other boards and committees. Sustainable Verona meets monthly on the first Wednesday of the month and their next meeting will be held via Zoom video conference on Wednesday, June 3rd. All meetings are open to the public. Anyone interested in volunteering with Sustainable Verona can reach out to Chairperson, Steven Neale at stneale@veronanj.org.

ABOUT SUSTAINABLE JERSEY

Sustainable Jersey is a non-profit that provides tools, training and financial incentives to support communities as they pursue sustainability programs. Currently, 81 percent or 455 of New Jersey's 565 municipalities are participating in the municipal certification program and 351 school districts and 952 schools are participating in the Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification program.

Website: www.SustainableJersey.com; www.SustainableJerseySchools.com
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