

Grant Reaps Beautiful Results in Hackensack

Rothman Grant Reaps Beautiful Results

In April 2005, Rep. Rothman announced that he successfully secured \$72,750 in federal funding to renovate and beautify Hackensack's vibrant downtown commercial district. Today, the makeover is complete and will be celebrated during a June 14th rededication ceremony at the historic Hackensack Green.

Thanks to federal funding secured by Rothman and others, local property taxpayers did not have to foot the bill for these improvements. "Everyone loves The Green," Hackensack Councilman Marlin G. Townes told the County Seat news weekly. "These beautiful enhancements will heighten our enjoyment of this space during the warm weather months and into the fall when we honor our veterans. These important federal and state grants have enabled us to renovate the area without any tax money from residents of Hackensack."

You can read the 2005 news release from Rep. Rothman announcing that he secured the funding [online here](#). The full article about the completion of the Hackensack renovation project, originally published in the County Seat on May 30, 2007, is below.

Historical Hackensack Green to be Rededicated, Beautified

The rededication of the Hackensack Green has been scheduled for June 14 at noon, a ceremony where school children, teachers, city and county leaders will gather to honor the city's historic center. The Green, a gift of 2 ¾ acres of land from John Berry to the residents of Hackensack, dates back to 1696. The First Dutch Reformed Church site was included in this gift. A strategic landmark during the American Revolution, Hackensack was originally a small village centered on The Green. Gen. George Washington headquartered here in November 1776 while he surveyed the local roads and bridges. On Nov. 20, 1776, he led his army into Hackensack.

The army camped on The Green as Washington made the important decision to continue the retreat from British and Hessian forces. This prepared the way for the first American victory of the Revolution the following month at the Battle of Trenton. On March 23, 1780, the British raided Hackensack and burned the courthouse that stood on The Green at that time. For decades, The Hackensack Green has served as a public meeting place. Since 1715, a courthouse has faced The Green. In the 18th century, The Green was the place where punishments were inflicted on criminals and where the militia trained. In 1820, it was enhanced only by trees along its edges and a flagpole. During the 1950s, the trees were removed, new trees planted and a fence installed.

During the late 19th century, embellishments included a cast iron fountain and a bandstand. The 19th century features were replaced in the 20th century by a civil war era canon, a flagpole and a World War I monument. The monument was designed by Charles Henry Niehaus, a prominent New York City sculptor whose work embellishes the Library of Congress and the Statutory Hall of the Capitol. The monument to Gen. Enoch Poor commemorates a Revolutionary War figure who is buried in the adjacent cemetery of the First Reformed Church. Poor died in 1780 of wounds incurred in a duel. Part of his military funeral took place on The Green. His funeral was attended by Washington and Lafayette. He was buried in the adjoining cemetery of the Dutch Reformed Church. The church, originally built in 1696 and rebuilt in 1791, is the oldest in Bergen County and the second oldest in New Jersey. The Green's makeover added many aesthetic, safety, and accessibility features to the beloved landmark.

Thanks to a \$72,000 federal grant provided through Rep. Steve Rothman, D-Fair Lawn, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and a \$190,000 state of Department of Community Affairs Statewide Livable Communities Grant, The Green's sidewalks and curbs were improved, and new seating, lighting, and decorative pavement was installed. The circular wall was removed and reconfigured, and the venerable cannon base was refurbished. Wheelchair-accessible crosswalks and curbs were constructed and new crosswalks and landscaping was created.

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By Albert Dib

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