

**PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of Regular Meeting of September 18, 2013– 7:30 pm**  
**Meeting Room A, Municipal Building**  
**400 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08540**

**I. Opening Statement**

Adequate notice of this meeting as required by Sections 3d and 4a of the Open Public Meetings Act has been provided and filed with the municipal Clerk.

**II. Fichtenbaum opened the meeting at 7:36 p.m.**

Present were: Kaczerski, Fichtenbaum, Ullman, Zemble, Chorney, Rojer and Molina

Absent was: Wasserman, Patil, and Crumiller

**III. Approval of Agenda:**

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the agenda.

**IV. Minutes:**

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the July 24, 2013 minutes as written and amended.

**V. Public Comment:** Wendy Ludlum discussed the open space area that Princeton University owns around the Broadmead, Western Way and Harrison Street area. She said area has wetlands and is a real habitat in the town. She said it is an important ecosystem with a vernal stream and a storm drainage protection area. She suggested that Princeton University give this land to the town because she has a strong suspicion that the University is eventually going to build on this property; the neighbors in that area received a certified letter from the University about lot consolidations and subdivisions they have proposed in front of the Planning Board. Ullman noted that the University will be appearing on 9/19/13 at the Planning Board regarding these consolidations. Ludlum went on to say on there is a beautiful line of trees and that this land should be kept for passive recreation and not built upon. She said she wanted to make sure the PEC was aware of this site in the event the University plans to develop this lot in the future. Fichtenbaum said maybe the University could designate that land so it would remain green and open space – however that would require a lot of effort on everyone’s part. She said the PEC may want to endorse something like that in the future – a “no build” type of restriction. Dave Pfeiffer from ANJEC said the University would need to get an LOI from the DEP in order to build on the lot if there are wetlands present. He said he thinks that the University would be willing to work with the town on this. Fichtenbaum thanked Ms. Ludlum for coming to the meeting and said she thinks the PEC should gather more information about this before taking a formal stand.

Peter Madison said he had been a member of the Planning Board for about 13 years and has been a long standing resident of Princeton. He said he spoke with Hiltner and his group who are working in Herrontown Woods. He said the County has done little to nothing to maintain the woods and Princeton has been in discussions with the County to take over the land. He said the town is also in talks with Friends of Princeton Open Space to link the woods to other parks within the town. He said he would like the PEC to help put pressure on the town to acquire the woods. He said the town is interested in the woods but not in the Veblen House because of the liability. He suggested that the town acquire the entire parcel and sell the house or he said the town could lease the parcel of land cheap to encourage people to restore and live in the Veblen House. He said the Friends of Herrontown Woods would like the PEC to encourage the town to acquire the entire parcel of land. Fichtenbaum said she had recently spoken with Hiltner and after his presentation to the PEC last month; his group has invested over 350 volunteer hours restoring the trails in the woods and they would also like to do some trail improvements. She said she thinks it is pretty admirable considering that the town doesn't even own the land. Madison said he thinks the County would be glad to rid of the property. Madison said one thought would be to hire someone who would lease the property and restore the house. It is more attractive to the town that way. Madison said the key would be to find an individual who would be willing to do this. He said the Friends of Herrontown Woods would welcome the PEC's support of this. He said they will also be reaching out to other groups including the Institute for Advanced Study and the Historic Preservation Commission. Ullman said the Veblen House would be an ideal location for a Parks Commissioner if the town owned the property. Fichtenbaum said that the Citizens interested in the preservation of this property need to have a written plan for PEC to be able to take any action including endorsement.

Ullman left the meeting to attend the Zoning Board of Adjustment Meeting.

**VI. Decisions/Discussions:**

- a) Highland Water Protection and Planning Act. In attendance were George Stafford and Dave Pfeiffer. Stafford said he attended a council meeting as them for support to continue the 2004 Highlands Water Protection & Planning Act. He said he has also traveled to other towns to gain support of the resolution that the members of the Highlands Act have prepared. He said he has many towns that are willing to support it. He said they are trying to show that the towns who receive water from the Highlands care as much as the people who live there. He said when he attended the Council meeting in Princeton; they suggested that he come to the PEC for support. He noted that Princeton receives 25-50% of its water from the Highlands. Pfeiffer showed the PEC where the Highlands are located on a map and he explained the Protection Act. Stafford said that approximately 5 million people in NJ get water from a Highland source. He said there are forces that want this Act to go away, but he said the Highlands Council needs to be shown how much this Act is needed. They also discussed fracking and what the geology is in the Highlands. Pfeiffer said that the Act was developed to restrict the land use in the Highlands Protected area. Fichtenbaum asked if Princeton gets drinking water and run-off from the Highlands. Pfeiffer

said Princeton does not get run-off, Passaic does. He said that protecting the water is of statewide importance. Kaczerski asked about the resolution that they are asking the PEC to pass. She asked if the threat to the drinking water was imminent. Pfeiffer said he thinks there is an ideological threat. He said he would like the PEC to pass a resolution and make a recommendation to Council to do the same. He said this is an important issue to the residents of the state not just individual towns. Fichtenbaum said she would support a resolution from the PEC and then forward it to Council recommending they also support the resolution. Kaczerski asked what the timeline was. Stafford said this is an on-going task of growing support for the Act. Kaczerski made a motion to adopt the resolution and recommend to Council that they do the same. The PEC made some minor changes to the resolution and it was suggested that the PEC pass the motion and then come back to the next meeting and memorialize it at the next meeting. Fichtenbaum made note to add this topic to the October agenda.

- b) **PEC Ordinance:** Fichtenbaum said she is not sure what this topic is about, she suggested tabling the discussion until the next meeting.

**VII. Updates and Regular Business:** Fichtenbaum noted that she received an email stating that the Sustainable Princeton Municipal Green Team has been appointed. Those appointed are: Brushi, Hough, Lempert, Landis, Ullman and Birge. She said this is a positive step and the next step is for the team to have some leadership – they need to appoint a Chair who is passionate about it.

**VIII. Focus Areas:**

- a) **SPRAB:** Fichtenbaum said she didn't see much coming up.
- b) **Mass Transit:** No report
- c) **Building Overlays:** Fichtenbaum said she has looked at 20+ ordinances that the town could look at passing. She said she has suggested "green overlay zones" but that did not have a lot of support. She said she thinks the PEC can help break up and get certain ordinances crafted and try to get them passed. She said she has asked ANJEC for model ordinances – but the ones that were forwarded to her seemed "soft" so she is searching for more concrete ordinances. (She noted she is looking at ordinances throughout the country, not just New Jersey). She said once she has gathered more information the PEC can prioritize according to environmental impacts. She said she will email a list of possible ordinances to consider that will have an impact.
- d) **Waste:** Chronney said she met with Diane Landis about Waste and she said she would rather have a cohesive group rather than a bunch of smaller groups all trying to do the same thing. She said they are pushing the Food Composting and trying to get a plan together to push this more out of the public eye. Fichtenbaum noted that this area would be a good starting point for an ordinance. For instance, she said, if a development is over a certain size, they must provide food composting. Chronney also said that the way it is right now, people get garbage collection for free and pay for composting, she suggesting switching it in ordinance form so residents pay for garbage pickup and get the composting for free. Fichtenbaum said it would be great to have everyone working on a waste ordinance for the town that included food, refuse and yard waste. Kaczerski noted that right now there is no penalty for non-compliance because there is no

enforcement. Fichtenbaum said there are stumbling blocks that need to be removed because it would be nice to see all the waste pieces in one ordinance. She said the PEC can work on the ordinance and then have it reviewed by the legal team before going to Council.

e) **Reports from Liaisons:**

a) **Recreation:** Herlihy said the pool is now closed and noted that it was open 2 extra weekends. She said the fall registration for the rec programs will start October 1<sup>st</sup> and that the playing fields are in full use with lacrosse, baseball and soccer. She noted that they are maintaining the active parks, fields and play grounds spaces and that they also inspect the “pocket parks” in what was formally the Borough. There was some discussion about a Parks Director and whether or not this person should oversee a crew or just oversee the many volunteers that are working in the parks.

b) **Board of Health:** Rojer stated that the Health Officer, Dave Henry has resigned to take another position overseeing multiple towns. They are actively seeking a replacement for him at this point. He explained the functions of a Health Officer. Fichtenbaum noted that the new Health Officer should think sustainably for instance air quality and carbon footprints. Rojer noted that they also need a plan to get urgent care in an emergency.

**IX.** Adjourn: A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Debra Rogers".

**Debra Rogers, Secretary**

Date Approved: October 23, 2013